



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 21 September 2017**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday, 21 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*

#### **JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO 2) 2017**

##### **Returned**

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

### *Budget*

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

**Debate resumed from 3 August 2017.**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (10:12):** I have spoken on many occasions over the past few weeks about the effect the budget will have on the people of Wyong. I conclude my contribution by speaking about Ourimbah Creek and the problem it has now with siltation and weed at the mouth of the channel. I met with a gentleman, Kenny Robinson, who lives at Chittaway Bay, who, along with members of Maritime Rescue NSW, took me and a member of staff through the channel of Ourimbah Creek to show us the issue there. On occasion I go out in my boat on Tuggerah Lake and I can say that the silting issue is becoming a safety problem.

Any boats that come out of Ourimbah Creek should travel at the designated speed limit of four knots to avoid causing a wake but in order to avoid the weed and to ensure it does not block the engine, many boats go through on the plane, which is much more than the four knot speed limit. Over last summer both Maritime Rescue and Roads and Maritime Services had to rescue about 20 boats whose motors clogged, overheated and then stalled when travelling through the channel entrance and they had to be towed. I ask the Government to consider a dredging strategy for the entrance to Tuggerah Lake. All the people along the channel pay their jetty fees and registration on their boats but it is getting to the stage where they will not be able to get in and out of the channel.

Unfortunately, one response has been, "Oh well, we will just close the channel." That will not help anybody. The local council, through a State Government grant of a few million dollars, has just repaired the boat ramp in the area. That is fantastic but it seems a bit redundant to have a boat ramp if the channel is blocked. People mainly talk about dredging the entrance to Tuggerah Lake at The Entrance but Wyong River, Wallarah Creek, Tumbi Creek and Ourimbah Creek also need to be kept open, not only for residents but also for fishermen and tourists who visit the area. People say Tuggerah Lake is the jewel in the crown for the Wyong end of the Central Coast. We really need a proper dredging strategy to ensure that it is accessible and safe. The lake is shallow; in most areas it is only two metres deep and if the wind comes up quickly it can become quite choppy. It can be quite dicey to be in a boat with an overheated and stalled engine in choppy water. I can attest to that.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** Service your engine.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** No, the weed gets stuck in the intakes and blocks them. There is not much one can do about that. That is the issue. Both the weed and the siltation in the channel should be looked at on a regular basis. I conclude my contribution on the budget by acknowledging that the Government has allocated quite a bit of money to the Wyong electorate, although some areas still need attention, particularly Ourimbah Creek.

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (10:16):** I make a contribution to the Budget Estimates and Related Papers 2017-2018. It is with great pride that after six years of a Liberal-Nationals Government in New South Wales the Coalition has delivered another record budget, one that ensures that New South Wales is the envy of the country. I congratulate the Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, and the Treasurer, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, on their hard work. I thank all the Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and backbenchers for making the hard decisions to achieve such an enviable budget position.

The success was evident in question time yesterday when the Premier outlined that some 40 per cent of new jobs in New South Wales were created in Western Sydney; Western Sydney is certainly benefiting from this record successful budget. I note that the Minister for Education is in the Chamber. He is a wonderful Minister for Education. I commend him for his commitment to education throughout New South Wales and to Parramatta in particular. Some \$300 million will be invested in Parramatta's education. I thank the Minister for that. He is fully behind the new vertical school in Parramatta, Arthur Phillip High School, a 14-storey building that will revolutionise teaching, learning and the way we deliver future education.

It will provide flexible workspace, pedagogy and the pathway for teaching our children and organising schools for high-density areas. That is of particular concern with the densification of Sydney, the competition for land and the need to deliver new schools. I commend the Minister for Education for his support. Arthur Phillip High School, the new vertical school to be delivered in the next couple of years, will be the flagship for New South Wales. While talking to the punters of Parramatta of a morning, the parents of children at Parramatta Public School remark on how much they are looking forward to the primary school going into a four-storey vertical building, which will be opposite the new vertical Arthur Phillip High School.

The 2017-18 budget includes an unprecedented investment in infrastructure. It delivers transformational mega projects, boosts services and provides confidence and optimism for business and community alike. The Government has maintained the State's triple-A credit rating and is delivering record surpluses. It is the only State in the country with a negative net debt, solid economic growth, record job creation and the lowest unemployment rate in Australia for two years in a row. Its economic prosperity is the envy of the nation. That does not come easily. The Government has made tough decisions based on a mandate from the people.

One of those decisions was in 2015 with the lease of the poles and wires. It was a controversial issue and not everyone in Government agreed with the decision. In 2015 the Government received the mandate of the people for that action. That released \$20 billion for investment in new infrastructure and delivery of mega projects. The ability to deliver that infrastructure is critical for the growth and future of New South Wales. I understand, Madam Speaker, that you are intent on delivering that infrastructure for the South Coast.

**The SPEAKER:** Indeed.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** I commend you on your advocacy for the South Coast and the funds you have received for infrastructure.

**The SPEAKER:** It is never enough.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** The surplus in 2016-17 was \$4.5 billion and is forecast to be \$2.7 billion in the 2017-18 financial year. The budget projects average surpluses of \$2 billion each year over the next four years. We are leading the nation with record growth. The gross State product has grown 3.5 per cent through record housing, public and private investment. By 2019 New South Wales will have a net worth exceeding a quarter of a trillion dollars. The Government's responsible fiscal management has enabled it to keep expenses under control. Those are the tough decisions that we have made in the past. They are not always popular decisions but they are essential in terms of fiscal responsibility. That investment strategy returns \$20 billion from the lease of the poles and wires to allow the mega projects to be delivered on time and to budget.

Service efficiency and delivery underpins the State's strong budget position. I commend all those people from Service NSW. Every time I visit Service NSW with a new fair trading Minister they are hard at work. I commend the staff from Parramatta Service NSW and other Service NSW centres for delivering the customer service that is required. That is what a Government should provide. Business and housing investment is outstripping the rest of Australia by a long stretch. We saw business investment grow by 5 per cent and housing investment by 15 per cent, whilst the rest of Australia has experienced flat or negative growth.

By 2056 New South Wales will be home to more than 11 million people and that will place greater demand on services and infrastructure. Good economic and financial managers plan and prepare for future growth. This State Government budget is laying the foundations for the future with WestConnex, NorthConnex, Sydney Metro and the light rail networks. The budget commits a record \$41.4 billion over the next four years for transport and roads, helping businesses improve productivity and reducing commuting times for employees. Western Sydney residents will benefit from \$13 billion in express services, including trains, buses, ferries and cycling infrastructure. There will be more than \$1 billion in road upgrades. In addition, \$3.2 billion is being invested in the WestConnex project; \$463 million to continue NorthConnex; and \$2.8 billion to fast-track the Sydney Metro. The budget commits \$142 million for the Parramatta Light Rail. I am excited about the light rail, as is Madam Speaker. The light rail will start at the front of Westmead Hospital, travel through the North Parramatta heritage precinct, and on to the Macquarie Street interchange.

**The SPEAKER:** I am excited.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** Even the Opposition is excited. The Opposition is secretly looking forward to the Parramatta Light Rail. Members opposite say they will come to Parramatta just to use the light rail. It is fantastic to see their enthusiasm for the project. I digress. The light rail will travel from the Parramatta interchange to Camellia and take a left to replace the Carlingford line. I have stated on television that the next stage of the light rail should be from Carlingford to Epping, but the Government cannot commit until it has a business case and the funds. I commend the Minister for Transport. I ask the Minister to actively consider funding that link. It will allow people in Parramatta and Western Sydney to gain access to Macquarie Park. That is important for those wanting to travel into the city. I ask Minister Andrew Constance to actively consider funding the upgrades.

The Minister has delivered \$17.5 million for a major upgrade of Harris Park station. What a welcome investment that is. There are several flights of stairs to access the station and people with mobility issues and bags find it difficult. After many years of lobbying, work is underway at Harris Park station to install a lift to the platform and pedestrian friendly ramps for community access. Harris Park is going from strength to strength. The Government has invested close to \$2 million to upgrade Rydalmere and Parramatta wharves. That is an exciting project. Parramatta and Rydalmere wharves are experiencing increased traffic. The Parramatta River provides an alternative conduit for public transport. The importance of that critical infrastructure is reflected in the upgrade of Rydalmere and Parramatta wharves. Work or tourism commuters will have an alternative route to Parramatta. The Minister for Transport has increased the number of weekend ferries to transport people travelling from Circular Quay to Parramatta to be invigorated by the excitement that Parramatta brings to Sydney and the world. We do encourage the tourists to occasionally visit Manly. The member for Manly is in the Chamber. Manly is nice, but Parramatta is better. We are proud of our football team. We only had to build them a new stadium to get into the top eight.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** They achieved that this year.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** They promised to win if we delivered a new stadium. That was the deal. If we build them a new stadium they will start winning the competition, which would be a pleasant surprise.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is that Manly's excuse?

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** I am a passionate supporter of the Eels and Western Sydney Wanderers. Both teams promised to win if they had a new stadium. The Deputy Clerk is a Western Sydney Wanderers fan. He can be found in his red and black jersey supporting the team. I do caution the Deputy Clerk not to participate in the fan marches lest he be caught on camera running down the street with the drums. I am sure he is not like that. He is a reserved person and is supportive of the Wanderers.

Another \$10 million has been allocated in the 2017-18 budget to fund four additional ferries to deliver more services along the Parramatta River. Having regular and reliable services to Parramatta wharf is an area of contention because the ferries experience difficulties accessing the Parramatta jetty at low tide. Hopefully this problem will be improved with the additional four ferries delivering more services. This budget allows for investment in a pipeline of State building projects. The projects are designed to improve traffic and deliver state-of-the-art transport networks. The budget also demonstrates that the Government is investing projects that matter to people and businesses.

The Government is building tomorrow's education system, committing unprecedented investment to a massive capital works agenda for our schools. A record \$4.2 billion will be invested in school infrastructure over the next four years. The Government has committed to build and upgrade at least 90 schools over the next two years. This will deliver an additional 1,500 classrooms and 32,000 student places across the State. The budget also secures funding to complete Parramatta's exciting flagship school projects. I reiterate my thanks to the Minister for Education for his support; he is in the Chamber listening to this debate. The budget allocates \$109 million for the new vertical school at Arthur Phillip High School and Parramatta Public School, the establishment of the O'Connell Street Public School and a major upgrade of Rosehill Public School. This is a \$300 million investment in schools in Parramatta alone.

The new schools will cater for increased growth and demand in the area, providing for up to 2,000 students in the high school and 1,000 in the two new primary schools—Parramatta Public School and the new O'Connell Street Public School. This week I was delighted to attend the topping-off ceremony of the new headquarters for the Department of Education in Phillip Street, Parramatta. In an example of this Government's commitment to decentralisation, approximately 1,800 staff will move from the Bridge Street premises to the first six-star building in Parramatta. We are proud that that building will set the new benchmark for purpose-built buildings in which the Government can house its public servants. I understand that Department of Education staff will move halfway through next year and will be fully settled by 2019.

**Mr Rob Stokes:** We are all very excited.



**Dr GEOFF LEE:** I acknowledge the Minister's interjection. Staff will have flexible workplace arrangements. People will be able to sit at any workstation. The private sector is also working towards providing flexible workplaces. PricewaterhouseCoopers, for example, has similar seating arrangements in its offices. The Coalition Government is making record investment in health and hospitals, which has been described as a hospital building boom, with a record investment of \$7.7 billion. An additional \$2.8 billion will be invested in New South Wales hospitals over the next four years. Campbelltown, Concord and Nepean hospitals are among the hospitals receiving record new investment, while Westmead Hospital is being allocated a further \$110 million towards a massive redevelopment of its site, including \$20.6 million for the car park. The budget will deliver an additional 1,000 new health staff. The increase comes in addition to the appointment of 3,500 nurses, doctors and medical professionals which the Government committed to delivering in past budgets. This budget lays the foundation for a prosperous future.

Many people are excited about the Westmead precinct. It is the largest health precinct in Australia, if not the Southern Hemisphere. It provides for a combination of clinical practice, research and teaching. I welcome the \$60 million commitment from Sydney University for stage one of the campus, which will be integrated in the new hospital building. The focus on research will be not only in the Children's Hospital at Westmead or the Westmead Private Hospital. The Westmead Millennium Institute is also undertaking groundbreaking research. More than 1,000 researchers will work in the Westmead Millennium Institute and the Children's Medical Research Institute, which will be a research hub. With an investment of more than \$900 million in the Westmead precinct, staff will increase from 16,000 to 25,000 over the next 10 years. We look forward to creating innovative jobs and intellectual property, which will be developed and become the future of health care. [*Extension of time*]

I thank all members for their interest in hospitals, in particular the Westmead hospitals, and Parramatta generally. The State is in great condition. It is exciting to hear about the mega projects being undertaken in Parramatta. This budget is delivering transformational projects set against a backdrop of a business and housing boom and record low employment. We are investing in health, education, transport and roads. There can be little doubt that this budget cements our position as the infrastructure capital of Australia and it will ensure that New South Wales remains the envy of the country. While we have been fortunate to have some mega projects in Parramatta, we have some conflicts. The Minister for Education is a passionate supporter of the environment and he indicated one of his concerns is the increasing pressure on the native environment. Extra density housing impacts on the environment. The Minister quite rightly pointed out that the bat colony along the Parramatta River adjacent to the North Parramatta heritage precinct is a concern. I thank the Minister, in his previous role as Minister for Planning, for recognising the significance of the bat colony. He was able to reduce the number of houses being built and the impact of those buildings. We are leaving the bats alone so that they can coexist with any proposed development. The bats are reproducing and there are now 10,000 to 15,000 bats.

Government members are excited about the Parramatta Light Rail. It is a mega project. The release of the environmental impact statement is an important milestone. It is a great opportunity for the community to have a say on the effect that the Parramatta Light Rail will have on the environment. Members of the public still have time to make comments. The location for stage one has been announced and we eagerly await stage two. The light rail will transform our suburbs and revolutionise the way we move around our suburbs and the city.

It is one of two mega projects that will transform Parramatta—the relocation of the Museum of Applied Sciences to the banks of the Parramatta River and light rail. It will improve community wellbeing and liveability, and support massive revitalisation along the corridor whilst driving economic growth. The preferred route includes a number of new urban renewal developments, both public and private, and underpins key growth in areas such as the Westmead biomedical precinct, the Parramatta North heritage precinct, Parramatta central business district, Rydalmere knowledge precinct and the Telopea redevelopment.

The development of the Westmead biomedical precinct will be a catalyst for future jobs and investment in our region. The New South Wales Government is investing close to \$1 billion in this development and the Westmead biomedical precinct, which encompasses Westmead Hospital, the Children's Hospital, the Millennium Institute, the Children's Medical Research Institute, the University of Sydney and the University of Western Sydney. The potential to increase the size of this health precinct is being realised and the number of jobs at the hospital is expected to increase to 36,000 by 2036.

New urban renewal projects such as the Parramatta North heritage precinct will enable employees to live in close proximity to their work and will connect them by rail. The Parramatta North heritage precinct has been rezoned to enable the construction of new homes to create a vibrant new community—a backdrop to the 30 or 40 buildings in the heritage precinct; the largest collection of early European and colonial buildings in Australia—and a major and distinctive tourism precinct in Parramatta. This unique and renowned collection of buildings and landscapes will benefit not only from a sympathetic residential development but also from jobs growth in tourism,

hospitality, heritage conservation and restoration—all connected by light rail to the Parramatta central business district.

This development is further supported by the recent announcement of the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, the member for Northern Tablelands, of the release of a visitor economy strategy for Western Sydney. Parramatta will be known for its heritage buildings and Parramatta central business district is benefiting from record levels of public and private sector investment. Last year the Government announced the largest ever government agency leasing commitment in Western Sydney, which will accommodate 50,000 public servants.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Bills*

**WORKERS COMPENSATION AMENDMENT (PROTECTION OF INJURED WORKERS) BILL 2017**

**First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Clayton Barr, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (10:42):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduced the Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017 because it is the right thing to do. It is not for the purpose of political pointscoring, but I know that is what critics will say. If the Government would like to introduce a similar bill I will happily withdraw mine. I do not want accolades; I just want what is right for injured workers across the State. No-one should be under the illusion that the amendments proposed in this bill will result in fairness for all injured workers. The amendments will not do that. Returning fairness and equity to workers compensation would require a complete overhaul. The 2012 reforms changed the scheme from one that looked after all injured workers to one that looked after some injured workers for some of the time. That fundamental change turned the scheme on its head, which is why the scheme requires a complete overhaul. This bill proposes modest changes that will help those in most need.

The Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017 will amend four key provisions in the current scheme, which I will deal with in my contribution. The first key provision relates to the five-year cut-off date for injured workers. The maths are quite simple: these changes were made in 2012 and it is now 2017. The most crucial element in this bill is the five-year cut-off date for injured workers. We must deal with this issue immediately or, at the very least, before the Parliament rises at the end of the year. The five-year cut-off date will affect 4,223 injured workers between September 2017 and December 2017. They will be kicked out of the workers compensation scheme and put onto the Federal taxpayer-funded Centrelink scheme; in other words, they will go on the dole. How do we identify those 4,223 workers? They are workers who have suffered an injury, who continue to be plagued by that injury and who have 1 per cent to 20 per cent whole body impairment.

Most people who were injured and who have whole body impairment between 1 per cent and 20 per cent were kicked out of the scheme after just 2½ years, or 130 weeks, because their condition was not complex or debilitating enough. Ninety-five per cent of those injured workers with 1 per cent to 20 per cent whole body impairment are already living on Centrelink benefits and are unable to work as a result of their injuries. Those 4,223 injured workers managed to remain in the scheme beyond the first 2½ years, or 130 weeks, because they were able to prove under section 38 (2) of the Act that they had no current work capacity. Equally, under section 38 (3) (c) of the Act, they were deemed to be "likely to continue indefinitely to be incapable of undertaking further additional employment" on top of the 15 hours that they were working.

There is no light at the end of the tunnel for people with complicated injuries. Things will not get better for them. These injured workers, who have 1 per cent to 20 per cent whole body impairment, have satisfied myriad doctors, lawyers and insurers that their future is so bleak their payments should continue beyond the 2½ years. No matter their prognosis, under current legislation their payments will be cut in the coming months. There is no scientific research or medical reason to support this five-year termination of payments.

Five years is simply a commercial figure—an insurer's figure—so that they know when they can close the file. Long-term injuries that show no signs of improvement are known in the scheme as the "tail". The purpose of the 2012 legislative changes was simply to cut the tail off the scheme—or at least 99 per cent of it. That is what led to injured workers being thrown out the scheme and onto the scrap heap of Centrelink and why the scheme went from an alleged \$4.1 billion deficit to a \$2.4 billion surplus in just three years. Those are the Government's own figures.

Under current legislation the Government is offering the 4,223 injured workers who are about to be scrapped a cruel Christmas gift. Some 1,882 of those workers will receive their final workers compensation payment during the week of Christmas. That will hardly make for a merry time. In addition to those 4,223 workers, an estimated 1,500 will be kicked off the scheme between January and June next year. In total almost 6,000 workers, their families and their children will be thrown on the scrap heap as a result of the existing legislation. The nasty five-year cut-off was established by legislation. It can be undone by legislation and the amendments in this bill. That is the choice before the House. Each and every one of us can choose.

Members of the Labor Party generally land on a position of support or opposition for bills that come before this Parliament and, yes, we bind together; we all vote the same way. Members of the Liberal Party and The Nationals often use that fact as an insult or a slur against Labor. They proclaim their ability to vote independently, choose their own path and make up their own minds on legislation. This is their day of reckoning. If they are capable of independently weighing up an issue and choosing which way to vote, what will their choice be on this bill? Will they independently choose to support injured workers who will otherwise be kicked off the workers compensation scheme? Or do they believe, having weighed up the arguments, that kicking them off the scheme is the right thing to do?

I make that point at some length because I know Government members often tell their electorates that they have put up a fight in the party room but lost. They do not tell their local communities that despite supposedly losing the fight in the party room they are still able to support a cause with their vote. In the coming months I will be travelling around the State and asking local communities to contact their members to see how they will vote on this bill. I will be telling their communities that Government members have a choice about how to vote, no matter what their party room decides.

There is another important detail that we all need to know. In 2012 Government members' communities probably took their word for it when they were told that the scheme was \$4.1 billion in deficit. I do not want to debate the truth or otherwise of that figure, but I make the point that a justification used in 2012 was that the Government wanted to avoid a 28 per cent increase in workers compensation premiums. I am sure we will hear that raised in debate on this bill. Interestingly, in 2015 the Government also declared that the real figure it should have promoted in 2012 was 16 per cent. But let us put that aside and stick with 28 per cent as the supposed increase to premiums.

At the time the premiums paid by business were on average 1.6 per cent of wages—that is, they paid on average \$1.60 in every \$100 for workers compensation cover. An increase of 28 per cent would have equated to an additional 44¢ in every \$100. That means that if the 28 per cent figure was accurate in a worst case scenario businesses would have paid not \$1.60 per \$100 but \$2.04. Credit where credit is due: The Government used the 28 per cent figure and scared most people. It was sneaky and deceptive. It was a choice of language. Government members could have told people that the increase would be 44¢ in every \$100, but they did not. They also could have told people that a 28 per cent slice would only be paid on a 1.6 per cent margin, but they did not.

I do not want to dwell on history; I just wanted to make that point so that Government members know exactly what they did at that time. Despite the fact that they spoke in support of the bill in this Chamber I am quite sure they did not understand that 44¢ in every \$100 was the worst case scenario. The most important financial matter is that today the scheme is \$1.5 billion in surplus, as the Minister noted during budget estimates hearings a few weeks ago. In 2015 it was \$2.4 billion in surplus before the Government made some very minor changes—dare I say improvements—at that time. After those changes the sky did not fall in; the scheme did not plunge into the abyss. Today I am asking the Government to make some additional affordable changes under the funding stream in the current system.

Explaining cruel workers compensation legislation in 2017 will be a completely different challenge for each and every Government member. In 2012 they might have been able to convince their voters that there was a \$4.1 billion deficit and there could be a possible premium rise of 28 per cent. They might have been able to use that fear to justify their end. But in 2017, with a \$1.5 billion surplus in the scheme and no threat of premium increases, how will they justify continuing to be cruel to injured workers and their families by not supporting this bill? Throughout this debate I will listen with interest as to what they will say to those in their communities who will see family and friends dumped off a scheme that was designed to protect them.

I turn now to the detail of the bill. The Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017 is designed to effect four key changes, with one change separated into two parts. The first change, as set out in paragraph (a) of the objects of the bill, is to remove restrictions on the entitlement of a worker to make a journey claim. The second change, as set out in paragraph (b), is to remove restrictions on what constitutes suitable employment. The third change, which is set out in paragraphs (c) and (d), is to remove the five-year cut-off period for weekly payments and remove the provision that limits payment of an injured worker's

medical expenses. The fourth change, which is set out in paragraph (e) of the objects of the bill, is to make it an offence for an employer to dismiss at any time an injured worker.

Journey claims are covered under section 10 of the Act. My bill will omit section 10 (3A). Currently journey claims are dealt with as a definition under section 10 (1D) and (3A) of the Act. Journey claims make up an incredibly small element of the broader workers compensation scheme, representing around 2.5 per cent of all claims. This bill seeks to remove the definition at section 10 (3A) that requires the victim to prove a "real and substantial connection between the employment and the accident or incident".

Since the definition of journey claims was changed in 2012 the media has covered a number of cases of workers involved in car accidents after working long and unreasonable hours where fatigue at the wheel was believed to be a factor. To date, only one or two of those accidents have been accepted as bearing a real and substantial connection to employment, meaning that journey claims in effect have ceased to be made. Possibly more importantly, journey claims are relevant for workers with a disability who often catch public transport and have to grapple with the various uneven surfaces and moving parts of transport infrastructure as well as their disability. Journey claims will bring fairness and equity to those with disabilities. Representing only 2.5 per cent of all claims, it seems reasonable to allow such claims to be made in a scheme with a \$1.5 billion surplus.

Suitable employment is defined in division 2, section 32A of the Act. My bill proposes to omit the definition of suitable employment in the current legislation and insert a new definition. The new definition is in eight parts. I will not go through each part at length; those interested should refer to the bill. But I will summarise what they do. The changes to the definition of "suitable employment" simply means that a job deemed suitable must have three qualities: it has to exist; the type of work has to be available; and the work has to be available within a reasonable proximity to the family home. I am proposing those three changes. Importantly, under the current Act there is no requirement for the proposed suitable employment job to actually exist, or be available, or to be anywhere near a person's home. Under the current Act, a job could be literally thousands of kilometres away and yet still deemed "suitable employment". That is inherently unfair and unjustifiable. In fact, it borders on insane. We can fix that today with the definition of "suitable employment" in this bill.

The next element is weekly payments and medical expenses. My bill proposes that sections 39 and 59A be omitted from the current Act. Both sections deal with time limits imposed on the injured worker. It is absurd that a scheme designed to support a person with an injury would, at some senseless point in time, terminate that support despite the injury continuing to exist. It does not make any sense that a purpose-built scheme, funded and in surplus, would push people out of the scheme and onto the taxpayer-funded schemes of Centrelink and Medicare. Logic predicts that if a person is injured in the workplace, then the workplace should fund their recovery ongoing. It should not be funded by already stretched taxpayer funds through Centrelink and Medicare. Section 248 of the current Act is titled, "Dismissal within 6 months of injury an offence". My bill proposes to omit section 248 (1) and (2) and insert instead:

- (1) An employer of an injured worker who dismisses the worker is guilty of an offence if the worker is dismissed because the worker is not fit for employment as a result of the injury.

Maximum penalty: 100 penalty units.

Employers of all shapes and sizes are winding down the clock on injured workers by using current section 248 to terminate an employee after six months. My changes will make it crystal clear to all employers that termination is not an option. I emphasise that there are a host of good employers that do not use this clause for termination. The great bulk are caring, socially just employers. But we would be fools and ignorant of the facts if we were to suggest that no employers are terminating their injured workers simply to take care of the bottom line. Those employers are heartless and irresponsible and driven more by profit than humanity. Some of the companies that frequently use current section 248 are the country's biggest employers, including our duopoly supermarket chains and New South Wales government departments.

In conclusion, we cannot hide behind the 2012 changes or the 2015 amendments. We cannot hide behind an alleged deficit because the fund is in surplus. I repeat, those opposite cannot hide behind a party room decision. We all have a choice to make. However, collectively we can make the lives of the seriously injured workers better. We can do that by keeping them on the purpose-built and fully funded scheme, instead of throwing them to the last bastion of societies safety net—the taxpayer. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**SECURING NSW STEEL INDUSTRY BILL 2017**

**Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 14 September 2017.**

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (11:05):** On the last occasion I spoke in debate to the Securing NSW Steel Industry Bill 2017, I outlined the difficulties with this bill and hence my opposition to it. In the short time I have left, I will focus on the ways in which the New South Wales Government can encourage increased consumption of Australian steel and support the Australian steel industry. I will focus also on how we, as legislators, can progress the economy and the jobs derived from the delivery of vitally important steel. The New South Wales Government is committed to opening and freeing up the market to make sure that the Australian industry is kept competitive.

In Australia we rely upon free trade and internationally we are very competitive. Barriers such as duties and import restrictions continue to be reduced, but it is a double-edged sword. Some may consider free trade creates difficulties for the local industry. We object to the dumping of products here from overseas and we have rules against it. But Australia's success relies upon its international trade and open and free markets. The New South Wales Government must ensure a free market environment wherever possible, as well as doing all we can to increase consumption.

Those on this side of the House continue to look at mega projects, including \$73 billion of infrastructure funding to be spent over the next four years on government projects. Those projects will energise not only the government sector but also the whole economy. We have already seen great results in the production industry in this State coming off the back of that record investment in infrastructure—for example, the \$360 million investment in the Western Sydney Stadium. That is a classic example of increasing the size of the piece of pie, not reducing it, and encouraging the production and consumption of New South Wales steel. [*Extension of time*]

**Ms Prue Car:** I didn't know he felt that strong on the steel industry in Parramatta.

**Ms Anna Watson:** There is a lot of steel made in Parramatta.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** I acknowledge the interjections from the Opposition.

**Ms Prue Car:** I do not know that I have ever heard you talk about steel at Parramatta.

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

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** In fact, there is no steel manufactured at Parramatta, but I refer to Western Sydney as an example of this Government investing in mega projects using Australian steel. There is no better example than the WestConnex project. It was great to see the signing of contracts worth \$70 million to supply Australian steel to the WestConnex project. 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. The contracts with OneSteel and ARC (Arrium) will ensure that more than 400 Western Sydney steelmakers will now have job security thanks to WestConnex. It increases the slice of the pie and allows us to use more steel.

The New South Wales Government is now the largest purchaser of Australian steel in Australia. For WestConnex, some 18,000 tonnes of steel have been supplied already by the OneSteel Sydney Mill in Rooty Hill, just down the road from Parramatta, for the new M4 and M5 projects. OneSteel general manager Neil Gibson says that his workforce at various Sydney plants are elated by the news of these wonderful projects. I congratulate the New South Wales Government on taking proactive steps in holding a South Coast summit on construction in March 2017. Local suppliers, industry groups and unions were engaged by the New South Wales Government to consider a suite of reforms to steel procurement to improve safety standards, industry certification and transparency. From 1 October 2017, the New South Wales Government will require compliance with a new Australian Steel Standard.

The New South Wales Government will review the application of a broader economic benefit test in using Australian versus imported supplies to ensure fairness between local and international suppliers when considering value-for-money assessment. The New South Wales Government will publish digitally the amount of Australian steel used across key New South Wales projects to ensure transparency in government contracting. A dashboard is expected to be made public later this year and will be managed centrally by NSW Procurement. The New South Wales Government will review the need to ensure protection for fabricators who raise concerns about steel quality directly with government agencies.

I conclude by reiterating that this side of the House supports jobs and the procuring of Australian steel and we support the whole of the Australian steel industry. I am sure everybody in this place supports jobs in the steel industry and procuring Australian steel. However, the Opposition appears to support protectionism, the reduction of free trade and the decrease of competition. They are failed plans that would have a detrimental effect on the economy of New South Wales and the whole of Australia. On this side of the House we believe in taking a positive approach and ensuring Australia's success by supporting free trade. We believe in delivering these mega projects that underpin our economy and provide vital infrastructure for the future and create more jobs in the

process. We believe in keeping the standards high in the use of steel and in introducing any reforms to the industry that are necessary to combat issues that may arise. I oppose the bill.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (11:13):** I am delighted to speak in this debate to the Security NSW Steel Industry Bill 2017. This bill is a very simple one. It provides a mandate for Australian standards in our publicly funded works, it holds developers using taxpayers' funds accountable to our workers and it ensures the progress it makes is made clear and available to the public. On this side of the House we will not concede to the false and wild accusations and statements that have been made by those opposite. This bill is in no way a limit to our economic development or a threat to our State's growth, as the Government would have people believe.

The bill is a way of ensuring that there is one more thing that this Government cannot sell off to the highest bidder. This is a bill that puts workers, families and communities first, and it is a bill that our State needs. The bill finally prioritises the security and stability of our workers, the quality of our public infrastructure and the livelihoods of workers in the Illawarra. It is about time the workers of the Illawarra felt that they were being afforded the respect they deserve in this House. The member for Kiama should be very careful not to insult these workers any further. Our steelworkers have found his behaviour in this House to be both disgraceful and insulting and they have made their feelings well known. In fact, they have written to him directly. Arthur Rorris, the Secretary of South Coast Labour Council, wrote an open letter to the member for Kiama on behalf of his colleagues. That letter was published in the *Illawarra Mercury* on 20 February this year. In the letter these workers highlight the member for Kiama's silent agreement with the shameful comments made by one of his colleagues. Mr Rorris writes:

To suggest as he did that the crisis facing the steel industry is due to the laziness and lack of productivity in the workforce suggests that he must have access to some "alternative facts" to those that the BlueScope Steel CEO, the unions and the international steel industry leaders have been relying on. Or does the NSW Liberal Government really believe that the crisis of overproduction of steel and the international glut is just "fake news"?

He goes on to say:

You must appreciate our disappointment and anger that your Government can't protect jobs in the way that you are capable of protecting the interests of big business, banks and corporations.

In his letter, Arthur echoes the thoughts of many in our region. Our workers are at risk of being left behind. This Government simply does not prioritise the livelihoods of our workers, or, if it does, they come a distant second to the interests of big business and corporations. The member for Kiama should be ashamed; his embarrassing attempts to hide his own disregard for the workers in his region are not working, and they will not be echoed by anyone on this side of the House. This bill is truly a community-inspired bill that was—like our steel—made in the Illawarra. It represents the coming together of a range of interests and political parties to help secure the sustainability of steelmaking in the Illawarra. This bill is an opportunity to make history.

A mandate of at least 90 per cent use of Australian-made steel in publicly funded infrastructure projects has not been achieved in our nation's history, and it is overdue. I note that the concept of mandating the use of locally produced resources in publicly funded projects is not a new concept outside of Australia. There is an emerging trend internationally of the workers' rights and livelihoods being protected whilst simultaneously ensuring the production of quality infrastructure. I take this opportunity to thank my Illawarra colleagues the member for Keira and the member for Wollongong in joining me in the tireless fight for the steelworkers in our region. Those opposite have seen to it that our fight will be long and tough, but I can assure the House that we will ultimately prevail. It is with great pride and determination that I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (11:18):** I move:

That the question be now put.

I ask that the question be put that this bill be now read a second time. The bill has been debated now for a number of days. Many members on both sides of the House have made contributions.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....32  
Noes .....44  
Majority..... 12

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Greenwich, Mr A

Atalla, Mr E  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Harris, Mr D

Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Harrison, Ms J

## AYES

Haylen, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Parker, Mr J  
Smith, Ms T F  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Hornery, Ms S  
Leong, Ms J  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Piper, Mr G  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
Park, Mr R  
Scully, Mr P  
Washington, Ms K

## NOES

Anderson, Mr K  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Constance, Mr A  
Davies, Ms T  
Evans, Mr L  
Griffin, Mr J  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Aplin, Mr G  
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Coure, Mr M  
Dominello, Mr V  
Fraser, Mr A  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Maguire, Mr D  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Roberts, Mr A  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S  
Conolly, Mr K  
Crouch, Mr A  
Elliott, Mr D  
Goward, Ms P  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Petinos, Ms E  
Rowell, Mr J  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

## PAIRS

Dib, Mr J  
Doyle, Ms T  
Finn, Ms J  
Foley, Mr L  
Hoenig, Mr R

Barilaro, Mr J  
Brookes, Mr G  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Grant, Mr T  
Humphries, Mr K

**Motion negatived.**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (11:25):** This is a graphic display of how to shut down public debate on an issue that Labor is supposed to be passionate about. They were on their high horse a few minutes ago. The member for Shellharbour could not even deliver a full 10-minute speech on this bill. She finished after only five minutes and gave what can only be described as a lacklustre performance about ensuring that developers use Australian steel.

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

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** If the member had read the bill, she would have noted that it restricts government agencies, local governments and State-owned corporations, not independent developers. This is another classic example of the member for Shellharbour delivering only a five-minute speech and starting it incorrectly. She did say one thing that is true: this is a simple bill. It is simple in the many ways it damages the Australian steel industry. What a disgrace. We have now returned to debate on this disgusting farce of a bill—

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

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** The member for Shellharbour will probably spend more time interjecting than she did giving her speech. She ran out of puff after only five minutes and 30 seconds.

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

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** The unions had not put everything together in time for her to create a 10-minute speech. I note that the member for Keira has entered the Chamber. I am sure we will hear some lovely interjections from him as well. The Labor members have tried to gag debate on their own bill because they know that, even

though it is their second attempt at introducing this bill, it is a failure. Anything supported by The Greens in the other place is destined to failure. In this case Labor is backing them, which is a total disgrace. The greatest threat to the steel industry in Australia are those opposite.

The bill requires New South Wales government agencies, local government and State-owned corporations to act contrary to Australia's commitments under three trade agreements, thereby exposing the Australian steel industry to retaliatory actions in other markets. I will expand on that later. The bill will also increase the direct costs of New South Wales infrastructure projects by potentially increasing the cost of steel inputs by 20 per cent. It will also create a precedent for similar actions and cost increases in other supplies purchased by the New South Wales Government.

I welcome the Temporary Speaker, and member for Albury, to the chair. Many construction projects in his electorate are using steel from New South Wales industries, as are projects all around New South Wales under this Liberal-Nationals Government. Another part of this bill of great concern is that it will add indirect costs through additional red tape on suppliers and contractors and add complexity to the cost of management of infrastructure projects. This bill will also shield domestic steel suppliers from international competition, thereby reducing the efficiency of the industry. A week ago I was in this Chamber and I listened to the erudite speech from the member for Kiama—members opposite can google that if they want to find out what "erudite" means. It was a very detailed speech outlining those concerns.

[Interruption]

The member can look up the dictionary for "erudite". Actually, he probably knows the meaning of "erudite" so that is okay, but he might want to share it with some of his friends. I am also obviously proud that this Government introduced the \$60 million payroll tax deferral for BlueScope Steel. I congratulate both the member for Kiama and the Minister for Finance and Services on hosting the steel procurement forum on 20 March this year. The Government has moved rapidly to deal with steel procurement across New South Wales. I note the interjections from the member for Swansea. Hopefully her contribution might last longer than the passionate drivel of the member for Shellharbour.

To assist the industry in readiness for and compliance with the new standard, the Government has committed \$50,000 to the Australian Steel Industry Institute on a successful independent accreditation of its steel standards and compliance. The new government infrastructure tenders published after 1 October 2017 will have to comply with those new standards. The New South Wales Government will spend around \$70 billion per year on infrastructure projects over the next four years. I note the contributions last week from the member for Drummoyne and the fantastic contribution from the member for Parramatta. The member for Parramatta succinctly highlighted the contribution that the New South Wales Government is making to the steel industry across New South Wales with that \$70 billion investment, including across Parramatta with infrastructure projects such as the construction of stadiums.

Even yesterday in question time the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport and member for Penrith outlined the fantastic investment in his electorate of the NorthConnex and the M4 and M5, which demonstrates that the Government is putting its money where its mouth is and supporting the steel industry in New South Wales. Also during question time yesterday he outlined that 19,000 kilometres of steel would be used in the construction of WestConnex. This is one example from so many across New South Wales of road and infrastructure projects being delivered using steel from the two suppliers in New South Wales.

Most government projects provide job security for an industry that has had its ups and downs, but it has a bright future. The New South Wales Government is now the single largest procurer of steel in the nation, unlike those opposite who, after 16 years of delivering basically no infrastructure, had no desire to support the local steel industry and never did anything about introducing a bill like this, which poses a risk to the steel industry. Those opposite failed to deliver projects. I congratulate the Minister for Finance, Services and Property, Victor Dominello, and the Parliamentary Secretary on working collectively with the steel industry. I congratulate also people in the steel industry such as the chief executive of BlueScope Steel, who said this is the sort of investment and guidance that will secure jobs for the industry. BlueScope Steel's Chief Executive, Paul O'Malley, had previously rejected the notion of mandatory steel quotas proposed by The Greens and the alliance.

This is the steel industry itself saying that this bill has no credibility and no credence. These are the people who are providing the steel and the jobs for the people of New South Wales; these industry leaders do not support the bill and they would know best. We can be guided by their contributions. The bill potentially puts at risk free trade agreements. A phenomenal amount, some 900,000 tonnes of steel, is being exported from this country to the United States. This bill would put at risk those potential free trade agreements.



**Mr Paul Scully:** Donald Trump tried to. Donald Trump wanted to put tariffs on us.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** If you are happy for those people to lose those jobs because you are prepared to risk a free trade agreement, then shame on you. You do not stand by those jobs for those industries. You are putting them at risk. Opposition members know that BlueScope exports—

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

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** Does the Opposition want to risk 900,000 tonnes of steel? As I said before, the record investment—

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

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I seek an extension of time.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** This is a good example of Labor not wanting to hear people speak. They will not grant me an extension of time. I ask that the question be put.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The question is that the member's time be extended.

**The House divided.**

*[In division]*

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member for Keira will remove himself from the House. The bar was down; he lifted the bar and pushed a staffer aside. That is disorderly behaviour. The Speaker commented yesterday on the treatment of staff. I hope this was not a repeat of such behaviour.

Ayes .....49

Noes .....28

Majority.....21

#### AYES

Anderson, Mr K  
Conolly, Mr K  
Crouch, Mr A  
Elliott, Mr D  
George, Mr T  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Maguire, Mr D  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Piper, Mr G  
Rowell, Mr J  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S  
Constance, Mr A  
Davies, Ms T  
Evans, Mr L  
Goward, Ms P  
Griffin, Mr J  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
Marshall, Mr A  
Parker, Mr J  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Coure, Mr M  
Dominello, Mr V  
Fraser, Mr A  
Grant, Mr T  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Leong, Ms J  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Petinos, Ms E  
Roberts, Mr A  
Smith, Ms T F  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

#### NOES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Donato, Mr P  
Haylen, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C

Atalla, Mr E  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Harris, Mr D  
Hornery, Ms S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
Scully, Mr P

Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Tesch, Ms L

## NOES

Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Washington, Ms K

Watson, Ms A (teller)

## PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Brookes, Mr G  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Humphries, Mr K

Dib, Mr J  
Doyle, Ms T  
Finn, Ms J  
Foley, Mr L  
Hoenig, Mr R

**Motion agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** I welcome to the gallery Marisa Clarke, the wife of the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, and friends of the Filipino communities.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I note that I had only 30 seconds left on the clock prior to the division, but those opposite wished to gag me. I now have an extra four minutes and 30 seconds. That is almost as long as the member for Shellharbour spoke on the bill. For those present in the gallery, this is what happens when those opposite do not want to hear the truth about investment in New South Wales. Members opposite do not support the bill. It is a simple bill. This extra time gives me the chance to reiterate what I said earlier. Yesterday in question time the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport, and member for Penrith, announced that more than 50,000 tonnes of steel is being produced and used on WestConnex. The member for Oxley, and Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, is in the Chamber. She is thrilled to see billions of dollars worth of road projects using Australian steel.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** There are 12,000 road projects and more than half a million tonnes.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I acknowledge that interjection and thank the Minister. This is a wonderful opportunity to outline the projects benefiting from New South Wales steel. The reality is that the New South Wales Government is the single biggest procurer of Australian steel in this country. That is a fact that the Opposition attempts to ignore with this simplistic bill. Yesterday the member for Penrith informed the House that more than 50,000 tonnes of steel is being used in WestConnex. That is 19,000 kilometres of steel bars. It is enough steel to reach from Sydney to London. This project has ensured the jobs of the employees of OneSteel Sydney Mill based in Rooty Hill and Arrium Steel. Members should take note of the Minister's words. The general manager of OneSteel, Neil Gibson, stated:

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.

They will have their jobs protected by projects such as WestConnex. Labor has opposed every major road infrastructure project. The Government has sought to ensure that Australian steel is used in a range of projects. I was pleased to hear the detail of the investment announced by the Premier and Deputy Premier with regard to the water pipeline. This major agricultural investment potentially involves thousands of tonnes of steel. I commend the Premier and Deputy Premier. The Murray River to Broken Hill pipeline is a \$500 million water infrastructure project that is 270 kilometres in length. Hopefully the member for Wyong does not have an investment property out there.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of Order: My point of order is Standing Order 73. I have no investment properties in that part of the world. I said my family lives out that way. I ask the member to get his facts right.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member for Wyong will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I reiterate that the Deputy Premier and Premier announced the \$500 million project, which could contribute 40,000 tonnes of BlueScope Steel. That will create potentially 19,000 direct and indirect jobs. The members opposite have opposed a number of projects. They are the biggest threat to steel procurement and usage in this country. The Government rejects the bill.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:49):** I am delighted to contribute to debate on the Securing NSW Steel Industry Bill 2017. I acknowledge the member for Keira, the member for Shellharbour and the member for Wollongong for leading the fight for the steelworkers of the Illawarra. Yet again Labor members in this place are standing up for the worker. They are putting measures in place to drive the local economy and create local jobs. Let us note the facts. The steel industry has existed in the Illawarra for decades; without it, there is no Wollongong. The steel industry has provided for its heartland economy and delivered outcomes. My late Uncle Max was a proud steelworker from Barrack Heights and he worked in the industry for the majority of his life. I have experienced firsthand the economic benefits of this industry. We know that job security provides certainty and job security comes from certainty in the marketplace. If government projects use the local steel industry, it will provide jobs for local people. But the benefits are statewide.

I am humbled and honoured to be the member for Campbelltown in the heart of the Macarthur region. The neighbouring Illawarra region provides the necessary synergy to those local economies. Not too long ago, Government members had an opportunity to vote on this bill and they voted against it. The member for Kiama voted against the bill, which is designed ultimately for the steel industry and to help drive the local economy for his constituents. Members opposite have taken a cloak-and-dagger approach to considering this bill. It says more about their politics and representations. Their approach is motivated by politics rather than providing measures and solutions to benefit jobs in the local economy.

Using 90 per cent of local steel would be an enormous feat. Campbelltown Hospital in my electorate has received upgrades over many years which were funded by the former Labor Government and also this Government. If every piece of steel in that hospital were manufactured in the Illawarra, it would ensure the security of local jobs. I am privileged to represent constituents who work in the steel industry in the Illawarra. I note the member for Terrigal left the Chamber after his contribution to this debate. We heard only his drivel and innuendo about free speech. He attacked Opposition members because they have family who live in a regional area. I have family members who live in regional areas and I am sure all members of this place have family members who live in regional areas. It is telling when members opposite have nothing else to talk about other than where a member of Parliament or their family lives. People in our communities become frustrated when our representations do not coincide with the facts. We should be motivated to create local jobs for local people and invest in a growing economy that provides for the benefit of us all. I draw the attention of the House to part 3 section 10 (1):

- (1) The NSW Steel Industry Advocate has the following functions:
  - (a) to monitor compliance with the requirements of this Act,
  - (b) to monitor whether steel (other than excluded steel) required by this Act to be used in the construction of relevant public works is manufactured to appropriate Australian Standards ...

I refer to part 3 section 10 of the bill and its paragraphs and subparagraphs that specifically outline in great detail how this can happen. My point is more broad. The bill could be enacted today to protect the workers in an industry that is in the heartland of the Illawarra and in other areas in our State for generations. I urge members opposite to reconsider their positions. I note the member for Heathcote would also have many constituents who currently work or who have worked in the Illawarra steel industry. I reiterate the comments made by the member for Cessnock. It comes down to binding votes. Yes, the Labor Party binds on votes, excluding conscience votes. Members opposite are critical of the Labor Opposition and the Labor Party's binding vote position, but I note members opposite also bind votes in their parties. The Nationals have expressed that from time to time they do not vote with their Coalition partner.

**Mr Lee Evans:** Point of order: I ask that the member for Campbelltown return to the leave of the bill, which is that 90 per cent of Illawarra steel be used in New South Wales. The steel he is talking about may or may not be manufactured in the Illawarra.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** I uphold the point of order. The member for Campbelltown will restrict his comments to the leave of the bill and minor ancillary matters.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** It is 90 per cent of steel, so the member for Heathcote is 100 per cent wrong again. This bill will secure local jobs for workers in the Illawarra and throughout New South Wales. It will also drive our economy. It makes sense to support our local economy. I commend my Labor colleagues in the Illawarra for introducing this bill to the House, which supports not only their constituents but also the economy of New South Wales. One can only ponder where the member for Kiama has been during this debate; we note his absence.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:57):** I make a contribution to the Securing NSW Steel Industry Bill 2017. I note at the outset that this bill was not introduced during 16 years of Labor Government. It is not because the Labor Government ran out of time; it is because it would never introduce such a bill. It is a dumb bill. We do not legislate for poor outcomes for the people of New South Wales. Opposition members have

introduced such a bill because they want to run a stunt. They know there is no risk of the bill being passed or of their stupidity causing damage to the economy of New South Wales.

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

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** Australian steel is being used in infrastructure projects in New South Wales. The majority of the M4 widening is sourcing Australian steel for its girders. The Barangaroo ferry hub used 800 tonnes of Australian steel. The Wynyard Walk used approximately 1,500 tonnes of steel sourced from Arrium. The majority of steel for the Foxground and Berry bypass was sourced in Australia. The majority of steel for the Gerringong upgrade of the Princes Highway was sourced in Australia.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Only 58 per cent.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** I am happy with that but I will still go through this list. The Sydney Metro Northwest skytrain project used more than 90 per cent of steel—roughly 550 tonnes of structural steel was sourced in Australia. The Sydney Metro Northwest project used 100 per cent of the steel—roughly 7,000 tonnes of the steel used to reinforce tunnels was sourced in Australia.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! I remind the member for Shellharbour that she is already on one call to order.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** Which of those projects would have been built if Labor had been in office? Would steel have been used in any of those projects if Labor had been in office? Not one project would have been delivered and, as a result, Australian steel would not have been used. Labor would not have delivered any of those projects. Infrastructure has to be built before Australian steel can be used. Labor does not build infrastructure; it hates infrastructure and will not build a single project. Over the past six years Labor has not supported any of this Government's proposed infrastructure projects. It opposed the projects and their funding sources.

This is simply a stunt. Opposition members do not want to build any projects using Australian steel. Opposition members hate projects and love cancelling them. They have not seen an infrastructure project that they do not want to cancel. They stir up opposition to this Government's projects but they attend the opening of every project, even though they opposed them and their funding sources every step of the way. They do not support the creation of jobs either through legislation or through party policies. If they ever gain control of the Government benches no infrastructure projects will be built.

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

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** What can we do about jobs in New South Wales? The facts speak for themselves. Under this Government thousands of jobs will be created in this State as a result of infrastructure projects—from the Pacific Highway in the north—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: The member should return to the leave of the bill, which refers to 90 per cent of steel being made in the Illawarra.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member for Riverstone has been relevant to the bill. He has been talking about steel and construction. The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** For the benefit of the member for Swansea, steel is being used in the Pacific Highway construction project.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** There is no point of order. The member for Riverstone has been talking about steel and its uses.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** Infrastructure projects are being built all over this State. From one end of New South Wales to the other hospitals are being built and upgraded with steel that has been sourced in Australia. This Government is spending money on infrastructure—projects that Labor promised for years but did nothing about.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Point of order: Earlier the member for Campbelltown was brought back to the leave of the bill but the member for Riverstone was not required to return to the leave of the bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member for Riverstone is talking about infrastructure and the uses of steel. The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat. The member for Campbelltown was talking about people's abodes.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** The overview of the bill refers to infrastructure constructed by or on behalf of public authorities in Australia. As this Government is using steel in infrastructure projects in Australia I will refer to some of the projects that are using that steel. From one end of the State to the other hospitals are being built, upgraded, expanded and improved using Australian steel. Jobs are being created not only in the Illawarra but also across New South Wales. This Government is managing its finances by recycling assets. It has raised the funds that are required to provide necessary infrastructure for the citizens of New South Wales.

That is what this Government is about. It is not about meeting the needs of unions that want to control the way in which business is done in this State. It is not about featherbedding the cost of public infrastructure projects by up to 20 per cent and limiting the use of Australian steel. If public infrastructure projects are too expensive not many of them would be delivered. Which electorates will miss out on new schools, improved hospitals or upgraded roads and bridges if infrastructure projects are more expensive? Which Opposition members would be willing to miss out on infrastructure projects if this bill becomes law? I do not think the member for Orange would be willing to miss out and I do not think any Labor Party members would agree to projects being taken away from their electorates because infrastructure projects are more expensive.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: The member, who seems to be distracted, should be brought back to the leave of the bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member for Riverstone is reacting to numerous interjections. I will place the member for Swansea on a call to order if she interrupts again.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** I am talking about infrastructure projects which are within the leave of the bill. The overview of the bill refers to infrastructure constructed by or on behalf of public authorities in Australia. When Opposition members return to their electorates I am sure they would not want to tell their constituents that they will be missing out on new schools because of an increase in the cost of steel. They would not be too popular. That is the effect of this kind of policy. When faced with the responsibility of using taxpayers money to best effect Opposition members would never do this.

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

**Debate interrupted.**

### *Motions*

#### **BY-ELECTION PREFERENCES**

**Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (12:05):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has revealed its plan to support the Australia First Party by putting The Nationals last.
- (2) Considers that the Australia First Party has endorsed a racist and extremist candidate for the seat of Cootamundra.
- (3) Calls on NSW Labor and the NSW Greens to publicly declare their intention to not preference the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party due to its support of the Australia First Party.

All members would be aware that candidates are elected on preferences. If a party nominates a candidate who has been convicted and sentenced to 3½ years jail, and that candidate is a known racist and Nazi sympathiser, no-one in this Parliament should preference that candidate. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition said that he would put such a candidate last, knowing full well that Labor preferences would be going to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and eventually to any candidate who outpolls the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party.

The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has a reputation for turning up on any issue, putting up its hand and saying it is willing to help, but it disappears when that issue becomes a problem in the community. When the public boat ramp was an issue in Coffs Harbour, Bob Brown from The Greens turned up and banged the drum. Not long after that the name of the Shooters Party was changed to the Shooters and Fishers Party. Bob Brown has not been back to Coffs Harbour to address the issue. When the gun clubs in Coffs Harbour seek support from the Government to improve their ranges, Bob Brown will be there asking to hand out the trophies but he will not make representations to the Government on behalf of the gun clubs. Members of The Nationals support shooters in their electorates. The member for Orange might laugh but he was elected with 50 votes over and above The Nationals on a two-party preferred basis.

**Mr Philip Donato:** A 30 per cent swing, so cop that.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER:** He got 100 votes from The Greens, but what do The Greens say about the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party? If the member for Orange is true to his electorate why is he doing preference

deals with The Greens, which is obviously what he did to gain entry to this place. Mr Saleam, who is standing in Cootamundra, is not only a known criminal; I have photos that I am happy to make available showing him wearing a Nazi emblem on an armband in public.

**Mr Jamie Parker:** He's a total nut case.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER:** That is exactly right. I would therefore ask The Greens to support the motion. This man has stood for a party that puts out posters saying things such as "Asians out! Or racial war!" His political party is part and parcel of the Australian Nationalist Movement. The thing that annoys or disappoints me most is that the Labor Party, The Greens and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party see by-elections as an opportunity to bang the drum to make a lot of noise but provide nothing.

**Mr Jamie Parker:** How about choice for voters? We provide a choice.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER:** The Greens want a choice for voters. Are they going to preference the Australia First Party down the line?

**Mr Jamie Parker:** No.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER:** Their interjections are clearly indicating that. This is nothing more than a drum-banging exercise on behalf of the Labor Party, The Greens and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party to say, "Look at us. We'll give you an alternative." The reality is that they have to be in government to get things done. The Nationals and the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government will continue to deliver for the people of Cootamundra and Murray. The challenge today for members opposite is to stand up and clearly state that they will issue a "vote 1" card to tell people to vote for the people they want elected.

I hear the member for Orange laughing again. That is because he got in with 100 Green preferences under his belt whilst all his leaders in the other place do is belt up The Greens day in and day out. His party and the Labor Party are paying lip-service to the people of regional New South Wales. The Nationals, in coalition with the Liberal Party, have delivered in spades for not only my electorate but also Cootamundra, Murray and every other regional electorate that we represent. The Government is also delivering for Wagga Wagga and Albury, which are held by Liberal Party members. The reality is that this Government has delivered and will continue to deliver. Members opposite are laughing again. Those city-based Greens never get their feet dirty in regional electorates unless it is to protest. I am urging members opposite to stand up and to tell us all that they will run a "vote 1" campaign and put the Australia First Party last.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:12):** Yesterday afternoon I was a little surprised by the latest stunt by the member for Coffs Harbour representing The Nationals that called on the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party to renounce a preference deal with the Australia First Party. That was the first I or anyone in my party had heard of it. Our candidate Matthew Stadtmiller, who was born and bred in the Cootamundra and Harden area, did not even know an Australia First Party candidate was running. I question how the member for Coffs Harbour has information that the Australia First Party is running. Perhaps he has been in contact with this lunatic. I guess in The Nationals' delusional world if they say so it must be so. I am reliably informed by party headquarters that no-one from our party has made contact with Jim Saleam.

**Mr John Barilaro:** So will you rule it out?

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** Just wait. I am equally informed that several members of The Nationals and senior staffers have had contact with Mr Saleam. It is The Nationals who should rule out a preference deal. When The Nationals are desperate and on the nose they resort to the only thing they know, which is lies and deceit whilst covering up their own faults and inadequacies. Yesterday's second stunt was to say that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party do not support the river red gum forests being returned to forestry. I have a copy of a notice of motion given by my upper House colleague Mr Robert Brown on 27 May 2015 entitled "National Parks Estate (Riverina Red Gum Reservations) Repeal Bill 2015". I can table a copy of that notice of motion. I put this to all members of The Nationals opposite: If they think that we do not support the river red gum forests they can put their money with their mouths are and support our bill. They have the numbers to get the bill prioritised. They should stand up to their masters in the Liberal Party.

**Mr John Barilaro:** Are you preferencing Jim Saleam?

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** Just wait; I will get to it. The Nationals should stand up for the people who elected them. This is embarrassing; I have not been in this place even 12 months. Members opposite wonder why people in regional and rural New South Wales have had a gutful of them. For the record, we will not be preferencing Jim Saleam. I say bring on the by-elections. Regional New South Wales deserves better.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** So you are not putting us last?

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

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** I have just said that we will not be preferencing Jim Saleam. In his speech the member for Coffs Harbour decided to talk about The Nationals sticking up for firearms owners. What a disgraceful comment and embarrassment. The Nationals supported the banning of the Adler shotgun and they supported the ammo bill, both of which go against law-abiding firearms owners. Deep down they know it because they have farmers and shooters in their electorates who are fed up with them. They should not come into this place and say that they will stick up for law-abiding firearms owners. Regional New South Wales deserves better.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (12:17):** I am pleased to support the motion moved by the member for Coffs Harbour. It was interesting to hear the member for Orange say that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party candidate in Cootamundra did not know that the Australia First Party was running. He suggested that there must be some sort of conspiracy and it is all coming from The Nationals. An article on the Australia First Party website reads:

In the wake of Katrina Hodgkinson selfishly abandoning rural Australians of The Riverina, Australia First Party's national president, Dr Jim Saleam, has felt compelled to throw his hat into the by-election ring.

**Mr John Barilaro:** When was that?

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN:** It is dated 30 August. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party candidate clearly has his finger on the pulse much more so than any other member of that party. On his Facebook page he thanked firearms owners for their support.

**Mr Philip Donato:** Point of order: According to standing orders, the use of props is not allowed. I ask that the member for Upper Hunter be directed to cease using them.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Upper Hunter is reading from a document.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN:** The member for Orange has now said that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party will not preference the Australia First Party. Is that correct?

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order—

**Mr John Barilaro:** It is just wasting time. They have a protection racket.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** No. It is my duty under the House rules.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** What is the point of order?

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** The member is not speaking through the Chair.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! I uphold the point of order. The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN:** Mr Temporary Speaker, if they were serious about the rules of this House there would not be as many Opposition members removed from the Chamber in question time each day.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** That would be called fairness.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN:** Fairness? When are the Labor Party, Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and The Greens going to state categorically that they are not going to preference in any way, shape or form the Australia First Party in Cootamundra or anywhere else? When will they state that they will only distribute how-to-vote cards that say, "vote 1"? That is what The Nationals do. People should be allowed to make their choice. On our how-to-vote cards we will put, "vote 1". Will the member for Orange and the member for Swansea do the same thing?

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

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN:** If those opposite do not do that in Cootamundra, by default they are extending their support, subtly or otherwise, of the Australia First Party and its racist, bigoted, criminal candidate in Cootamundra. Those opposite should be ashamed of themselves.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (12:21):** This motion is a deflection from important matters in this State. Once again the Government has moved a Thursday morning motion to stop other members from moving motions pertinent to their electorates. This is all about self-interest. In this State we have an optional preferential voting system.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! The Deputy Premier will come to order.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition said that we will not preference the Australia First Party and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has said that it will not preference the Australia First Party. The Government is yet again espousing falsehoods. Yesterday in *The Young Witness*, under the title "Nazi rumours denied by candidate—"I'm an Australian Nationalist", an article stated:

The Shooters Upper House MLC Robert Borsak said whilst no final decision had been made on who would get their preferences he had an "expectation that we will be preferencing Dr Saleam behind the Nationals".

This morning those opposite have wasted the time of the House; they only needed to refer to *The Young Witness*. This motion is about the Government's electoral survival. It was punished in the Orange by-election and it is desperate for everyone to vote for only one candidate. But I can assure Government members that anyone who knows how The Nationals treat regional areas will not do that. As I said, in this State we have an optional preferential voting system. We will either put Dr Saleam last or not give him any preference at all. At the last election a character by the name of Alex Norwick contested the Wyong electorate for the Australia First Party. I made sure that he was last; I preferenced Liberals before I preferenced him.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! The member for Wyong will be heard in silence. The Deputy Premier will come to order.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** That is what the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers said they will do. We will be holding for them. Those opposite need to get that through their heads. It is disgraceful that they have wasted the time of this House this morning debating this motion when there are far more important issues to be discussed. However, they will not rule out whether they have been registered to support One Nation. The Nationals should be particularly worried about that because in Western Australia the Liberal Party preferenced One Nation over The Nationals. Those opposite should be ruling that out. The National Party should be asking whether in three-cornered contests—which I believe are now open across the State—the Liberal Party will preference One Nation before The Nationals. That is the real question. They should be worried about that and not about what the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is doing.

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** Point of order: I ask that the member for Wyong return to the leave of the motion. One Nation is not mentioned in this motion.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** The motion is about preferences.

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** What happens in Western Australia has nothing to do with what happens in Cootamundra.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! The member for Wyong is talking in general terms about preferences.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:25):** I contribute to debate on the motion moved by the member for Coffs Harbour. Nothing could be more important to people in the Murray electorate and to people in Cootamundra than this motion. It is beyond belief that the member for Wyong said this motion was not important to constituents in that electorate. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party advertisement says that they are going to put The Nationals last, so by default they are preferencing the Australia First Party. We have all heard about the horrendous Australia First Party candidate that is contesting Cootamundra. At first the member for Orange said that there was no such candidate and that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party knew nothing about it. The member for Upper Hunter then pointed out that it had been advertised that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party would be doing just that. The member for Orange made a mistake, but that is the sort of thing that he and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party do all the time.

On 14 September the member for Orange asked a question of the Minister for Health about the ambulance station at Molong. He asked when it will be delivered. Wakey-wakey, the development application has been submitted and approved; it is all happening. He did not do his homework. He only had to refer to the Department of Health website. Instead, he made a fool of himself asking that question. Signing up to Gonski is one of the most important things this Government has done in the past six years and the greatest beneficiaries of that will be the people of regional New South Wales. Guess what? There was no-one from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party at the table when we discussed it. When we signed up to the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS], one of the greatest things ever to have happened in this State for people with a disability, not once was the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party at the table. When we decided that 65 per cent of the Roads budget would be spent on regional roads no-one from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party was at the table.

All those great decisions have been made by the Liberals and Nationals in government. No-one from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has been there. Let us take a moment to think about that. My wife and I both have a firearms licence. We are both members of the Wingham Rifle Club. It is important to be able to shoot at targets and to eradicate feral animals, but I would never endorse hunting and shooting innocent elephants. That is



a disgrace. That is what the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party stands for. Hang on, it gets worse. Look at this gallery of dead animals hung as trophies, as if it is something of which to be proud. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party are not talking about foxes, rabbits and things like that; they are talking about exotic exhibits.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: It is improper for members to use items in the House that cannot be recorded in *Hansard*.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! I uphold the point of order, although the member for Myall Lakes was showing it to himself rather than displaying it to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** People have to understand that the hunters, fishers and shooters party are not in the room; they do not get a chance. They are spear chuckers, on the outside; they do not get a say in what happens in this State. It is important for the people of Cootamundra and Murray to understand that that party stands for nothing except political expediency.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:29):** I address this issue on behalf of The Greens. I do not want to get involved in the dispute between The Nationals and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party but I do want to address one paragraph in the motion. The Inner West knows this character Jim Saleam very well. He resides at Tempe. He has had a shot at Blue Mountains council and Marrickville council. He is a convicted criminal, convicted not only for property offences and fraud but also for organising a shotgun attack in 1989 on an African National Congress representative. This man is abhorrent and his values are those of fascism and neo-Nazism. We see his unbelievably destructive agenda played out in this so-called political party the Australia First Party.

I acknowledge that the motion considers the Australia First Party to be racist and extremist. Although racism is being used as a political tool here, it is an important issue. Racism should not only be discussed in Parliament when a motion is raised to kick the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. It is an important issue that should be discussed generally for the benefit of our community. I point out that the attraction for some people to these extreme right-wing ultra-nationalists is real. I am not here to give advice to The Nationals; they can look after themselves. But it is important that they do not move to the right in their response. The way forward is to work with our local communities, to give the community the services they need, and to stand up and fight for our local electorates. We should not contend a flirtation with ultra right-wing policies.

We should all stand against the position of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party on gun ownership and the watering down of the important Howard Federal laws on gun ownership, as a result of which we have seen a reduction in crime involving the use of guns. We should recognise and protect those laws. The Nationals are obviously using this motion as a political stunt to kick the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. Of course we will not preference those extremist racists, but it should be recognised that the issues they raise may have some resonance in our community—even though the highest vote for this character has been around 1 per cent—and we should stand against them. This motion, rather than having a shot at the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, should be amended to note that the Parliament unanimously condemns the Australia First Party.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (12:32):** In reply: I thank the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Balmain for their contributions, and I acknowledge the contributions of the member for Orange and the member for Wyong. I remind the member for Orange and the member for Wyong of the old adage, "The louder you speak the weaker your argument". The motion relates to a matter of great importance to the Parliament, as the member for Balmain said. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party's candidate in Cootamundra has put out an advertisement that reads:

The Nationals are out of time.

Too many broken promises, too many lies, not enough action.

Put the Nationals last.

If people put The Nationals last it means that preferences will go to the Australia First Party, to this man who has been so accurately described by the member for Balmain as a convicted criminal and a neo-Nazi. Anyone who puts out an advertisement like that is suggesting to the people of the Cootamundra and Murray electorates that the Australia First Party should be preferenced before The Nationals. The member for Balmain says this is a stunt. It is not a stunt; it is a reaction to a piece of political advertising by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I gather from conversations between the Deputy Premier and the member for Orange during this debate that the member for Orange did not know of the advertisement.

I suggest that the member for Orange talk to his candidate in Cootamundra and stop the political stunts. As was said earlier today, the member loves turning up, cutting ribbons and claiming credit for projects—such as the hospital car park and the ambulance station—that were in place prior to his being elected. He asked a question in this House that I have no doubt was formulated for him by the member for Maroubra. The member for Maroubra probably said to him, "Get up and ask this question. You'll kick a goal." The member for Orange should

double-check what he is given or he will end up with egg on his face every time. He has ended up with egg on his face today by not condemning his own candidate in Cootamundra and his own party for putting out that ad.

**Mr Philip Donato:** We didn't put it out. It's not an ad.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER:** It says here it is an ad by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers. It says Matthew Stadtmiller. Is he your candidate?

**Mr Philip Donato:** Look at who put up the poster.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER:** He has endorsed and circulated the ad to members and supporters of your party.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: Members should not argue across the Chamber and they should direct their comments through the Chair.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! The member for Coffs Harbour will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER:** I was amused to see the member for Swansea defend the member for Orange, and now the member for Wyong is defending the member for Orange. If he needs their defence, he is sitting on the wrong side of the House. Members on the other side of the House spoke about the lack of attention shown to regional electorates by The Nationals. We have never seen so much money spent in my electorate and on the North Coast as has been spent in the past seven years. We did not see any money for 16 years under Labor. Our party defends regional and rural New South Wales and we intend to keep delivering. I advise the member for Orange to counsel his candidate in Cootamundra—and in Murray, if his party has a candidate there—to not run ads like that.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....45

Noes .....34

Majority.....11

#### AYES

Anderson, Mr K  
Barilaro, Mr J  
Constance, Mr A  
Dominello, Mr V  
Fraser, Mr A  
Grant, Mr T  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Petinos, Ms E  
Rowell, Mr J  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

Aplin, Mr G  
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Coure, Mr M  
Elliott, Mr D  
George, Mr T  
Griffin, Mr J  
Humphries, Mr K  
Lee, Dr G  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S  
Conolly, Mr K  
Davies, Ms T  
Evans, Mr L  
Goward, Ms P  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Maguire, Mr D  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Roberts, Mr A  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

#### NOES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Donato, Mr P  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
Park, Mr R

Atalla, Mr E  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Foley, Mr L  
Haylen, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Parker, Mr J

Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Harris, Mr D  
Hornery, Ms S  
Leong, Ms J  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Piper, Mr G

## NOES

Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Smith, Ms T F  
Washington, Ms K

Tesch, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

## PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G  
Brookes, Mr G  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Henskens, Mr A

Dib, Mr J  
Doyle, Ms T  
Finn, Ms J  
Hoenig, Mr R

**Motion agreed to.**

**NATIONAL GARDENING WEEK**

**Debate resumed from 14 September 2017.**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (12:44):** It is a pleasure to complete my contribution to what could be one of the most important debates that has ever been conducted in this Chamber; that is, on gardening competitions. I commend the member for Myall Lakes for bringing this important motion to the House. I hear members of the Opposition scoffing, but the people of New South Wales love their gardens. That is no more apparent than in my electorate, the beautiful Hills Shire Council area, which has been known around the world for more than half a century, since the inauguration of the Orange Blossom Festival, as the Garden Shire.

The Hills shire is currently celebrating the wonderful Orange Blossom Festival, which I took part in only two weeks ago at Kenthurst Park. This beautiful park in Kenthurst is maintained and preserved by Kenthurst Rotary, a fabulous service club that does so much for our community. It will be my great pleasure to attend tomorrow night the prestigious Hills Gardening Competition Awards, which are being held in my electorate of Castle Hill in the iconic Harvey Lower Pavilion. The competition is run by the Hills Kellyville Rotary Club, which is a great institution and service club. I look forward to attending the awards and I acknowledge the extraordinary gardens across our shire and my electorate.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:46):** In reply: I thank the members who have made a contribution to this debate, in particular, the Minister and member for Castle Hill. When I think of Castle Hill, I think of its many beautiful gardens and parks. One does not normally associate Sydney with beauty, but Castle Hill is a beautiful place and has a fantastic local member. The community of Castle Hill is lucky to be represented by such a strong local member; he is a local champion. The member for Gosford, who has a green thumb and enjoys gardening, told me that for most of her working life every Monday she has brought flowers to her workplace to brighten and beautify it and make it a more pleasant place. That would be appreciated by George Hoad, who started National Gardening Week, which is held in October.

As I did last year, I challenge all members to join with their local communities and gardening clubs to encourage people in their electorates throughout New South Wales to recognise and to get involved in National Gardening Week. Gardening is a wonderful pastime and provides a huge boost to our economy. Many people rely on employment in the horticultural and gardening sector. People enjoy gardening at home and through gardening clubs. It is a healthy hobby and a way to connect with other people. Gardening gets people outside and doing things, and people participating in gardening clubs and competitions avoid social isolation. Everybody, including the Hansard reporters, know that my electorate of Myall Lakes is internationally renowned as Australia's water playground. It has more State and national parks than just about any other electorate, and the gardens are an important part of the region.

Parks and gardens are a very important part of our community. Myall Lakes has a natural beauty. Members may not be aware that Myall Lakes is the oldest electorate in New South Wales and that it has the largest number of people on the aged pension. The electorate also has a large number of people with disability. Able-bodied people and those not so able can get out and enjoy the garden. People can take the "dis" out of disability by concentrating on their abilities in the garden; they can join garden clubs, meet other people and enjoy life, and in doing so contribute to the economy. Many stores sell gardening supplies such as compost, flowers and plants. When people engage with those selling gardening products they help themselves while also generating

employment, which is extremely important to my electorate. I conclude by congratulating George Hoad and the Myall Lakes Gardening Club. I commend the motion to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I thank the member for Myall Lakes for moving the motion. There are many in my electorate of Terrigal who have a green thumb and they, too, love to take part in National Gardening Week. The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

**FAIRFIELD LOCAL AREA COMMAND MULTICULTURAL LIAISON OFFICERS**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:51):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Fairfield Local Area Command [LAC] for bringing the "Coffee with a Cop" initiative to New South Wales.
- (2) Commends the Fairfield LAC for its ongoing commitment to community engagement.
- (3) Acknowledges that the Fairfield Local Government Area is multiculturally diverse.
- (4) Notes that currently there is one Multicultural Community Liaison Officer in the Fairfield LAC.
- (5) Calls on the Minister for Police to support the addition of two extra Multicultural Community Liaison Officers to meet the needs of the area.

First, I acknowledge the tremendous efforts of every officer in the Fairfield Local Area Command. They give their all to keep our communities safe throughout the year. Since placing this motion on the *Business Paper*, I am pleased to advise that the Fairfield Local Area Command has received an additional multicultural community liaison officer [MCLO], which brings it to the grand total of two in our area. That is a positive step. The role of the MCLO is incredibly diverse, as is the community in which they serve. The Minister and I have had discussions about the importance of MCLOs in our communities and he, too, shares my sentiments and understands the vital role they play in culturally diverse areas.

I am sure the Minister would agree that it would be great if such diverse communities could have an additional 10 MCLOs because they are an amazing asset to local area commands and to the communities they serve. MCLOs throughout New South Wales work with communities and police to strengthen the links and lines of communication between the NSW Police Force and our culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Recently there has been much media attention about Fairfield's humanitarian intake of refugees. Thousands of refugees have settled into the Fairfield, Cabramatta and Prospect electorates, which brings significant challenges. An increase in MCLOs in the Fairfield command would greatly assist in the settlement of refugees.

I note also how incredibly lucky we are in Fairfield to have such cultural diversity within the ranks of the LAC. It is one of our strengths. The flow-on effect is an array of linguistic services available to our frontline officers to assist them in engaging and liaising with our diverse community. It will come as no surprise to anyone who has heard me speak of my local area command that it is a strong believer in the importance of community engagement. It remains committed to maintaining an open dialogue between local officers and the community, and we support the "We Are You" campaign rolled out by Superintendent Peter Lennon.

In addition to ongoing community engagement through the MCLOs, the local area command runs a monthly Coffee with a Cop initiative that aims to promote policing in the area, to engage with local residents, to gather information and to build further upon the trust between the local Police Force and the surrounding community. These incredibly successful events are held in the electorates of Fairfield, Cabramatta and Prospect, and the initiative has received a positive reception from residents in all three electorates that are served by the Fairfield Local Area Command. To those members who have not previously attended a Coffee with a Cop event, they are exactly that—an event where individuals from all walks of life engage with their local law enforcement officers and often simply have an informal yarn about what is going on in their area.

A good cuppa is always on hand at a Coffee with a Cop event. This initiative has helped to elevate the level of trust within the community while helping to provide police with on-the-ground information from the community's perspective. This is so important. Informal discussion between residents and police officers is a key contributor to the success of Coffee with a Cop, and I hope this trend continues to grow, not only locally but also throughout the State. Indeed, I am happy to say that local area commands in many electorates have now adopted the Coffee with a Cop initiative, which is a sensational initiative that originated from the Fairfield Local Area Command.

Before I conclude, I offer my sincere appreciation and thanks to the dedicated men and women at the Fairfield Local Area Command for all their hard work. They always go above and beyond to engage with our

local community. I commend and thank Superintendent Peter Lennon and Superintendent Wayne Murray of Cabramatta Local Area Command for their dedication and commitment to our communities and their ongoing support for the men and women in blue, who give us wonderful service each and every day. As I said, our area is uniquely diverse. Having the humanitarian intake of refugees creates its challenges, and one of the challenges facing police is getting the message across to those people that police are there for them.

Many of these people have come from backgrounds where police, members of Parliament and government officials are treated with suspicion. We know that is not the case here in New South Wales. Initiatives such as Coffee with a Cop, as well as having an array of talented multicultural community liaison officers, are important in breaking down those barriers. That is what is happening in the Fairfield Local Area Command. The member for Prospect, the member for Cabramatta and I are very proud of those police officers. I look forward to hearing Government members speak in the debate. I know the member for Seven Hills, a former police officer, will speak. I look forward to his comments about MCLOs and the Coffee with a Cop initiative.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (12:58):** It is a pleasure to make a contribution. I thank the member for Fairfield for recognising the important work of our hardworking and dedicated men and women of the NSW Police Force. I note his comments about his own local area command and his strong support for those police. I am sure they are glad to hear that support. In light of some updated information since the member for Fairfield gave notice of his motion, I move that the motion be amended as follows:

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraph (5) and inserting instead:

- "(5) Congratulates Police Commissioner Michael Fuller, APM, on doubling the number of Multicultural Community Liaison Officers in the Fairfield LAC during 2017 from one officer to two officers." Since its creation in 1862, the NSW Police Force has fostered a tradition of interaction with local communities in a variety of ways in order to promote and to preserve harmony. Members are well aware of the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the communities scattered throughout the 93 State electorates that encompass 76 local area commands [LACs]. During its 155 years of existence the NSW Police Force and its outstanding officers and unsworn staff have developed numerous strategies to engage with our local communities, including working in partnership with community members.

As part of this engagement, specific NSW Police Force positions, programs and bodies have been established, including community safety precinct committees, Neighbourhood Watch groups, police officers assigned to Police Citizens Youth Clubs [PCYCs], youth liaison officers [YLOs], Aboriginal community liaison officers [ACLOs] and multicultural community liaison officers [MCLOs]. I understand that 33 multicultural community liaison officers are employed by the NSW Police Force across 25 local area commands to work with communities and police officers to strengthen links in our communities. They also facilitate communication between police and culturally diverse communities.

An important trait of being a successful MCLO is to have real-life experience and skills, such as the ability to speak another language and to recognise and respond to the cultural differences within our communities. MCLOs must be able to talk to the wide variety of people they encounter each day. They liaise with a variety of cultures to close the gaps between the police and the community. The MCLOs are assisted by the cultural diversity team, which manages the NSW Police Force cultural diversity training. NSW Police Force community engagement guidelines encourage police to prioritise engagement strategies at a leadership level, to know the local area, to plan strategies to fit local communities and to execute formal engagement strategies.

The Police Multicultural Advisory Council [PMAC] assists the NSW Police Force to identify significant issues and facilitates partnerships between police and non-Aboriginal communities from diverse cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds with the aim of reducing crime and antisocial behaviour. The objectives of the council is to inform the NSW Police Force's approach and priorities with respect to delivering culturally responsive policing services across New South Wales; to identify significant emerging issues; to lead and facilitate partnerships between police and other communities; and to facilitate open, direct and two-way communication between the NSW Police Force executive and external stakeholders.

The NSW Police Force works hard to interact with local communities in a variety of ways. As mentioned by the member for Fairfield, these include opportunities to interact, such as Coffee with a Cop; attending community open days; and participating in major community events such as shows, Australia Day events and community street parties. Coffee with a Cop is a relatively recent successful community engagement initiative. I am told that this year the state-wide Coffee with a Cop day saw 87 events held across 73 local area commands. The member for Fairfield spoke about the importance of police engaging with all sectors of the community. There is no doubt about that. Community policing relies heavily on maintaining trust. When trust is built by the excellent NSW Police Force it instils a sense of personal safety, improves two-way information flow between the police and the community, and builds a strong community.

The frontline men and women of the NSW Police Force are building those relationships every day, whether it be through multicultural community liaison officers, Aboriginal community liaison officers, or the beat

police walking the streets, patrolling the railway station or walking through the shopping centre speaking to the community. Those are the types of activities that build a strong community and generate an atmosphere that allows the police to do their job. It is a job they do on the streets with bravery—protecting us, our property, our loved ones and our extended family throughout the community. I thank the member for Fairfield for moving this motion.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:05):** I support the motion moved by the member for Fairfield and the amendment moved by the member for Seven Hills. This is an apolitical issue. It is about acknowledging the fantastic work that the Fairfield Local Area Command [LAC] does in our electorates of Prospect, Fairfield and Cabramatta. The Fairfield LAC works closely with the Holroyd Local Area Command and the Cabramatta Local Area Command further south. I am pleased with the amendment moved by the member for Seven Hills because it indicates that Commissioner of Police Mick Fuller and Minister Troy Grant have been listening to the community.

The member for Fairfield touched on the rich multicultural experience in the Fairfield Local Area Command and in my electorate of Prospect. It is vital to have community liaison officers with an ethnic background that reflects the community, and that is what we have. The Fairfield LAC is staffed by officers who are dedicated and who work hard for the community. Many of them live in the community and have close personal relationships and family members in the area. As a result of those community ties they exhibit a unique dedication that is wonderful to witness. I have spoken with the general duties officers, detectives, community liaison officers and unsworn staff at Fairfield and Wetherill Park police stations. They do a great job.

Wetherill Park police station is a small station within the electorate of Prospect that works closely with local communities near Stocklands. There are disabled groups and various ethnic communities such as Syrian, northern Iraqi, Italian and Islander. On a daily basis members of the local area command work with youth in high schools. The Wetherill Park Rotary Club works closely with the youth liaison officers to help youth who might be falling off the wagon and who need help and support to rebuild their lives. The Fairfield LAC also shows leadership in this area. I congratulate Superintendent Peter Lennon of the Fairfield LAC. He is a dedicated individual. No matter what time of day it is, if I am dealing with a police-related issue he will pick up the phone. The local area commanders in Blacktown and Holroyd are also dedicated. They act on any request we put to them.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Fairfield LAC. A number of its officers who deal with local schools and traffic issues have talked to me about presenting new legislation to Parliament to ensure the safety of children. We will be working on that over the next few months. I thank the Fairfield LAC and the NSW Police Force for protecting our community.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:09):** I thank the member for Fairfield for the opportunity to talk about the great work performed by the NSW Police Force not only in Fairfield but also across New South Wales. I endorse the amendment moved by my colleague the member for Seven Hills to paragraph (5) of the motion moved by the member for Fairfield. I commend the NSW Police Force for its work, particularly multicultural community liaison officers [MCLOs], who are helping to help strengthen links and to encourage communication between police and our culturally diverse communities. Many of the communities in my electorate, such as Hurstville, are culturally diverse. In fact, it is fair to say that St George has the highest number of people with a Chinese background. I thank the New South Wales Commissioner of Police, Michael Fuller, APM, and his officers for their work.

Following recruitment action taken over the past few months, the Fairfield community is now well served by two multicultural community liaison officers. As many of my colleagues will agree, we live in a culturally rich and diverse State, and we have a broad range of languages and traditions in our cities, suburbs and towns. I am sure we also agree that the NSW Police Force performs the difficult task of reducing crime and violence as well as improving public safety. Police continue to work closely with key community members and leaders and use a number of different strategies to engage with culturally diverse communities across New South Wales. I am advised that the NSW Police Force currently employs 33 civilian MCLOs across 25 local area commands to meet the increasing demand of demographic changes. As a councillor on Kogarah City Council and then as the member for Oatley for the past seven years, I have worked closely with the local area commands in our community, and particularly with MCLOs, who have done an outstanding job not only in reducing crime but also being a sounding board and providing education to many of the communities in my electorate.

The NSW Police Force, through the employment of MCLOs, is working hard to establish ties with community groups and members of the public to reduce crime and reoffending. The presence of MCLOs offers me and the community an assurance that all members from culturally diverse backgrounds who attend police stations will be provided with assistance and support, whether they are victims, offenders or witnesses. MCLOs help communities to understand their rights and responsibilities when in contact with the police and can help explain what police do to respond to and to manage crime and community safety. They ensure communities are

offered access to policing services that are culturally and linguistically sensitive and appropriate. I thank the member for Fairfield for moving this motion. Members are on a unity ticket on this issue. I support the motion.

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (13:13):** I speak on the motion moved by the member for Fairfield relating to Fairfield multicultural community liaison officers. I commend the member for raising this matter in the House. We all know that our service men and women in New South Wales do a fantastic job to keep us safe each day. But we do not pay enough tribute to the hardworking civilians and volunteer staff who support our police on the job. The multicultural community liaison officers play a vital role in culturally diverse communities such as Cabramatta, Fairfield and Prospect. They assist police with their day-to-day work and build strong relationships with the community. We are fortunate to have three multicultural community liaison officers at the Cabramatta Local Area Command [LAC], who work primarily with our Asian communities. Phiny Yung speaks Khmer and works with the Cambodian community, Quynh Truong works with the local Vietnamese community, and Nina Long works with the Lao and Thai communities. The Cabramatta communities are blessed to have these three community liaison officers who, over time, have built up trust between our local police and the community.

The Fairfield Local Area Command is famously diverse. Having multicultural community liaison officers throughout Fairfield is a no-brainer. A cultural difference exists in multicultural communities when it comes to dealing with police. A large number of migrant families and people of non-English speaking backgrounds come from countries where it was neither safe nor wise to have relationships with police because of the high levels of corruption, abuse and misuse of power, or political instability. Therefore, it is important that our police make an effort to change that mindset and show our communities that we are partners in fighting crime, and that our police can be trusted and will look after our interests and the interests of our families.

I commend Fairfield Local Area Commander Peter Lennon for introducing the Coffee with a Cop initiative to New South Wales. I extend my thanks to Cabramatta Local Area Commander Wayne Murray for also taking up this great initiative. The initiative aims to further break down barriers between communities and their local police. When this event is held each year in our cities, hundreds of people attend to have a coffee with a cop. It is great to see that, no matter what community they come from, they speak not only to State members of Parliament but also to police. Together with the member for Fairfield and the member for Prospect, I am happy to support this initiative every year.

While there is an element of distrust in certain communities towards police because of cultural backgrounds and former experiences overseas, it is important that initiatives like this are implemented. With the growing number of new and emerging communities in New South Wales as well as people from refugee backgrounds, there has never been a more important time for us to back in our multicultural community liaison officers. I pay tribute to them for their hard work and commitment to keeping New South Wales safe, whether they be in the Cabramatta LAC, the North Shore LAC, the Mount Druitt LAC or the Eastern Beaches LAC. I thank them for helping keep our communities safe.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (13:17):** I am happy to say that although the member for Fairfield had a dig at me yesterday we have since reconciled.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Because there have been no digs towards him from that side!

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** Not from the member for Camden. This is an opportunity to inform the House about the NSW Police Force. The Camden Local Area Command [LAC] does an outstanding job, led by Ward Hanson. Although we are discussing the motion moved by the member for Fairfield—to which the member for Seven Hills moved an amendment, which I wholeheartedly endorse—I acknowledge the men and women of the Camden LAC for doing a wonderful job. The Fairfield community is now well served by two multicultural community liaison officers. A significant part of their ongoing work is backing up police officers in the important strategy used in Fairfield, "We Are You". When talking about "We Are You" earlier this year, Fairfield Local Area Commander Superintendent Peter Lennon stated:

We, the police, are part of the community. We work here, we live here, we shop here, our children go to school here. The safety of the community is a shared goal and we want to work towards it together. That is reminiscent of the Camden LAC and could have easily been a quote from Ward Hanson.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** We are you.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** That is correct. The Fairfield MCLOs are part of a group of some 33 MCLOs in 25 local area commands throughout the State. What are those commands? They are: Bankstown, Blacktown, Burwood, Cabramatta, Campbelltown, Ashfield, Macquarie Fields, Eastwood, Auburn, Liverpool, Merrylands, Hornsby, Mount Druitt, Campsie, Green Valley, Granville, City Central—

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Doors closing.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** Doors closing. There is also Wollongong, Kogarah, Hurstville, Parramatta, Dee Why, Manly, Marrickville and Chatswood. The 33 MCLOs located in 25 local area commands are spread throughout the State. The MCLO program continues to grow as it supports and promotes strong relationships between police and diverse communities. MCLOs also work with domestic violence liaison officers and non-government stakeholders to assist victims of domestic and family violence. This is important work because language and cultural barriers can make it harder for victims of abuse to seek support and protection. It is fitting for the MCLOs to work with our domestic violence victims because those officers have had a huge impact in breaking down barriers. I acknowledge the very good motion moved by the member for Fairfield, which the Government wholeheartedly supports.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (13:21):** By leave: I acknowledge the motion moved by the member for Fairfield and the amendment moved by the member for Seven Hills. I no longer get many opportunities to speak in the House at this time of day but, as Minister, I take pleasure in acknowledging the important role of multicultural community liaison officers [MCLOs] in our communities, for our communities. As the member for Fairfield knows, I spend just about every weekend or evening in the field at cultural festivals and events in his electorate and at the wonderful Fairfield Showground in the backyard of the member for Cabramatta. These include the Tet Festival with the East Vietnamese population, Parramasala in Parramatta, Diwali, the Eid festival in Paul Keating Park at Bankstown or the Africultures Festival in Lidcombe.

I have noted that police, most often MCLOs, attend every important festival to build trust and to show faith with the local community. The member for Seven Hills, who is a highly distinguished former police officer, referred to the importance of building and maintaining faith with the community. I acknowledge the many new arrivals in the electorate of the member for Fairfield who may need to raise issues directly with police. That opportunity is gifted to them by our multicultural officers in the field. I take this opportunity to pay credit to them. The Government invests in significant partnerships—worth approximately \$10 million a year—with, for example, the National Rugby League, the Australian Football League and, importantly, Police Citizens Youth Clubs [PCYCs]. I pay tribute to people like Dom Teakle, Chief Executive Officer of the PCYC. The PCYC reaches out into our communities and plays a very important role working with young boys and girls across our culturally diverse communities.

The PCYC embraces those young people who are struggling to find an opportunity to embed themselves in our communities and offers great guidance and mentoring programs. I had great pleasure in attending the awards night of the PCYC not only with Dom Teakle but also with the New South Wales Commissioner of Police, Mick Fuller. I congratulate Commissioner Fuller on the role he is playing in encouraging our multicultural community liaison officers to go out into the paddocks and fields to embrace our cultural diversity, to offer support, and to build trust and faith with our communities. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:26):** In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Seven Hills, Prospect, Oatley, Cabramatta, Camden and Castle Hill for their contributions to the debate. I sincerely thank Nathaly Parish and Sozan Jabur, our MCLOs in Fairfield.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** The member for Fairfield has moved a motion, to which the member for Seven Hills has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** The question now is that the motion of the member for Fairfield as amended be agreed to.

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

### **STOCKTON CENTRE, KANANGRA AND TOMAREE LODGE CLOSURES**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:28):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Government is proceeding with its plans to close the Stockton Centre, Kanangra and Tomaree Lodge by July 2018.
- (2) Notes that these services house people with complex intellectual and physical disabilities.
- (3) Calls on the Government to fulfil its various commitments to residents and families about the service closures and transition to group homes.
- (4) Condemns the Government for failing to fulfil its commitments.
- (5) Urges the Government to honour its commitments and adequately resource the closure of the services to avoid the residents paying a tragic price.



I gave notice of this motion in the House on 28 March 2017. Since then, there has been a tragic series of events. In April we learnt of the death of a Stockton resident who had been transferred to a group home and the hospitalisation of another. It was reported in the *Newcastle Herald* that the death was due to dehydration. In May the Government confirmed that another former resident of the Stockton Centre and from the same group home was hospitalised. Later that month we received confirmation that another former Stockton Centre resident had died and a fifth person from the same group home was hospitalised. So the group home that residents from the Stockton Centre were moved to by this Government is now sitting empty.

This is no coincidence. The tragic outcome that we foreshadowed in April, and that many had been anticipating for years, has played out. The price was paid by those people, and I extend my deepest, sincerest condolences to all the family, friends, loved ones and carers involved. This was the result of a cold-hearted, irresponsible decision by the Government not to provide those residents with the level of care they required, and which they had received for many years in the Stockton Centre. When I hear that staff were terrified about going to work in one of the group homes because they did not know what to do, I know something is seriously wrong. The Government did not allocate adequate resources, carry out adequate planning and oversight, or provide adequate collaborative consultative care to avoid those residents suffering a terrible fate.

As foreshadowed by the Stockton Hospital Welfare Association in March, in a letter that was provided to the Minister, and foreshadowed by many people over the years, vulnerable residents were transitioned without adequate care, accountability and oversight. I urge the Government, once again, to try to find its wayward heart and to put in place protections, oversights, safeguards and adequate resources to ensure that the terrible outcomes of the past are not replicated. I also urge the Government to undertake open communication with all of the parties involved. Living with the uncertainty of the process has taken its toll on all of the residents, carers, advocates and loved ones. Their well-founded concerns have been ignored for years and yet they really do know what is in the best interests of residents. The Minister was well aware of the concerns raised by those who knew best, but in step with this Government's trademark arrogance, the concerns were ignored and people lost their lives. It is as simple and as bad as that. There is nothing more unconscionable than this Government not providing these people with adequate care and respect.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### *Bills*

### **RETAIL TRADING AMENDMENT (BOXING DAY) BILL 2017**

#### **Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill without amendment.

I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

#### *Visitors*

### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** Before welcoming our visitors to the gallery, I wish the Treasurer a very happy birthday. I will not say how old he is. I also wish the Premier a very happy birthday for tomorrow. I hope she has the day off. I extend a warm welcome to Brenton White, who will be participating in the Ninth Commonwealth Youth Parliament in the British Virgin Islands from 8 to 12 October, guest of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, the Parliamentary Secretary for Education, and member for Kiama. I also welcome a delegation of Dominican parliamentarians and staff including Senator Felix Maria Nova Paulino, Senator Euclides Rafael Sanchez Tavaréz, Senator Antonio de Jesus Cruz Torres, Senator Felix Maria Vasquez and Representative Recardo De Hesus Contreras Medina. The delegation is accompanied by business representatives from Perilya Limited and are guests of the member for Barwon.

I welcome to the gallery Adam Saxton, Craig Cullen and Craig Leibbrandt, guests of the member for Upper Hunter. I also welcome Hunter Leech, who has been selected as part of the 2018 Anzac Ambassadors Program and who is accompanied by his family members Tamara Leech, Jason Leech and Kynan Leech as well as his teacher Sally Edwards. They are guests of the member for Myall Lakes. I acknowledge the student leaders and teachers in the gallery from Barnier Public School, Parklea Public School, Quakers Hill East Public School, St Joseph's Primary School, Riverbank Public School, Norwest Christian College, John XXIII Catholic Primary School and Mary Immaculate Primary School, who are visiting the Parliament to take part in the Riverstone Junior Leadership Assembly and who are guests of the member for Riverstone. I also welcome Matthew Schiebel, guest of the member for Lismore.

Finally, I welcome to the Speaker's Gallery Ms Marianna Stylianou, Research Officer with the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, and Ms Rachel Macreadie, Research Officer with the Family and Community Development Committee of the Parliament of Victoria, who are here on a two-day program as guests of the New South Wales Parliament.

*Members*

**MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT CONDUCT**

**The SPEAKER:** I now have a general message for all members, especially for newer members who may not be aware. There are certain rules and customs we must all observe if the dignity of the House is to be upheld. I remind members of two of those rules and customs in relation to divisions. First, once a division has been called for, the bells will be rung for four minutes. After that time has expired, the Chair will call for the doors to be locked. It is grossly disorderly for any member to then enter the Chamber after the bar of the House has fallen or to raise the bar themselves to enter. Secondly, it is also grossly disorderly for members to move about the Chamber once the doors have been locked. Members should take their seats as quickly and as quietly as possible so that the tellers can then do their job of recording the decision of the House. If members have any questions about the proper etiquette in the Chamber, I ask them to seek the advice of the Clerks.

*Governor*

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Lieutenant-Governor:

T F BATHURST  
Lieutenant-Governor

Government House  
Sydney, 14 September 2017

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

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

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

DAVID HURLEY  
Governor

Government House  
Sydney, 14 September 2017

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

*Bills*

**APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINEESHIP AMENDMENT BILL 2017**

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

**Assent**

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

*Question Time*

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS**

**The SPEAKER:** Before we proceed with questions, I remind the House that some members are already on two calls to order and some are on one call to order.

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:23):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales. Given that the Government's handpicked administrator made the former mayor and deputy mayor of Gundagai personally liable for the costs of legal action taken to prevent the forced merger of the council, will the Minister now act to reverse that vindictive decision?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:24):** When it comes to mergers, amalgamations, and Cootamundra and Gundagai, I have been a strong vocal advocate for having democracy restored to local government elections, and that is what happened last weekend. Following the local government elections, once again the community has a strong voice in making sure that the services and infrastructure that are so important

to them continue to be delivered. We all know the importance of local government. In most regional centres or towns the local council is the face of all government; it often picks up the pieces for all levels of government. That is why it is so important to have a strong and vibrant local government sector. The reforms were all about making sure that we had a strong, vibrant and sustainable local government sector.

I spent the winter recess travelling across the State—4,000 kilometres, 37 towns—and I spoke to many, many community groups. One of the things made absolutely clear to me was that the Fit for the Future process allowed councils, for the first time, to have greater transparency about their costs and how they deliver services to the community. They said that the Fit for the Future process was a positive in making sure that councils were not only fit for today but also for the future. More importantly, councils were able to plan for the future in consultation with the community and working with governments of all levels to make sure that we continue delivering. During the debate about those reforms a lot of individuals within the local government sector advocated on behalf of those communities. Those individuals are to be congratulated on fighting for their communities.

One thing we have not as yet lost in this country is the right to democracy—the right of any individual to put their hand up and to run for council. All around the world people are fighting for what we take for granted in this country—namely, the opportunity for any individual to put up their hand to run for any level of government and to be successful. At all levels of government in this country we have people who are passionate for their communities. No doubt there are passionate people in Gundagai and in Cootamundra. One of the first decisions I made this year was to travel to Gundagai to meet with the group that was concerned about the mergers and amalgamations and they asked me to follow up on a number of fronts. They were not happy with the administrator of the Gundagai-Cootamundra Regional Council. The administrator was replaced. They were not happy with the general manager of the Gundagai-Cootamundra Regional Council. The general manager was replaced.

They also expressed their concern about the merger and amalgamation in general. I had said—and I continue to say—that the most important thing that we must do is to bring certainty to those communities and the best thing to bring certainty is not to disassemble what we have created. What have we seen? We have seen not only the money that was given to those councils out of the merger but we also went back to Gundagai and committed another \$10 million for water security. That was important. This was a local community championing for those infrastructure projects and services. We have also continued to do that with the regional growth funds, which will empower those communities. If anyone looks at the detail behind the regional growth funds, they will see that the merged councils were given a loading or additional funding because we wanted to make sure—

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** Point of order: The Minister has once again gone off the beaten track.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I do not think he has. I have been listening very carefully. There is no point of order.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I am on the track winding back to Gundagai. As I said, there are many individuals who have fought for those communities. The Premier and I have had conversations about a number of issues that we still want to see resolved. We will have more to say in this space. My commitment today is to continue to work with those merged councils and to make sure that we deliver on what we said they would get—namely, support to make those mergers and amalgamations positive and also to make sure that they deliver services and infrastructure. For the first time, we have a strong regional council that is delivering across the board. That is the commitment from those on this side of the House. Watch this space; there is more to be said.

#### REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (14:29):** My question is addressed to tomorrow's birthday girl, the Premier. How is the Government helping regional New South Wales to grow and to prosper?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:29):** I thank the member for his question. Wagga Wagga is the largest inland city in the State and I appreciate his interest in all matters regarding regional New South Wales. My answer largely follows on from the Deputy Premier's response today in relation to the priority we give to our rural and regional communities. I am extremely proud of the fact that our Government continues to deliver vital infrastructure and services across the board, whether it is roads, schools, hospitals, transport or other important initiatives. I am also extremely pleased that our infrastructure spend and service and quality improvements in rural and regional New South Wales have resulted in jobs growth. I know every regional community appreciates jobs growth.

When we talk about any aspect of our infrastructure spend, it should be noted that in this year's budget alone more than \$9 billion has been dedicated specifically to rural and regional New South Wales. We have done a great job in rebuilding our regional hospitals, and our work is not yet done. The Minister for Health continues to go to those communities that are either undergoing upgrades or will be getting upgrades, to discuss with them plans for those hospitals. Already we have completed hospitals in areas including Wagga Wagga, Dubbo,

Tamworth, Forbes, Parkes, Bega, Port Macquarie and Byron Central, and there is more to come. In this year's budget alone, we are very pleased to have funded hospital upgrades in Tweed, Albury, Bowral, Cooma, Griffith, Inverell, Macksville, Coffs Harbour, Goulburn, Lismore and Mudgee.

We are also investing record amounts in local roads, such as the Gocup Road upgrade between Gundagai and Tumut; the Tulladunna Bridge replacement, providing an important route for agricultural freight and local movements in the Wee Waa community; and the Moree bypass, which will help economic growth, reduce travel times and create new jobs. I am also pleased to say that in addition to the great work done by the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the Minister for Transport is getting on with the job of delivering a new state-of-the-art regional train fleet to replace our ageing XPT and Xplorer fleet. This is delivering a boost for regional jobs—

**Mr Luke Foley:** What, in South Korea?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am going to ignore his lack of knowledge on anything. The Leader of the Opposition does not want new trains in rural and regional New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Stop the clock until the House comes to order. The member for Swansea is on three calls to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** As I constantly say in this place, one of the things I get to do as Premier of New South Wales that makes me most proud is to visit our rural and regional communities. I am very pleased to have visited the following electorates in the past eight months—and this is not an exhaustive list: Ballina, Barwon, Bathurst, Clarence, Cootamundra, Dubbo, Goulburn, Kiama, Lismore, Murray, South Coast, Tweed, Upper Hunter, and Wagga Wagga. The point I am making is that whether it is the Deputy Premier, me or the whole team, we appreciate the importance of rural and regional New South Wales. During a recent visit to Griffith I went to the Murray Cod Australia fish farm with the Deputy Premier, where we were very proud to officially register the \$500 million Growing Local Economies Fund. Murray Cod Australia is a fantastic family business that has—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister for Corrections and the member for Wyong will cease their conversation across the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** This is a wonderful example of a business that started off small and is now exporting not only around Australia but also globally. It is businesses like this that will benefit from this fund. If it is a piece of infrastructure we can improve to make life easier for these businesses, we will. We are also very pleased to have established the \$1.3 billion Regional Growth Fund, which will help to transform regional communities. The Government enables those who are doing well to go even further and it also ensures not only that regional communities survive but also that they thrive into the future. Just survival is not an option for us; it is about thriving and growing.

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

*[Extension of time]*

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I know time will not allow me to go through all of Labor's failures—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** —but I can list three in relation to regional New South Wales. In northern New South Wales, the Labor Government announced an upgrade to the Grafton Bridge in 2001. Nothing happened. The Labor Government re-announced it in 2004. Again nothing happened. By the time Labor left government nothing had been done to upgrade the bridge. We are funding that project and I am pleased to say that major works are underway. In southern New South Wales, Labor promised an upgrade to the Wagga Wagga Hospital in 2005, 2006 and 2008. Labor did nothing; we have delivered. In western New South Wales, Labor announced an upgrade for the Parkes Hospital, but again it never delivered.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order. Members will take their conversations outside.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Country communities will well remember that it was Labor that closed 37 maternity units across the bush, including in places such as Ballina, Cessnock, Coolah, Cowra, Crookwell, West Wyalong, Wellington, Hay, and Yass. Time does not permit me to go through all the examples, but who can forget the Pensioner Booking Tax Labor introduced for CountryLink booking services? Labor taxed people for ringing up and making a booking. Labor's failure is demonstrated time and again. I went to see what the Country Labor update was on its website and found that it has not been updated since 2014. Those opposite can pretend they care about rural and regional New South Wales, but they do not deliver. They are lazy and incompetent. It is only the Liberals and The Nationals that will deliver for country New South Wales.

**WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (14:36):** My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage. Will the Minister enlarge the Williamtown red zone given that residents who live outside its boundaries now have elevated levels of toxins in their blood?

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (14:37):** I welcome the question from the member for Port Stephens. Indeed, it is a serious issue. As the member will know, having been involved in a lot of the work that has been going on in relation to Williamtown over a period of time—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Port Stephens, this is not a debate.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** The member for Port Stephens will know better than anybody in this House what the Government has done through the Environment Protection Authority, working with the Commonwealth, whose land it is—it is Defence property—having them account for their property—

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

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** —and working with the member for Port Stephens as the local member, and with the local community reference group to provide that community with the assurances, the support and the information they need to make good decisions about their community. I welcome the question; it is a serious issue that this Government takes very seriously. That is why this Government has put millions of dollars behind its practical efforts to support the Port Stephens community and the broader communities across that part of New South Wales. There is nothing more to say, but I would welcome a conversation with the member for Port Stephens after question time. This is not a matter to play politics on.

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

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** This is a serious matter; it is about the Port Stephens community and communities across New South Wales. It has my and the Government's full attention and we will have the resources, energy and funding to support the member's community.

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

**REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (14:38):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. How are the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals investing in regional communities to improve the lives of people across the State?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:39):** I thank the member for Albury for his fantastic question about what we are doing as a government to support regional communities. Our record investments in health, hospitals, schools, road and rail are significant and we are proud of them. They are part of a \$73 billion pipeline of infrastructure across the State over the next four years and part of a commitment by the New South Wales Government to get on with enabling infrastructure that makes a difference, growing the economy, creating jobs and making sure that regional New South Wales gets its fair share.

We have heard the Premier talk about the Growing Local Economies fund—\$500 million to support industry and business in regional areas to unlock potential and to turbocharge regional economies. As part of the \$1.3 billion of growth funds, we had a program called Stronger Country Communities. We invested \$200 million over two years to support local communities to build the amenities that make their cities, towns and villages great places to live and to raise a family. Those amenities are important from a liveability perspective and include upgrading Country Women's Association [CWA] halls, local parks, footpaths, sporting facilities and cultural institutions—the stuff in regional New South Wales which we cherish and on which we want a greater focus.

Regardless of where they are in regional New South Wales, all people will get a fair share of the \$200 million because we have changed the way that we fund through this program. We have used a choice modelling program to ensure that every local government area gets a slice of the \$200 million. Therefore, those communities will not have to compete with larger cities or centres. Every area in regional New South Wales will get its fair share. I have already seen some of the fantastic announcements across the State. Wherever I travel in regional New South Wales, I hear great commentary from local mayors. They call this a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build things that matter. Some projects are left sitting on the shelf in the hope that one day the State or Federal governments will open their purse. In this case, we have funded those projects.

Working in conjunction with community groups and the local government, we are delivering the projects that communities have dreamt of. We are not asking local governments to contribute one cent but only to help us to administer the program. We want to partner with local government to deliver the amenities and projects that are important to regional New South Wales. Regardless of where they are in this State, from Orange and Cobar to Forbes and Narrabri, mayors across regional New South Wales are congratulating the Government on this program.

When I look at what this program can deliver for Cootamundra and Murray, I find that in the electorate of Cootamundra alone \$9 million will be shared across the local government areas [LGAs] to build the stuff that matters. Stuff like the Temora Memorial Town Hall, the Arianah Park Recreation Ground redevelopment, the Gundagai Playground and Fitness Centre and the Jubilee Park at Cootamundra. These are the sorts of things that this project can fund, build and deliver for regional New South Wales. All of the LGAs in the electorate of Murray will share in \$9.5 million, making sure that we build the amenities we believe in—amenities that our communities not only deserve but also have a right to.

We want to build liveable cities. We are creating jobs. The data on jobs growth since 2015 shows that regional New South Wales is part of the engine room of the New South Wales economy. We are growing jobs and turbocharging industry in partnership with the New South Wales Government. We are building the infrastructure that matters and we are making sure that regional New South Wales gets its fair share. That is a far cry from the record of those opposite, who think they know what is best for regional New South Wales. In his budget reply speech, the Leader of the Opposition spoke about possibly investing \$4 billion or \$5 billion in regional New South Wales if and when we sell Snowy Hydro to the Federal Government.

Once again—and this is typical of Labor members—they have put it on the credit card. The sale has not happened and we have not agreed to a sale. We do not know what the offer is or where the Federal Government is on the issue of the Snowy Hydro. Labor members are again making promises with no money in the bank. They are putting it on the credit card. When we came into government in 2011 we inherited debt and deficit. Back then we had deficit as far as the eye could see and we were \$4.5 billion in debt. We can once again see the true form of those opposite; they are spending money that they do not have. [*Extension of time*]

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Members opposite are making commitments based on an amount of money that they say they have not confirmed. They talk about how 100 per cent of the proceeds of that sale will be for regional New South Wales. Even if we achieve \$4 billion or \$5 billion out of the Snowy Hydro transaction, it is a drop in the ocean compared to what the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals are delivering for regional New South Wales with about \$9 billion already committed to regional areas through Restart NSW. We are building the infrastructure that matters—roads, rail, hospitals and schools. As usual, those opposite want to put it on the Labor Party credit card, and they are hoping for a transaction which will be negotiated by this side of the House and which may or may not succeed.

Our track record shows that we have ensured 30 per cent of all proceeds in Restart NSW go to regional New South Wales. This equates to about \$9 billion on top of what Ministers and their portfolios are also investing in those regions. I often talk about the Roads budget. It is up 105 per cent since 2011, the last time those opposite were in office. Of that Roads budget, 65 per cent is being spent in regional New South Wales. It is a fantastic investment by this side of the House. Members opposite have already spent the proceeds of the Snowy Hydro transaction three times. In his budget reply speech, the Leader of the Opposition spoke about solar power, energy, hospitals and schools, but then he went on. We calculated how much he was committing and found that he was about \$10 billion short. It is typical of Labor to spend more than it could receive even when it has not received anything. While those opposite dream about what they will deliver for regional New South Wales and make shallow promises, this side of the House—through the Regional Growth Fund and investments across our portfolios—will get on with delivering. Between the electorates of Cootamundra and Murray, we have invested more than \$18 million.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. The Minister for Transport will resume his seat.

#### NEWCASTLE LIGHT RAIL

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (14:46):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Given that leaked documents reveal that Newcastle will have the world's shortest and most expensive light rail system, will the Minister now admit that the project was always based on putting developers ahead of the public interest?

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:47):** I thank Crackers for his question. I was not expecting it. I thank my colleagues on the front bench for helping me out. I am intrigued by this question because I have a question on notice, LA1543, which happens to have been asked by Mr Tim Crakanthorp and which asks me about extending the light rail to the University of Newcastle, Newcastle Airport, Broadmeadow Sports Precinct and local hospitals. But there is more. For the benefit of the member for Newcastle, we will play a game of Guess Who? Guess who said this:

I think the fact that the Government has committed to taking out the heavy rail is going to change the city and I think that is a very positive thing. This person also said that securing light rail for the city is "fantastic". I thank the member for Strathfield for that comment. A couple of other Labor dignitaries are backing this. Penny Sharpe thinks it is fantastic. Sharon Grierson thinks it is fantastic. Michael Costa—and I love Michael Costa, the former Minister for Transport Services—

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** He said:

The hurdle in the revitalisation of Newcastle has always been the transport component. This plan fixes it, and Labor will lose all credibility if it opposes it in the Parliament.

Now Crackers, mate, is that the best you can do? My favourite person who backs this project happens to be Nuatali Nelmes. I do not know how she is tracking—

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** —but I did see the member for Newcastle very busy on local council election day making sure that Nuatali was re-elected as mayor. I have to wonder why.

**Mr Luke Foley:** She got a massive majority.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Yes, her majority is bigger than Crackers' actually. Her primary vote was double that of Crackers'.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Minister to refer to members by their appropriate titles.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I will. I apologise to the honourable Crackers.

**The SPEAKER:** "The member for Newcastle" is his correct title, Minister.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The point I make about Newcastle—and the good member knows this—is that since the Government lifted up the heavy rail line there has been \$2 billion worth of property investment in the heart of the city. We all remember what life was like when the member for Strathfield was the local member. The place was dead. We have taken Newcastle and revitalised it. There are cranes in the sky, construction jobs are being delivered and there is a fantastic transport project called Newcastle Light Rail.

#### REGIONAL POLICING

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (14:51):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services. What is the Government doing to improve policing in regional communities?

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (14:51):** I thank the member for his question. He knows that this Government recognises that policing in rural and regional areas is very different from policing in the city. The types of crimes our officers deal with and the isolation and distances they need to cover mean we cannot assume that one model of policing will work for the whole State. That is why the Government is supporting the Commissioner of Police in his approach to ensuring that the policing and community safety needs of regional communities are treated and responded to differently.

A few months ago I was proud to stand with Commissioner Fuller to announce the appointment of our first ever dedicated Deputy Commissioner for Regional NSW, Gary Worboys, APM. For the first time in this State's history the unique issues faced by police in regional areas will be formally represented at the highest levels of the NSW Police Force. Not only has Deputy Commissioner Worboys been appointed to this new role, which brings a new level of focus to the unique issues facing regional communities and police, he has also been empowered and supported by the Government to follow the commissioner's re-engineering of the force in regional New South Wales to further improve our policing response.

The process of re-engineering the force is about having frontline officers where we need them, when needed and in the quantum that is required. It is about giving the people of New South Wales a police force that is flexible, nimble, well-resourced and best placed to address current and future policing needs. Re-engineering the force is aimed at delivering police on the ground where and when they are needed, which means our communities will reap plenty of safety benefits. It is about putting more police on the ground in our communities—

we make no apology for supporting Commissioner Fuller in this aim—especially in regional communities that have been traditionally geographically discriminated against with police allocations under the local area command model.

Re-engineering the police involves, and will continue to involve, extensive consultation with people on the ground—communities, councils and police themselves. Re-engineering the NSW Police Force is about considering international best practice, learning lessons from others and undertaking extensive modelling of the needs of our diverse communities. The police executive team is drawing on the experience of all officers to drive and to implement the necessary reform. The executive, under the capable leadership of Commissioner Fuller, has the support of the Premier, the Cabinet and me in this goal. The NSW Police Force is being set up to best serve our community now and well into the future. I reiterate that the police have our full support. Unfortunately some armchair experts are making plenty of comments in the public domain. Unfortunately they are ignorant and do not have a real understanding of the work our police do or what is required to achieve better policing outcomes. They are questioning the expertise of Commissioner Fuller, APM, and his deputy commissioners, who are delivering the reforms that will see more boots on the ground. They are undermining the efforts police are taking to protect our communities, to make them safe and to give us more police resources.

I am proud and I know I am joined by every member on this side of the House and by plenty of members on the Opposition benches. I thank the member for Campbelltown for his sensible support of police in the Campbelltown area. Like the member for Rockdale, the member for Cessnock and the member for Kogarah, he understands the need to reform police structures in their local areas, where they have seen significant benefits. The Government and I are proud to back the men and women in blue. Unfortunately some on the Opposition benches—one who models his hairdo on Tintin's—take a very different approach. We know that the police are best positioned to deliver the resources where they are needed. It is up to all of us to get behind the commissioner and his executive, to support them in implementing the changes that need to be made for the NSW Police Force to protect our communities. *[Extension of time]*

To address the unfounded fear campaign that certain members of this place are pursuing, I am happy to make the following statement.

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

**Mr TROY GRANT:** While all resourcing decisions and the organisation of the NSW Police Force are matters for the commissioner—they always have been and always will be—I am happy to guarantee as the Minister that I support the re-engineering process. I also guarantee that there will be more police on the front line. Everywhere in New South Wales, in metropolitan and regional areas, the Liberal-Nationals Government is interested in putting more frontline police on the streets. The critics, namely the Opposition spokesman for police, is more interested in doing a deal with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party.

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

**Mr TROY GRANT:** This Government is focused on putting more police on the street. The Opposition supports those who want to put more guns on our streets. We want to cut crime; they support someone who wants to cut restrictions on handguns. We know where the priorities are.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: It is terrific that Barilaro needs Troy to bail him out in Murray. My point of order is Standing Order 73. If the Minister wants to make imputations about the member for Fairfield, he should do so by way of substantive motion.

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

**Mr TROY GRANT:** It will be a simple question for the people of Cootamundra and Murray very soon, and even a simple question for those in Orange. If they want more police on the street, vote Nationals. If they want more guns on the street, vote for the lunatics opposite."

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order. There is too much noise in the Chamber.

#### WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (14:59):** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Government admit that Wollongong Hospital is at breaking point with bed block for the past four weeks and last Thursday night 86 patients were unable to get access to a hospital bed?

**The SPEAKER:** I had trouble hearing the question.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:59):** I am the first to admit that when we came to government health services were in a mess. For too long those opposite did not treat health services in



rural and regional New South Wales with the respect that they deserved. If those opposite cared about health they would have upgraded Wollongong Hospital when they were in government and they would have requested upgrades for the 100 health facilities built by this Government over the past six years. The Minister for Health just informed me that the member for Wollongong has not bothered to write to him about the issue.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Point of order: Along with my colleagues, I have written many times.

**The SPEAKER:** What is the point of order?

**Mr Paul Scully:** My Illawarra colleagues and I have written many times.

**The SPEAKER:** I cannot hear the point of order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I do not wish to mislead the House. The Minister for Health told me that two other Labor members had come to see him about other substantive issues, but the member for Wollongong was not one of them.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Rockdale will cease interjecting. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** If those opposite want a hospital built or a piece of infrastructure upgraded, they should vote for the Liberal-Nationals.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: They cannot vote for you in Wollongong because you do not run a candidate.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. If the Leader of the Opposition repeats that behaviour I will place him on three calls to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Labor can ask the questions and I am happy to list the hospitals built by this Government in regional and rural New South Wales.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Minister for Health has provided me with information. Progress on the \$106 million redevelopment of Wollongong Hospital elective surgery unit was completed in 2015. It was completed on time. This Government inherited a list of messes and it is getting through them one by one. If there is a hospital that needs upgrading, this Government will do it. I am pleased to have been reminded that this Government funded a \$106 million redevelopment that was completed in 2015. If there is a hospital that needs upgrading, we will do it.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Labor was in government for 16 years and did nothing. This Government continues to deliver.

#### REGIONAL EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:04):** I address my question to the Minister for Education. Will the Minister explain to the House how the Liberal-Nationals Government is delivering quality education for students in regional New South Wales?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I now place every member on one or two calls to order on three calls to order. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (15:04):** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. It is a wonderful regional area of this State. The member passionately advocates for the children, parents and teachers in her community. I am delighted to respond to the member's question, "What is the Government doing to deliver quality education throughout regional New South Wales?" This Government cares about education across this State. Whether they live in the city or the bush, people can expect quality education with quality teachers in quality schools. This Government has delivered record levels of recurrent funding for school education over the past few years. For the 10 years between 2011-12 and 2020-21 the Government will provide \$11 billion for school infrastructure and maintenance projects. It will fund 3,000 new classrooms, thereby providing opportunities for 70,000 extra students to attend schools across New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will stop the clock until members come to order. I will start the clock again when members come to order and decide to behave appropriately. The Minister has the call.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** The most significant difference this Government has made in providing increased access and equity for students in rural and regional New South Wales is through its commitment to the Gonski agreement. Over six years the New South Wales Government's commitment to this agreement provides for an additional \$1.7 billion in funding based on the resource allocation methodology of providing funding to students. It is not based on what school they go to, what sector they belong to or where they live in the State; it is based on student need. Students in regional and rural New South Wales face disadvantages that are not faced by students in metropolitan regions.

There are many advantages to living in regional and rural New South Wales that include a varied landscape, rich communities and wonderful opportunities and freedoms, but there are also logistical and resourcing issues. Students in remote areas of the State are more likely to face disadvantage in educational opportunity. The original Gonski report states:

There is evidence that the performance of students in rural schools is significantly below that of students in city schools, even after accounting for other differences. Members on this side of the House believed this situation was unsustainable and unfair and it needed to be addressed. That is why we have been and remain fundamentally committed to the needs-based, sector-blind approach advocated by Gonski. Under the resource allocation methodology, particular allocations are based on isolation. Additional funding is provided to counteract the issue of spatial remoteness in our education system. For example, in 2017, the location allocation will deliver funding to approximately 1,000 schools to recognise needs as a result of being disadvantaged due to distance from population centres and the additional cost for goods and services and due to distance from other schools and to their capacity to interact for staff professional development. It is not only students who face challenges in rural and regional areas of the State but also their teachers. [*Extension of time*]

Through programs such as Great Teaching, Inspired Learning and the additional support that the Government is providing for instructional leadership programs and quality teaching so teachers have the opportunity to mentor one another and to learn so they can focus on best practice. Our teachers face increasing challenges, as do our schools, because of the expectation of what they can provide for our communities. This Government is committed to providing equity and excellence in education across this State, and it is ensuring that people who live in the regions and remote areas are not disadvantaged because of their location.

#### TRANSPORT ACCESS PROGRAM

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:11):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. With extraordinary expenditure being applied to parts of the rail network, such as Newcastle, will the Minister advise what is being done through the Transport Access Program for modest but important upgrades to stations such as Wyee, Dora Creek and Fassifern in Lake Macquarie?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:11):** It is apt that we have a question this week about lifts. The member for Prospect—

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: It relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. Elevators, lifts or anything else has nothing to do with Dora Creek—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Campbelltown should listen to the question. He will resume his seat or he will be removed from the Chamber. The member for Campbelltown knows that his comment was unacceptable.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I do not need to say anything in response to that.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question. The member for Rockdale will cease interjecting. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the third time.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I was making the observation that the question was about lifts. This place has had a busy week on the topic of lifts. I note that the member for Prospect and the member for Strathfield have been eerily quiet during question time today.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** I can still call you a grub.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the second time. Calling a member "a grub" is unacceptable.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** In response to the question, I am happy to consider those stations as part of the next round of assessments. I note that the member for Lake Macquarie has a long history as an advocate for disability services in this State. He is a good advocate and is fighting hard for his electorate. We will consider those stations. By working constructively with the Government, he has delivered additional lighting and car parks at Fassifern station and at Morisset station. For the benefit of the member for Campbelltown, I inform the House Cardiff station has received new lifts and easy access ramps. We will continue to work with the member for Lake Macquarie on the Transport Access Program, which is, of course, about lifts.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! With so many interjections, it was difficult for the Minister to answer the question. After only two words from the Minister, the member for Campbelltown was interjecting. If the member for Campbelltown continues to interject he will be removed from the Chamber. The member for Prospect will come to order.

### TRANSPORT ACCESS PROGRAM

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (15:15):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's Transport Access Program and advise the House of any risk to this program?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will be removed from the Chamber if they do not come to order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:15):** I thank the member for his question about the Government's \$1 billion investment in creating accessible stations which, of course, for the benefit of the member for Campbelltown, includes lifts. Whether it is train stations, ferry wharves, car parks or interchanges, the Government is committed to ensuring that everyone in New South Wales has fair and safe access to our transport network.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I was proud to work with the Treasurer to boost our investment for accessibility upgrades by \$200 million in this year's budget, bringing the total investment to \$1 billion. I am also pleased to tell the House that since the program began in 2012, more than 450 projects across the transport network have been completed or are underway. Wheelchair access is now available at 165 of the 307 stations. That is 43 more than when we came to office, and it now covers 89 per cent of overall public transport patronage. It means all metro stations—Northwest and City and Southwest—will have lift access. Members on this side of the House love lifts. I am perplexed that the shadow Minister for Transport has not written one letter to me about lift access at stations in her electorate.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** This week I learned why: she cannot trust herself in a lift.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. These sorts of slaps are best delivered by someone with humour, talent, wit and a few supporters.

**The SPEAKER:** That is certainly not you. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** How happy is the member for Maroubra about what happened yesterday? Obviously the member for Strathfield cannot trust herself in a lift. The doors open and there is Belinda Neal saying, "Don't you know who I am?"

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Point of order: As the shadow Minister for Disability Services, I am interested in transport access.

**The SPEAKER:** What is the point of order?

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** It is Standing Order 129, relevance. I want to hear about the station lifts in my electorate.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. That was not a point of order.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Yes, it was.

**The SPEAKER:** It was not a point of order. The member for Prospect should learn the rules.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I was horrified to find this photo.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Prospect will be removed from the Chamber if he does not come to order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The photo is of the lift access at North Strathfield station and it shows the member for Drummoyne with the member for Strathfield. There is nothing wrong with campaigning together. I am just glad he got out of there without bruises.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 73. If the Minister wants to embark upon this course of action we should debate this matter and that will require you—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! What is the point of order, before you embark on some instruction to me?

**Mr Michael Daley:** —to revisit my request to allow me to see the CCTV footage—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! You did not come to see me. The member will resume his seat.

**Mr Michael Daley:** —which you refused. I stood at that chair yesterday and asked you for a copy of the CCTV footage and you said "No." If you allow the Minister to go down this path, you should allow us to see the CCTV footage—

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** —and you might like to interview the people who were in the lift who saw the stitch-up.

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

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

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra did not keep his appointment in my office yesterday. I advised him to discuss the matter and he did not turn up. I do not know why.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** We in Transport for NSW are very concerned about security and safety. We run a program called "Do your bit for a safer trip". Those opposite would do well to learn about it, particularly the member for Strathfield and the member for Prospect. First, stand clear of the closing doors; second, mind the gap; and, my favourite, be mindful of your fellow passengers.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order. My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. It is clear that the Minister has an improper motive—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Campbelltown does not understand the standing orders. I direct the member for Campbelltown to remove himself from the Chamber for two hours.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Campbelltown left the Chamber at 15:20.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! If the member continues to argue my ruling on his way out, he can go for three days or a week. Maybe I will call security.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The last point I made was to be mindful of your fellow passengers. The only passenger that the member for Strathfield seems to care about is the talented member for Prospect. As to his behaviour over the last couple of days, he needs his mouth washed out with soap. *[Extension of time]*

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The response of the Minister is well beneath a Minister of the Crown and it is insulting to his integrity. If he insists on attacking his own integrity, he should do so by way of substantive motion.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. No standing order has been breached.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** That last point of order would be credible if the member for Prospect and the member for Strathfield apologised for their treatment of staff in this place. It is not the first time that we have seen this type of behaviour. If the member for Prospect thinks he owns the joint—

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: The real point is all of the Minister's supporters could not fill a lift.

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

**Mr Luke Foley:** It is Standing Order 73, Madam Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Did the Leader of the Opposition just think of that? If the member for Prospect interjects again he will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I would have thought the Leader of the Opposition would be the last person who would take a point of order in relation to the treatment of staff in this Parliament, given the general secretary of the Labor Party.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will stop the clock until the House comes to order. It is difficult for me to rule on a point of order when I cannot hear the Minister because of interjections.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I hope this point of order relates to a breach of a standing order.

**Mr Ryan Park:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. We are happy to debate on any day, at any time of the week the integrity of the member for Strathfield or that of the member for Prospect over any of that lot. So bring it on.

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

**Mr Ryan Park:** Bring it on, especially you.

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

*[The member for Keira left the Chamber at 15:21 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The points of order would be credible only if the member for Strathfield and the member for Prospect apologised for their actions.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am not hearing any more points of orders. I have not yet heard one valid point of order.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** My point of order relates to two breaches, and they are directed to you, Madam Speaker. I refer to Standing Order 49 and Standing Order 75, that you will stop this attack and that you will bring an appropriate level of conduct to this Chamber. This is your opportunity and responsibility, and I ask that you enforce those standing orders.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I do not regard it as an attack. I will listen further. The member will resume his seat.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** This Government is investing in lifts and programs like "Do your bit for a safer trip".

**Ms Trish Doyle:** And you're the Minister for incompetence.

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

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Blue Mountains left the Chamber at 15:25.]*

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** And take your 40-year-old trains with you when you go. I remind those opposite that Opal is about tap and go, not push and throw. *[Time expired.]*

#### *Committees*

### **COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

#### **Report: Review of the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 Annual Reports of the ICAC Inspector**

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** As Chair, I table the report of the Committee of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, dated September 2017, entitled, "Review of the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 Annual Reports of the ICAC Inspector". I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY**

#### **Reference**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** As Chair, in accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the adequacy of the youth diversionary programs in New South Wales, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

### **STAYSAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)**

#### **Report: Driver Education, Training and Road Safety**

**Mr GREG APLIN:** As Chair, I table the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, dated September 2017, entitled, "Driver Education, Training and Road Safety" in New South Wales. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.***Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

**Pet Shops**

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

**Slaughterhouse Monitoring**

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

**Inner West Bus Services**

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

**Drug Summit**

Petition requesting the Government convene a drug summit to investigate alternative methods of drug detection at music festivals, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

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

**Sussex Inlet Community Church**

Petition requesting an investigation into the sale of the Sussex Inlet Community Church and calling for protection of community land used by churches, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

*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**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:38):** I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Parliament on a recent inquiry undertaken by the Committee on Children and Young People: the 2017 Review of the Annual Reports of the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Children's Guardian. At the 2017 review hearing, the committee heard from the Advocate for Children and Young People, Mr Andrew Johnson, and the then Children's Guardian, Kerryn Boland. As always, the committee also valued hearing directly from young people themselves, including Ms Brenella Abdel-Rehim, 2016 chair of the Youth Advisory Council, and Mr Declan Drake, the 2017 chair. After considering all of the evidence, the committee made the following single important recommendation:

That the Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault conduct a review of the incidence of violence against children.

Violence against children was a key issue in this year's review. In fact, the committee learned that in polling, which informed the current NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People, children said that their biggest fear was crime and violence. The advocate also gave evidence regarding attitudes towards the impact of violence on children and young people. He observed that a large number of children—particularly those from lower socio-economic areas—feel that violence against them is seen as secondary in importance to other issues, especially when compared with violence perpetrated against adults. Both the advocate and the 2016 chair of the Youth Advisory Council commented that children were particularly concerned about media representations of violence against children.

The committee was therefore pleased to hear that a key focus of the advocate in the coming year is the prevention of violence against children. The advocate is currently developing initiatives to prevent such violence, and the committee is keen to learn more about those initiatives. The committee also heard that the Advocate for Children and Young People has been encouraging children and young people to participate more in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. The advocate has also been promoting life skills training and education and working to raise awareness in children and young people about their employment and renting rights.

In November last year the committee tabled its report on the sexualisation of children and young people. This review provided an opportunity for an update on the advocate's implementation of the inquiry recommendations. The committee was pleased that the advocate had already met with the eSafety Commissioner and was examining law reform and education in relation to the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. Since the review hearing, the Government has also released its response to the inquiry, which details a variety of work that the advocate is undertaking in response to the recommendations.

The primary function of the Committee on Children and Young People is to oversight both the advocate and the Children's Guardian. This year the committee took the opportunity to review the annual report and activities of the Children's Guardian. The committee focused on the performance of the guardian in administering the Working With Children Check and also heard about the guardian's work to promote a sense of shared responsibility for children's safety. The Children's Guardian pointed to the key strengths of the new Working With Children Check system following reforms in 2013.

The committee heard that an important feature of the new system is the continuous check event. This means that if someone is charged with a relevant offence in New South Wales, the police will notify the Children's Guardian. The Children's Guardian will then conduct a risk assessment in light of that information. Previously, individuals who received a Working With Children Check would not be rechecked until they changed employer. The committee was happy to hear about the progress being made in this area and looks forward to the outcome of the five-year statutory review of the check. The committee also heard that the Children's Guardian had recently launched a campaign called Parents check the Check. The Children's Guardian emphasised that the Working With Children Check alone is not enough; child safety is a shared responsibility. For example, the campaign encourages parents to ensure that home tutors have Working With Children Checks and that children are adequately supervised when they attend sporting or activity clubs.

I take this opportunity to thank Ms Kerryn Boland for her tireless work and service to the community as the Children's Guardian, an office that she has held since 2005. At the same time, on behalf of the committee, I welcome Ms Janet Schorer, the new Children's Guardian. The committee looks forward to working with Ms Schorer to further the invaluable work of the Children's Guardian in protecting the children of New South Wales. As always, I thank the committee staff for their efforts in assisting the committee. I also thank the committee members for ensuring that the committee continues to work well.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (15:33):** As a member of the Committee on Children and Young People, I make a contribution to the take-note debate on the 2017 Review of the Children's Guardian and Advocate for Children and Young People. Children and young people in New South Wales are our present and our future, and their safety, welfare and development are paramount. This review gave the committee the opportunity to consider the annual reports of both agencies over which it has oversight. The Children's Guardian works to ensure that the spaces children occupy are safe. It does this through many means, including the Working With Children Check. The advocate's mission is to make New South Wales a better place for children and young people.

A fundamental part of the review was meeting with the advocate and guardian and, importantly, the 2016 and 2017 chairs of the NSW Youth Advisory Council, Brenella Abdel-Rehim and Declan Drake, to discuss the achievements of the past year and the future focus of each agency. In its report the committee made one recommendation, that the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, conducts a review of the incidence of violence against children. I hope that the Government takes up this recommendation, especially in light of polling undertaken to develop the NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People in which children tragically said that their biggest fear was crime and violence.

The committee heard that there are concerns about how violence towards children and young people is represented in the media and that there is particular concern that it was only considered as a secondary focus in relation to domestic violence. The Advocate for Children and Young People told the committee that the advocate would focus on violence against children in the coming year and has advised that it is developing initiatives to prevent violence against children and young people and to reduce its impacts. The committee will keep a watching brief on those important initiatives. No child should live in fear of crime and violence.

The function of the Office of the Children's Guardian under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 is to collect and maintain data, and assess and monitor applications and applicants obtaining a Working With Children Check. In addition, it monitors organisations and programs that work with children and young people. During the review the committee focused on compliance with the Working With Children Check and, importantly, the shared responsibility for children's safety. The Children's Guardian has urged parents to assume more responsibility in ensuring their children's safety with the launch of the Parents check the Check campaign.

This campaign encourages parents to ensure home tutors have Working With Children Checks, even if the tutor has been highly recommended by other parents or teachers.

The Parents check the Check campaign is particularly timely given that 77,975 students are studying one or more Higher School Certificate courses and 70,270 of them are on track to complete their HSC this year. Many HSC students receive tutoring. Parents who organise tutors for their children want the best for their child. The Children's Guardian has recommended that parents not only check the Working With Children Check of tutors but also maintain a line of sight to their child throughout all tutoring sessions. Finally, I thank the chair and my fellow committee members for their contributions and insights throughout the inquiry. I also thank the committee staff for their work in assisting in the preparation of the report.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:37):** As shadow Minister for Community Services, I make a brief contribution to the take-note debate on the 2017 Review of the Annual Reports of the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Children's Guardian. I acknowledge the committee chair, the member for Holsworthy; the deputy chair, the member for Epping; the member for Charlestown and the member for Upper Hunter; and the Hon. Greg Donnelly, the Hon. Paul Green and the Hon. Catherine Cusack from the other place. I also acknowledge the importance of the work of the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People, including the advocate, Mr Andrew Johnson, and the Office of the Children's Guardian. I thank the current Children's Guardian, Ms Janet Schorer, and former Children's Guardian Ms Kerry Boland.

I note that the report acknowledged the tireless efforts of former Children's Guardian Ms Boland, who had been in that role since 2005. On behalf of the Opposition, I place on record our gratitude for her contribution in supporting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in our State. Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our children and young people should be one of the most paramount considerations of any government. Parliamentary committees like the Committee for Children and Young People are tasked with the role of overseeing the core functions of government departments such as the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Office of the Children's Guardian to ensure that best practice is followed in their operations and, importantly, to make recommendations to the Government for it to reform policies and procedures to improve outcomes for children and young people in our State. It was recommended in the committee's report that:

The Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault conducts a review of the incidence of violence against children.

I am pleased that the committee shared the concerns of the 2016 Youth Advisory Council about the risk of violence posed to children and young people. No child—or any person for that matter—should be exposed to the risk of harm, violence or abuse in their home, at school or a sporting club, or in any situation. According to the June 2017 Community Services caseworker dashboard, 85,146 children were reported to Family and Community Services as being at risk of significant harm between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017, with 68 per cent of those children never receiving a face-to-face assessment from a caseworker. In the past 12 months the number of children reported to be at risk of significant harm has increased by 9,000. In the same period the number of frontline caseworkers has decreased by 60 statewide, with 115 positions left vacant in the June quarter.

It is deeply concerning that the Government has cut back on the number of frontline child protection staff at a time when more than two-thirds of children are still not receiving a face-to-face assessment from a caseworker. The Committee for Children and Young People noted its concern about the incidence of violence against children. In view of the record number of risk of significant harm reports, I hope the committee's recommendation for a review is not ignored by the Minister. The 2017 review of annual reports also considered the annual report of the Office of the Children's Guardian, the agency responsible for administering working with children checks. As I have previously stated, Labor firmly believes that there is no higher duty for this State than to protect and support our vulnerable children and young people, and to ensure that at all times they are kept safe from the risk of harm. I commend the report to the House.

**Report noted.**

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 43/56**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:42):** I take the opportunity to speak about the Legislation Review Committee's digest No. 43 for the Fifty-sixth Parliament. The committee's most recent digest reviewed a number of bills that were introduced in the sitting week commencing 12 September 2017 and one regulation. I will now refer to some of the key issues that emerged from the committee's review. The Justice Legislation Amendment Bill (No 2) amended various Acts within the Justice portfolio. This bill is part of a periodic review of legislation that amends a number of minor and miscellaneous amendments to Acts and



regulations. One of the amendments included a change to the Bail Act 2013 to permit police officers to make bail decisions about persons transferred to a mental health facility for assessment and then assessed as not mentally ill.

This provision allows a police officer to make the decision to allow the person to be temporarily detained in the mental health facility, rather than being transported back to a correctional services facility. Although this provision is for practicality reasons, the committee was concerned that mental health facilities and their staff may not be trained to detain persons who are not mentally ill or fulfil accompanying duties such as the legislative duty to notify the Custody Notification Service when an Aboriginal person has been detained. The committee noted that this responsibility is more appropriate for professionally trained correctional officers within correctional service facilities.

The Road Transport Amendment (Driver Disqualification) Bill 2017 amends the Road Transport Act 2013 to give the Local Court the power to remove outstanding driver licence disqualification periods and abolishes the Habitual Traffic Offender Scheme. The committee noted that the bill gives the court a wide discretion to impose a lengthy disqualification period but does not provide guidance on how that discretion should be exercised. Given that the court can decide to impose a longer disqualification period, and this can affect a person's ability to travel to work, the committee would prefer that there be further guidance about when this discretion should be exercised.

The bill also empowers a local court to lift a licence disqualification if the driver has not been convicted of an offence during the relevant period. However, these decisions cannot be appealed under the Crimes (Appeal and Review) Act. While the discretion does not limit the power of the court to otherwise annul, quash, set aside or vary a licence disqualification, the committee was concerned by the restrictions on appealing decisions given the importance of being able to drive to work or TAFE, particularly in rural areas. For this reason, the committee drew this matter to the attention of the Parliament.

The object of the Summary Offences Amendment (Full-face Coverings Prohibition) Bill 2017 is to make it an offence for a person to wear a face covering in a public place without a reasonable excuse. The committee identified several issues with this bill. First, the bill provides that a person's cultural or religious belief is not a reasonable excuse for wearing a face covering. This infringes on a person's freedom of religion. Secondly, the meaning of "reasonable excuse" is quite narrow and has the potential to trespass on a number of rights, including the freedom of expression and freedom of political communication. Thirdly, the bill places the onus of proof for providing a reasonable excuse on the defendant in any proceedings. By reversing the onus of proof that traditionally requires the prosecution to prove all elements of an offence, the bill may impact on the presumption of innocence. For these reasons, the committee referred the bill to the Parliament for its further consideration.

The committee also reviewed the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Regulation 2017. This regulation outlines processes and requirements for security checks of officers of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. As part of those security checks, the regulation provides that the commission may require fingerprint information of officers, applicants, and associates. Associates are defined to include a wide variety of people, including business colleagues, friends, family and children under the age of 18 years. This biometric information is destroyed only after the officer has ceased working for the commission for six months, but is still retained if the former officer becomes the subject of any investigations or legal proceedings. The regulation is also not clear about the circumstances that would require this information. The committee was concerned that this means that biometric information of persons who are not officers of the commission, including children, could be retained in unspecified circumstances for an unspecified number of years. The committee referred this regulation to the Parliament for its further consideration. That concludes my remarks on the digest for this week. I thank the committee members and staff for their assistance. I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:47):** I contribute to debate on the Legislation Review Committee's digest No. 43 for the Fifty-sixth Parliament. The committee considered eight bills, but only commented on five, and one regulation. The Summary Offences Amendment (Full-face Coverings Prohibition) Bill 2017 was introduced as a private member's bill in the upper House. The object of the bill is to prohibit a person from wearing a face covering while in a public place without reasonable excuse. A face covering is broadly defined as any article of clothing or other thing, such as a helmet, that hides the face of a person in a way that conceals the person's identity. For a number of reasons the committee found that the bill infringes upon the rights and liberties of the citizens of New South Wales and drew them to the attention of the Parliament.

The committee did not comment on the Food Amendment (Seafood Country of Origin Labelling) Bill 2017 and the Gaming Machines Amendment (Transparency) Bill 2017. It found that they did not infringe upon the rights and liberties of New South Wales. The committee made a similar finding about the Retail Trading Amendment (Boxing Day) Bill 2017. However, the committee did note that the Percy Allan report, which the Minister referred to in his second reading speech, found that two-fifths of the respondents to the survey of retail

workers felt coerced to work on the Boxing Day holiday. I note that a minority of committee members found that it did infringe upon the rights and liberties of workers in New South Wales, but, unfortunately that was not the majority view of the committee. I commend the report to the House and, once again, I thank the staff for all the work they do to help and support the committee. I also thank my fellow committee members.

**Report noted.**

*Matter of Public Importance*

**SOUTH KOREA NATIONAL FOUNDATION DAY**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:50):** Anyong haseyo. I am very pleased to introduce this motion to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, which recognises the importance of Korea National Foundation Day. I do this not only out of respect to our Korean Australian community but also so that our friends in South Korea know that we stand in solidarity with them during this time of increased tension with North Korea. We have, of course, acknowledged Korea National Foundation Day before in this Parliament, but today I wear a hanbok, the traditional dress of Korea, to ensure our Korean Australian community know that we will always support them and their families, friends and colleagues in South Korea. We have a long and enduring friendship and this Parliament reaffirms that relationship today. In particular, we want our Korean Australian community to know that we celebrate and acknowledge Korea National Foundation Day on 3 October, and that although it might not be a public holiday here, it is a day that is recognised and respected by this Parliament—Australia's oldest Parliament.

I proudly represent a significant Korean Australian community and I thank them and the many community groups that make our area a vibrant and dynamic multicultural community. Anyone who visits Strathfield will know that it is the heart of the Korean community here in Sydney. Strathfield is also the sister city of Gapyeong and last year, during my visit to South Korea, I laid a wreath at the Australia and New Zealand War Memorial, which commemorates those Australians who died during the Battle of Kapyong in 1951. I take this opportunity to thank Mayor Kim for his leadership of Gapyeong County and for his hospitality during my visit this time last year. The hanbok I wear is from Gapyeong.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge areas such as Eastwood, Campsie and Newington, which also have growing Korean Australian communities. In doing so, I mention the recent achievement of Dr Peter Kim, who was elected as a councillor on Ryde council two weeks ago. He proudly represents the Australian Labor Party and is the first Korean Australian elected to serve that community. I wish him well as a councillor and a leader in his community, and I look forward to working with him to ensure the Korean Australian community across Sydney has a strong voice in government. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the retiring president of the Korean Society of Sydney, Harry Paik. Harry has led the society well over the last two years. In coming weeks, members of this Parliament from both sides will thank him officially for his leadership. I also look forward to working with Mr Byungsoo Ryu, who is the new president of the Korean Society of Sydney.

We have many groups that this Parliament should recognise and thank for their community involvement as part of national day commemorations, including the Korean Welfare Association, which hosts its activities day for first-generation Korean Australians in Strathfield. I thank John Lee and Keith Lee. I thank the Korean Cultural Centre and, in particular, Mr Kang, who is a great supporter of Homebush Public School. I thank the National Unification Advisory Council, led by Susan Lee, who was the 2016 Strathfield Woman of the Year. I also thank the Korean Australian Young Leaders, who host their annual sports day in Strathfield Park. I acknowledge the Korea Australia Chamber of Commerce and its president, Gabriel Kang, and his wife, Christina. I have made many friends through the chamber, and I thank them for always giving me a warm welcome.

Also active in my community are the Strathfield Korean Business Association, the Korean Memorial Garden Committee and the Friends of Comfort Women in Australia. I thank Vivian Paik for her determination to see the peace monument have a place in Sydney. I am in awe of the support these groups give on a voluntary basis to the community. At a diplomatic level, I thank the Consul General of Korea in Sydney, Mr Sangsoo Yoon, for his unwavering support of the Korean Australian community. I also mention his predecessor, Mr Whie-jin Lee, who I had the pleasure of seeing again last year during my visit to Seoul. Mr Lee has written a book of his time as a diplomat and of the Korea-Australia relationship, and I thank him for the gift of that book. Korea National Foundation Day commemorates the start of Korean history; it was when Korea was founded by Dangun. As I said, it is a day of national pride and celebration. In this Parliament today, as we acknowledge Korea National Day, we reiterate our heartfelt thanks to the Korean Australian community and reaffirm our support to the Korean Australian people.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (15:55):** As the member for Strathfield said, Anyong haseyo. We on this side of the House also acknowledge the significance of

Korea National Foundation Day on 3 October and the enormous contribution that Australians of Korean heritage have made to our way of life, not only in New South Wales but throughout Australia. Currently, as we all know, there are great tensions in the Korean peninsula and we know that our friends here in Australia are suffering terribly because of the emotional stress and the uncertainty of what is happening there. On days like today, we reach out as parliamentarians across the board to our friends and say that we are here with them and for them because we know they have made an enormous contribution to our way of life here, particularly in New South Wales.

The member for Strathfield says that the heart of the Korean community is in Strathfield. I challenge that. I would say that the beating heart of the Korean community is in my electorate of Ryde. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for 2016 show that 5,638 people of Korean heritage reside in my electorate, which is 4.9 per cent, and that in New South Wales close to 1 per cent of the population are of Korean heritage. I am fortunate to have a number of Koreans in my community who have made enormous contributions. I will give a shout out to a number of distinguished Koreans.

The Korean Society of Sydney former president is Mr Harry Paik. I join the member for Strathfield in acknowledging his great leadership and service to the broader community, but in particular to the Korean community, and what he has done to ensure that the Korean culture is not just celebrated within the Korean community but widely. His contribution to the multicultural fabric of our State should be acknowledged. The current president of the Korean Society of Sydney, Mr Byungsoo Ryu, and vice president, Mr Keesun Lee, are both gentlemen I have known for a number of years. I know that they are more than up to the challenge of their very important roles in the society. They have big visions and grand plans that I know will be realised for the benefit of Koreans across New South Wales.

The Korean Australian Welfare Association founder is Mr Keith Lee, who is a thorough gentleman for whom I have enormous respect; and the president is Yongjae Lee. The former adviser of the Korean Australian Veterans Association is Lieutenant Colonel Paul Kim. Colonel Kim, as I affectionately call him, is an absolute warrior in the community—he works so hard and is very honest, and we are fortunate to have him in our community. The editor of *HanHo Daily*, Jason Koh, and I regularly catch up to discuss issues of importance in the electorate and more broadly.

I acknowledge the president of Friends of Comfort Women in Australian and the Statue of Peace, Ms Vivian Pak. Agnes Shim is a wonderful ambassador and President of the Korean Women's International Network who has been assisting people for 45 years. I acknowledge Ms Namhee Koh, who serves on the Multicultural Advisory Council for the NSW Police Commissioner. She is a wonderful friend and a great person in the community who does many great things. I acknowledge the President of the Korean Sports Association, Mr Jong Sik Cho, President of the South Korean Chamber of Commerce Mr Kang and Mr James Byun of the Eastwood Korean Chamber of Commerce.

Jonga Jip is a fantastic Korean restaurant in Eastwood. We all know how good it is. We have the Ryde City Council, which I have already acknowledged, and Dr Peter Kim. Even though he is on the other side, I wish him all the very best. The Registrar Psychiatrist of Ryde Hospital, Dr Yoon Shik Park, is an esteemed leader in our community. I acknowledge Mr Sean Kim, a member of the Australian Lawyers Association. I also pay tribute to Consul General Yoon, who has done outstanding work in his time here. I pay a strong compliment to Susan Lee. Both sides of this House acknowledge her as a significant leader in the Korean community. We must acknowledge her contribution. I thank all of my Korean friends for their wonderful support and friendship. I wish them all the very best on their national foundation day.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:00):** I acknowledge the hardworking member for Strathfield, Jodi McKay, for bringing this matter of public importance to the House today. Korea National Foundation Day is coming up on 3 October. I wish all of our Korean Australian friends a happy celebration. It is a tough time for them given what is going on across the world, and our many friends in the Korean community are concerned and anxious. We stand shoulder to shoulder with them. Korea National Foundation Day is also known as Dangun Day. It commemorates the formation of the first Korean state of Gojoseon in 2333 BC. According to Korean legend, Dangun was the first leader of the Korean people and created a system of government that instituted law and moral codes of behaviour. Today we celebrate Korean culture and the achievements of the Korean people. It is a national day in the Republic of Korea.

My colleagues the member for Strathfield and the member for Ryde acknowledged a number of people in the Korean community, and I add my voice to theirs in thanking the former president of the Korean Society, Harry Paik; the new president, Mr Ryu; the Consul General, Mr Yoon; the wonderful Susan Lee; and the many other people in the Korean community who work hard contributing to our community and advancing Australia. Both members talked about the beating heart of the Korean communities in their electorates, but it was the Korean community that first established their businesses in Campsie. The Korean community are very entrepreneurial

and highly educated. Australia is the third largest export market to Korea. On a personal note, I thank all of my constituents in the seat of Canterbury for what they have done locally, not only in Campsie, in being innovative, highly professional and highly educated. I acknowledge Campsie Public School, one of our bilingual Korean schools. I also thank and congratulate Dr Peter Kim, a prominent member of the Korean Australian community who was elected as a Labor councillor at Ryde Council.

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (16:04):** In reply: I thank the member for Ryde and the member for Canterbury for their contributions to this important motion which recognises Korea National Foundation Day. It is an important day, held on 3 October. In this Parliament today we reaffirm our support for the Korean Australian community and our good friends in South Korea. As the member for Ryde said, this is a time of increased tension in South Korea and it is important that we acknowledge the longstanding warm relationship between Australia and South Korea. The member for Ryde is a good supporter of the Korean Australian community and we work well together in supporting that community. I say a particularly heartfelt thank you to the member for Canterbury, because all of us want to have the most significant Korean community. I acknowledge the Korean communities of Eastwood, Campsie and Newington and my Korean community in Strathfield.

I thank Mayor Kim and the Korea Foundation for hosting me in Korea last year. As the member for Strathfield, it is important that I visit Seoul and our sister city, Gapyeong. Strathfield and Gapyeong have a longstanding and important sister city relationship which I am pleased to support. The member for Canterbury and the member for Ryde both listed many Korean Australian groups that represent the Korean Australian community here. Those groups do an amazing job and engage regularly with all of us. They support our communities and we are forever grateful for that.

I thank the Korean Welfare Association, the National Unification Advisory Council and Susan Lee, the Korean Australian Young Leaders, the Korean Australian Chamber of Commerce, the Strathfield Korean Business Association—which does an amazing job supporting many Korean Australian small businesses and restaurants in my electorate of Strathfield—and the Friends of Comfort Women in Australia. During my visit to Seoul last year I went to the Human Rights Museum, which promotes and raises awareness of the issue of comfort women. When I returned, I spoke about it in Parliament. I spoke about the sexual slavery that occurred in World War II and the need to be respectful to all women and ensure we have a committed approach to the safety of women across the community. Again, I thank the member for Ryde and the member for Canterbury for their contributions.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

### **HENTY MACHINERY FIELD DAYS**

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:07):** It is that time of the year again when Henty is abuzz with activity. The fifty-fourth Henty Machinery Field Days is expected to attract a crowd of more than 60,000 people this week who will check out the exhibits on display, catch up with pastoralists, graziers and croppers and learn about the latest technologies for productive use on the land. The Henty Machinery Field Days is the largest agricultural open-air event in southern Australia and it gets bigger each year. Over the course of three days there are sheep demonstrations, yard dog trials, natural fibre fashion awards, vintage farm machinery, chainsaw carving and farm inventions to investigate. Congratulations to chief executive officer Belinda Anderson and the Henty Machinery Field Days team on a great event once again. As the song goes, there's a lot of good people there.

### **CATALAN INDEPENDENCE**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:08):** I recognise those people in Australia of Catalanian descent and those who are interested in its future. Catalonia has its own language, a proud history and its own unique traditions. One still reads of the Bourbon Conquest in 1714 after the so-called War of Succession. Under Franco, the public use of Catalan was banned. Town, village and street names were rendered in Castilian and media and education were given in Spanish, not Catalan. But Catalonia, or Catalunya, survived Franco.

The Catalan regional government has planned an independence referendum for 1 October. The Spanish Central Government is doing everything it can to prevent this occurring. Even if people oppose Catalan independence, it seems entirely wrong, authoritarian and profoundly undemocratic to try to prevent a vote. On Wednesday this week the Guardia Civil—the militarised police—raided Catalan government offices and arrested more than a dozen senior government officials who support the referendum. They have seized millions of ballot papers and related material and raided the delivery service. They are threatening to prosecute more than 700 mayors who will allow municipal centres to be used as ballot places. These attacks on civil rights and freedom of the press, speech and assembly are profoundly undemocratic. There should be dialogue and democracy, not police actions and de facto coups by the central Government.

### MANLY ELECTORATE POLICING

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:09):** I update the House on the good work of Manly police who went above and beyond in their duties this morning at Manly Wharf. Our police are often measured through raw statistics, station sizes and local area command numbers. As important as these measurements are, it is also important to recognise another less discussed measure of our police, which is their compassion and care for the vulnerable and frail in our community. In a true display of community spirit, a constituent of mine on her way to work this morning noticed an elderly gentleman who was confused and out of sorts. To her credit, she took it upon herself to help and after she called the Manly police station a constable was ready to meet the bus on which both were travelling at Manly Wharf where police could assist the elderly gentleman. On behalf of my constituent and indeed the people of Manly I thank the constable and team at Manly police station for their concern and for taking time to attend to the elderly gentleman. It may not be a significant incident but it demonstrated the diligence and compassion of Manly police. I place on record our appreciation of community policing, delivered with respect and care.

### NEW SOUTH WALES ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:10):** Today I speak proudly about the 40-year celebration of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. I commend every person who has been a councillor since its inception in 1977 when more than 200 Aboriginal community representatives met for three days at the Black Theatre in Redfern to discuss land rights. The council actively campaigned until the passage of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NSW) in 1983, continuing a grassroots struggle for land rights that dates back to early contact. From the beginning they called for community ownership of land on the basis of traditional ownership rights, cultural heritage, and social and economic needs. They also emphasised the aspirations of local communities to have direct control over the land they occupied. I congratulate all 120 local Aboriginal land councils in New South Wales, noting the great team at the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, on their continued hard work to strengthen all aspects of our Aboriginal communities in New South Wales for future generations.

### TARONGA ZOO TIGER TREK

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:11):** I recognise and celebrate the opening of the new tiger trek experience at Taronga Zoo, which is now open to the public. We are all very excited that the tigers are back at Taronga Zoo. This project is an Indonesian-themed initiative that allows visitors to experience the majestic and critically endangered Sumatran tigers up close and learn about the unique challenges they face in the wild. The exhibit includes a rainforest trail, interactive experiences, a wealth of information and even a mobile app. All these features are aimed at educating visitors on ways they can meaningfully contribute to preservation efforts and increase the chances of survival of the beautiful Sumatran tiger, of which fewer than 400 are currently alive. The new exhibit is part of a wider program at the zoo based around encouraging sustainability and supporting conservation efforts, and is already widely acclaimed. Taronga Zoo is a local treasure but the tiger trek gives us new reasons to be proud. I congratulate Cameron Kerr and the entire team at Taronga Zoo on the tiger trek.

### TRIBUTE TO BARBARA MURPHY, AO

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:12):** Few women have had as great an impact on the Australian labour movement than Barbara Murphy, AO. Barbara was a much-loved and highly effective educator, working in Sydney schools for more than 25 years before joining the NSW Teachers Federation, where she served as both senior vice-president and deputy president. As the only female presidential officer in the federation at the time, she championed progressive change within a sexist culture that denied many women teachers advancement and equality. In 1979 Barbara was the first woman elected as an executive member of the Labor Council of New South Wales. She served as an Australian delegate to the International Labor Organization and in 2012 was awarded an Order of Australia medal in recognition of her commitment to the labour movement, to feminism, to education and to the welfare of animals. Barbara continued to advocate for progressive feminist ideals right up until her sad passing on 31 August at the age of 85. Barbara will be forever remembered as a pioneering and passionate feminist who forever changed the face of the male-dominated union movement. I express my condolences to her partner, John, and voice the gratitude and respect of young women from across the labour movement for the trail that she blazed.

### THE HILLS WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AFTERNOON TEA

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:13):** I speak about The Hills Women in Leadership afternoon tea held in my electorate of Seven Hills on 25 August 2017. The event was attended by the Minister for Women, the Hon. Tanya Davies; and the member for Baulkham Hills, the Hon. David Elliott. The event was a small celebration of local women in the Seven Hills and Baulkham Hills electorates who are doing great work for our communities. In particular, I acknowledge the women who attended from the Seven Hills electorate, including

Robyn Castle, Wendy Lazanas, Shirley McLeod, Belinda Schuster, Joan Van den Burg and Kaye Weaver. This list of fantastic, active community leaders make incredible contributions to their local school parents and citizen committees, community groups, sporting groups and businesses. It was an opportunity for Minister Davies to acknowledge the contributions of these women to the Seven Hills and Baulkham Hills electorates. Minister Davies gave a fantastic speech about the need to further encourage and mentor young women across the electorate of Seven Hills. I thank the Minister for attending and thank community leaders in the Seven Hills area for their countless hours of dedication.

#### **SWANSEA ELECTORATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:14):** On 9 September 2017 voters on the Central Coast went to the polls to elect their local government representatives and they came in droves. At the booth I attended they were interested only in the Labor how-to-vote forms. They were looking for integrity and trust. They were sick of corruption across the Central Coast from the Liberals. At this election Labor fielded a strong team in the Budgewoi ward. We saw the election of Doug Vincent and Jillian Hogan. Doug's experience and integrity, coupled with Jillian's empathy and advocacy, will guarantee a strong voice for the north of the Central Coast. Today Doug and Jillian will be sworn in as councillors and, whilst I am sorry I cannot be there, I simply cannot wait to work with them to make a positive difference for people in the Budgewoi ward and the Central Coast. Congratulations to Doug and Jillian and all the Labor Central Coast councillors. I thank the hundreds of volunteers who helped out during the campaign. I say well done to the member for Wyong for his great support. Go Labor.

#### **ST GEORGE ROWING CLUB**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:15):** Today I acknowledge the St George Rowing Club, which recently celebrated its sixtieth anniversary. The St George Rowing Club was formed in 1957 by the rowing fraternity and quickly grew to a broad membership of more than 100 by 1962. In 1973 the club moved to a small wooden building on the Georges River at Como, where the club continues today. Over the years the club has experienced many successes, including winning a number of State and national titles as well as producing three Olympians. It was fantastic to join the St George Rowing Club as it commemorated 60 years with a regatta on the morning of 27 August 2017. In particular, I thank the crew who took me out on the boat bearing my name, including Jacqueline Marks, Lance Reeve, Paul Lazarou, Ian Toll, Les Higgins, Denis Tracey, Graeme Thorburn, John Rowell, Bruce Reid and also Eamonn Burke for organising the event. Congratulations to St George Rowing Club on 60 wonderful years. I wish the club even greater success for the next 60 years.

#### **TREE OF DREAMS MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:16):** On Thursday 7 September 2017 I was privileged to attend the Tree of Dreams event held by the Iris Foundation at the Wyong Milk Factory. The tree of dreams is an Iris Foundation project to raise awareness and funds for the support of suicide prevention on the Central Coast. The death of a loved one is never easy to experience but the process of bereavement is more challenging with suicide. Shame, guilt and blame are often among the strong emotions felt and can isolate survivors from their community and greatly undermine a family's ability to provide strong mutual support. The tree, which is located in the grounds of the Wyong Milk Factory, provides a public space to express and acknowledge these emotions. It helps people feel connected with others who may be experiencing similar circumstances. The visual display also draws attention to the impact of suicide among those not directly affected. This increased awareness and understanding can help to break down the stigma surrounding poor mental health and suicide, creating an enduring benefit for the broader community. I commend the Iris Foundation for this initiative and thank the Wyong Milk Factory for its support.

#### **TRIBUTE TO SHALISE LEESFIELD**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:17):** Today I speak about industrious student and constituent Shalise Leesfield who, at just 11 years of age, is a young ecowarrior. For some time now she has spent her weekends, family in tow, scouring the shoreline of her local area, Lake Cathie, collecting discarded fishing line. Shalise is somewhat of a junior conservationist and participated in the Junior Marine Ranger Program at Dolphin Marine Magic, Coffs Harbour. It was there that she learned about the truly negative impact discarded fishing line has on marine life. Struck by inspiration after seeing the Seal The Loop fishing line bins available from Dolphin Marine Magic, Shalise approached Port Macquarie-Hastings Council about the possibility of having some installed in her area.

After negotiating with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Shalise sourced the bins free of charge from Dolphin Marine Magic, travelled to Coffs Harbour with her parents to pick them up and with her father then set to install them at the Lake Cathie foreshore, all at no cost to the council. Shalise will empty the bins on a weekly basis, disposing of the line appropriately and recording the amount binned. This information will be forwarded to

both Dolphin Marine Magic and Port Macquarie-Hastings Council on an ongoing basis. Congratulations to Shalise Leesfield on her inspired tenacity and resourcefulness in providing an environmental resource for her local community to help protect our precious local marine life.

#### **PENRITH DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (16:18):** On 9 September 2017 it was a privilege to attend the Penrith District Netball Association grand final presentation day with my great friend Penrith councillor Karen McKeown. It was particularly exciting to see Londonderry's own Cambridge Park Netball Club clean up in this year's season. I extend congratulations to the Cambridge Park Camellias to whom I awarded the best-dressed supporters prize. It is always a pleasure for me, as a female member of Parliament, to support our young girls in sport. Indeed, young women in sport are doing brilliantly at the moment. So many of our young local girls are going on to bigger and better things. I take this opportunity to say that it was fantastic to see the Matildas take on Brazil and win in Penrith last week—my son and I really enjoyed the game—celebrating some of finest female athletes in the nation. Congratulations to all our young netballers and sportswomen.

#### **BLUE LUNCH FUNDRAISER**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (16:19):** I congratulate Highland Property Agents on a successful Blue Lunch fundraiser on 1 September. Representing local businesses, more than 480 people attended the Ivy Ballroom. The event has raised \$1,059,225 for the Sydney Children's Hospital since it was launched four years ago. This year's event raised \$335,725 for the Kids Cancer Centre. The Kids Cancer Centre investigates possible haematological and oncological disorders and diseases requiring bone marrow or cord blood transplantation. The centre provides expert treatment and care to children and adolescents affected by these illnesses.

#### **TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM EDGAR GORDON HUNTLEY**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:20):** Today I pay tribute to William Edgar Gordon Huntley, who passed away on 7 September this year aged 90. Born in April 1927 and the eldest of six children, Bill was raised in Newcastle. In 1954 he decided to make the Illawarra his home. For 45 years Bill worked hard on the New South Wales railways, following in his father's footsteps. Bill was actively involved in his community, provided for his family and loved his cricket. He was a loving husband to wife, Gloria, guiding father to his daughter, Dawn, and much loved Pa of granddaughters, Kate and Sarah. To those who did not know him, Bill may have appeared to be an ordinary man, but to those who knew him he was truly extraordinary. He will be deeply missed by his family and friends. On behalf of my wife, Alison, I extend condolences to Dawn, Kate and Sarah.

#### **SOUTH COAST RURAL FIRE SERVICE BRIGADES**

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:21):** I thank the many New South Wales Rural Fire Service [RFS] brigades on the South Coast who fought the Jervis Bay fire last week. An emergency warning was issued to residents on 14 September 2017 and Jervis Bay Road and Wreck Bay Road were closed. RFS crews worked around the clock to ensure the fire did not threaten homes and nearby villages. Air tanker Thor was called in to drop fire retardant and thankfully by the afternoon conditions eased and the warning was downgraded. The following weekend RFS brigade members gave up their valuable time to host numerous Get Ready Weekend events. My thanks go to the 15 brigades who spent the weekend helping residents prepare for the bushfire season and develop their bushfire survival plans. Bushfire season on the South Coast starts a month earlier than the rest of the State. Following the driest winter in 15 years I am glad we have such dedicated and professional volunteers on hand to prepare and protect us this bushfire season.

#### **MAITLAND BUSINESS CHAMBER PRESIDENT CRAIG MCGREGOR**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:22):** I acknowledge one of Maitland's passionate, energetic and effective advocates, Craig McGregor. Craig is the outgoing president of the Maitland Business Chamber. On behalf of everyone in our city I recognise his service and note his commitment to and advocacy for those in our community who have suffered domestic violence. After being told of the high rates of domestic violence in our community, Craig suggested wrapping a white ribbon around Maitland by engaging sports groups to take the white ribbon pledge and raising funds for the local refuge, Carrie's Place. Business chambers cannot thrive and succeed as ours has without a dedicated group of volunteers who contribute time, effort, money and energy to help other businesses. Most importantly they need to be bold and proactive and try to use occasions such as the winter lunches. As the shadow Minister for small business I am proud that my electorate has one of the best business chambers in the State. I congratulate Craig McGregor and thank him for his work for our community.

### TRIBUTE TO ROBERT "DUTCHY" HOLLAND

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:23):** It is with great sadness that I inform the House that Lake Macquarie lost one of its finest at the weekend with the passing of Robert "Dutchy" Holland. His sporting achievements on the world stage were outshone only by his dedication to family and the local community. Well remembered for taking wickets for Australia in the mid-1980s cricket tests, locally Bob was perhaps better known for his unswerving community spirit and dedication to mentoring young people. Bob was diagnosed with brain cancer only six months ago, and succumbed to an associated illness last Sunday. His passing came just 48 hours after he attended a huge fundraiser organised in his honour by the Southern Lakes Cricket Club and the local community to help him meet the cost of an impending trial of a new treatment. Bob will be greatly missed by many in the Lake Macquarie community, which I know I represent in offering collective condolences to Bob's loving wife, Carolyn, his sons, Craig and Rohan, and his daughter, Naomi, and extended family, including his grandchildren. Bob was a remarkable person and a true gentleman. We were lucky to know him.

### PADDLE FOR POLICE LEGACY

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:24):** I acknowledge the participants in this year's Paddle for Police Legacy in which more than 30 watercraft set off from Ettalong to paddle up Brisbane Water to the Gosford central business district. Participants included surf club volunteers, an outrigger canoe club and other members of the community. Among them were five inmates from the Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre who raised \$200 in the lead-up to the event. The paddle, which is Brisbane Water Local Area Command's largest single fundraiser for Police Legacy, supports the families of officers who pay the ultimate price in the line of duty. I congratulate Brisbane Water Local Area Commander Superintendent Danny Sullivan and his colleagues for organising this event which is an important fundraiser for police families in need of support.

### CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:25):** I acknowledge the small businesses in my electorate of Canterbury. I acknowledge the blood, sweat and tears that small business owners invest to achieve success in their businesses. I acknowledge the long hours, sacrifice, customer service, community participation and their employment of local people. The member for Lakemba, Jihad Dib, former member for Bankstown Daryl Melham, former Premier Iemma and I attended the Canterbury Bankstown Local Business Awards. I thank all the nominees and congratulate the businesses in my electorate that achieved awards: Natures Best, Belfield; Anytime Fitness, Earlwood; Nio's Grille, Clinton Park-Earlwood; Christina's Community Pharmacy, Earlwood; The Little Cup and Saucer, Canterbury; and Roselands Automotive. Well done. Congratulations to our small businesses.

### JOHN COLET SCHOOL

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:26):** A few weeks ago I accompanied the Premier to visit John Colet School at Belrose to mark the Premier's Reading Challenge. On Monday I was excited to be back at John Colet School to attend the opening of new facilities. The wonderful new buildings were named Plato House and the G.S. Mane wing. I was there with the member for Mackellar, Jason Falinski; headmaster, Julian Wilcock; former headmaster Gilbert Mane, after whom the new wing was named, and his wife, Sarah Mane; head boy, Hugh Brogden; and head girl, Marley Kennedy-Jewell. It is wonderful to see John Colet School investing in our community's future. The new facilities should be places of quality teaching and interactive learning for generations to come.

### TRIBUTE TO PRIVATE PADDY BUGDEN, VC

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (16:26):** Today I pay tribute to a legendary World War I hero in my electorate, Private Paddy Bugden, and mark a centenary since he received the Victoria Cross for his bravery during the war. Last Saturday it was my great pleasure to join the President of the Alstonville RSL Sub Branch, Mark Quilligan, his lovely wife, Lyn Prentice, and members of the RSL branch and dozens of members of Paddy Bugden's ancestors and family at the hall in Alstonville to reflect on this extraordinary young man's service to the Australian community. At the commemoration ceremony we heard speeches from Rotarian John Barnes, Bugden family representative Patrick Nunan and a blessing from Father Geoff Bugden. In attendance were Doug and Kaye Baird, the parents of Corporal Cameron Baird, VC, who was the 100th Australian recipient of the Victoria Cross. He was killed in Afghanistan in 2013. His father, Doug, gave a very moving speech about how his son had spent time as a young boy reading about Paddy Bugden. In recognising the valour and bravery of young Private Paddy Bugden we took a moment to reflect and give thanks to all the men and women who have served and currently serve in our Australian defence forces.



**PORT STEPHENS NETBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:27):** Another exciting netball season is over in Port Stephens. I thank the Port Stephens Netball Association for running yet another successful and fun season. I thank president Jodi Cassar, representative convenor Sam Rumbel, secretary Shara Nebauer, minute secretary Sue Xenos, treasurer Julie Nolan, technical services convenor Laura Nolan, and games services convenor Narelle Triston. I thank all the umpires, coaches, managers, players and families for making the season such a success. I thank all the women who make my own netball club, the Medowie Netball Club, amazing. They had seven teams in the grand finals and three grand final winners. Thank you to president Cheryl Smith, vice-president Susan Riddle, secretary Kerry Whitty, treasurer Robyn Hoppe, public officer Emma Fleming, umpires convenor Cherie Edwards, and junior coordinator Taylah Whitty. Without these tireless volunteers none of us could turn up and have a great time each week.

**FORMER MAYOR OF CABONNE COUNCILLOR IAN GOSPER**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (16:28):** I recognise the recently retired Mayor of Cabonne, Councillor Ian Gosper, who served the people of Cabonne as their mayor for four years, and another two years as deputy mayor. In an act of selflessness, Ian recently retired to allow opportunity for others to build on the great work that he oversaw in his tenure and to maintain Cabonne's independence, which he fought hard to retain against the threat of a forced amalgamation. Mayor Gosper was overwhelmingly supported by his community in his battle against forced amalgamation; his leadership of Cabonne Council and dedication to his community resulted in remarkable cohesion and support. Ultimately, Mayor Gosper was triumphant in keeping Cabonne independent to continue on its path of a sustainable future.

During the past five years, Mayor Gosper accomplished many of the projects and strategies set out in the integrated planning framework, including \$91.5 million spent on roadworks and construction of new bridges; \$18 million spent on the Four Towns Sewerage Scheme; \$16.6 million spent on stage 1 of the pipeline to provide potable drinking water to Cumnock and Yeoval; and \$2.2 million spent on the redevelopment of Canowindra Swimming Pool. Residents of Cabonne are fortunate to have had Mayor Ian Gosper at the helm, an intrepid leader to steer them safely through a turbulent political storm while maintaining a pathway of growth and prosperity.

*Petitions***NURSE-TO-PATIENT RATIOS****Discussion**

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (16:30):** I was proud to present to this Parliament a petition with more than 10,000 signatures on nurse-to-patient ratios in New South Wales hospitals and I thank those around the State who have joined us to watch this discussion remotely. As the son of a nurse and a regionally based member of Parliament, I hold our hardworking nurses, especially those based in regional and rural New South Wales, in the highest regard. I am proud to place on the record my commitment to supporting our nurses in delivering the best care possible to patients throughout the State. I regularly visit and meet local nurses across my electorate. They are passionate, selfless, professional, dedicated and committed to providing first-class care. Whether nurses are working in neonatal intensive care units, emergency medicine, mental health, paediatrics—regardless—it is their commitment to giving patients the best care possible that is unwavering.

I have spoken in this place many times about the importance of equity. I firmly believe that the same opportunity should be afforded to people in New South Wales regardless of where they live. Just because they live in regional New South Wales should not disadvantage them. That is why I am in this place, the reason that I stood as a candidate for Parliament. Every day I fight to secure a fair deal, the right deal, for my regional electorate and all the regional areas of New South Wales. Whether for health care, education, transport or road infrastructure, it is the driving reason for me to do what I do. My platform for running for Parliament in 2010-11 was health care. For too long my communities were deprived of the promised hospitals and investment in health that they were promised for decades. They were let down time and time again. The Labor Government promised investment in our hospitals, but time and time again it broke those promises.

Today we are in stages 3 and 4 of the \$150 million redevelopment of Dubbo Base Hospital. Mudgee hospital is also undergoing a major redevelopment. Multiple hospitals at Forbes and Parkes and multipurpose services [MPSS] in my electorate alone have been completely refurbished under the watch of this Government, something that I am immensely proud of. I know that health care extends beyond equipment, bricks and mortar, and facilities. We need to invest in those working on the front line of our health system, the people who look after us in our most vulnerable times. The New South Wales Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' (State)

Award sets out the staffing arrangements. The award uses reasonable workload principles to make sure that nurses have a manageable workload and are able to provide the care that patients need.

In New South Wales, the award staffing arrangements include an assessment of patient safety and clinical needs. The award also uses nursing hours per patient day in suitable wards, or where nursing hours per patient day is not suitable, other specialty staffing provisions. These staffing arrangements have been enshrined in the award since 2011 following an industrial settlement with the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. Nursing hours per patient day means that specified wards are allocated an average number of nursing hours over the course of a week. Nursing hours are allocated in a flexible way to match the busiest times and patients' needs. The award staffing is the minimum staff that must be provided. Additional staff can and should be provided when needed to meet the requirements of patient care. Beyond the specific nursing hours per patient day framework, nursing and hospital management make an assessment based on a range of factors including: patient safety, clinical needs, professional judgement, previous experience and, importantly, safe systems of work to determine the optimum staffing levels.

These award provisions and nursing hours per patient day provide flexible and effective staffing levels to achieve greater alignment of the workload with patient care needs. In comparison, ratio-based staffing, which is the number of patients per nurse, is fixed and measured on a shift-by-shift basis. The fixed nature of ratios does not provide the ability to change staff numbers to match activity, thereby reducing the ability of nurse managers to allocate extra staff to patients with high-care needs. I am a big advocate of the one-size-does-not-fit-all approach. I believe this to be true in our health system. We should not be disadvantaged in the regions. Equally, the Government wants to ensure our health system can adapt. We must have a system in which our healthcare management can allocate more staff as required to specialised and high-level care.

The New South Wales Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' (State) Award aligns staffing arrangements with the hospital facility and complexity of care provided at that facility, not with the location of the facility. Again, I will not stand by and let regional communities suffer while its city cousins receive better treatment or a better allocation of resources. The type of hospital and complexity of health care that is required should be a determining factor in the allocation of practitioners, not the postcode. Aligning staffing allocations with the hospital's level of complexity ensures that the right number of staff with the right skills are available to deliver the right care, irrespective of geographical location. Referral pathways between hospitals mean that no matter where a patient lives, they can have access to the level of treatment and care that is required at that time.

Queensland and Victoria have legislated ratios that determine the number of nurses that a ward should have. Legislated ratios in those States vary according to a hospital's location. This is a point of difference between the three State systems. In Victoria and Queensland, non-metropolitan hospitals have few staff because ratios are aligned with the hospital's location. In this State, the award staffing arrangements include an assessment of patient safety and clinical needs that is most appropriate. In practice, the obligations on NSW Health as an employer that result from the award staffing requirements are comparable to a Victorian or Queensland public health employer with its legislated ratios.

Once again, I thank everyone who signed this petition. I stand by the community to ensure that we continue to provide the people of New South Wales with first-class health care, regardless of where they live. I have every faith that the Minister for Health will continue to support the nurses of this State and continue to invest in the workplaces where they deliver their outstanding care. I will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with our nurses to ensure that the New South Wales Government supports them in providing this care.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:38):** I contribute to discussion and support this petition on nurse-to-patient ratios in New South Wales hospitals, which is signed by more than 10,000 petitioners. I understand that people from rural and regional New South Wales will be watching this discussion. I thank them for their interest, their passion and their commitment to seeing equity in the healthcare system across our State. In principle, Labor supports nurse-to-patient ratios. New South Wales will always stand by its patients, nurses, doctors, and health and hospital workers, especially in regional and rural New South Wales, because we know how difficult and important their jobs are. In regional and rural New South Wales, where resources are stretched to the limit on a daily basis, nothing is more important.

In 2015 NSW Labor announced its policy to introduce nurse-to-patient ratios in a responsible manner. Labor's policy included ensuring patients in emergency departments would have ratios of one nurse to every three patients. This would have gone a long way to addressing the increasing waits patients face across the overstretched hospitals of New South Wales. Closer to the election, the shadow Minister for Health, the Hon. Walt Secord, and the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, will release our policy in this area. Sadly, our nurses and our health and hospital system are under enormous stress and pressure. We see it every single day in the communities that we represent, from Dubbo to Port Stephens. People who are seeking health support are not able to access it, and our health and hospital system lurches from crisis to crisis.

Western Sydney hospitals have the longest waits in emergency departments in New South Wales. Western Sydney is now joined by the North Coast and South Coast as being under enormous pressure. Emergency departments in Batemans Bay on the far South Coast and Lismore on the North Coast have had significant increases in presentations, jumping by 26.1 per cent and 15.3 per cent respectively. They were followed by Moree, Tamworth, Hawkesbury and Queanbeyan. In 26 hospitals there was an increase in the proportion of patients who spent longer than four hours in an emergency department, which is the national benchmark. Statewide more than a quarter of the State's patients waited longer than four hours in an emergency department. Overall emergency department presentations increased in 63 of 75 New South Wales hospitals. This is a sad state of affairs for our communities and for our health system.

The Berejiklian Government has seen an increase in the number of patients waiting for elective surgery. Elective surgery waiting lists in New South Wales are the longest in Australia. As of 30 June this year, 74,500 New South Wales patients are waiting for elective surgery. Prior to being in this place I was a health lawyer. I also represent a beautiful regional community. This issue is of immense importance to me and is one of the reasons I, like the member for Dubbo, entered this place. As a health lawyer I saw the terrible outcomes of systemic issues that resulted from a lack of resources. It is imperative that we ensure there are adequate resources to allow safe patient care. This is the crux of the petition. It is not a big ask from the people of rural and regional New South Wales.

This week I attended the launch of a report prepared by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, funded by Royal Far West. The report revealed that one in three children in rural and regional New South Wales cannot access the health care they need. This was based on facts obtained from NSW Health, so I am not making this up. This is an outrageous indictment on a system and a government that continues to pursue its obsession with building toll roads and stadiums in Sydney yet leaves our children in rural and regional communities unable to access the health care they need. There is no bigger indictment. The agenda of this Government and its absolute obsession with infrastructure is not delivering outcomes for our communities. I thank all the petitioners and those who have signed this petition for their commitment and passion to try to correct the imbalance between the health care in rural and regional New South Wales and the health care that is delivered elsewhere.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:43):** I am pleased to speak in support of the petition presented to the House by the member for Dubbo. I acknowledge the contribution made by the member for Port Stephens on behalf of her community. I take this opportunity to recognise the amazing nurses in our public hospitals, whether they work on the wards of our hospitals, in our community health centres or in any capacity in our electorates. They are dedicated and committed people. While I was a nurse at Port Macquarie Base Hospital and in an aged care facility, I considered it a privilege to work alongside them. I now consider it an honour, as other members do, to be able to serve them in this place.

I will reiterate the point made by my colleague the member for Dubbo that, in the New South Wales public health system, staffing arrangements for nurses and midwives are contained in an award of the Industrial Relations Commission. These award provisions reflect an industrial agreement between the Department of Health and the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association that was reached in 2011. The staffing arrangements backed by the award explicitly acknowledge that the employer has a responsibility to provide reasonable workloads for nurses and midwives. Reasonable workloads assist in providing a sustainable health system for the people of New South Wales, including in the regions, which not only meets present health needs but also plans for the health needs of the future.

The provision of health services in the twenty-first century is highly complex and multi-factorial, frequently requiring contributions and input from our dedicated staff across a number of classifications and specialities. Integrated care and customised treatment plans reflect this reality. Reasonable workload principles, nursing hours per patient day in suitable wards, and units accounted for over the period of a week together with other specialty staffing provisions are used by NSW Health. Additionally, management makes an assessment based on a range of factors, including patient safety, clinical needs, professional judgement, previous experience and safe systems of work to determine the optimum staffing levels. The award staffing is the minimum staff that must be provided. Additional staff can be provided when needed to meet patient care needs.

By contrast, ratio-based staffing is fixed and measured on a shift-by-shift basis. While it has the attraction of a simple and easily conveyed approach to staffing, it does not provide the ability to flex and scale staff numbers to match activity. Nor does it fully recognise the complexity and nuances of patient mix and service delivery provision. The benefit of nursing hours per patient day compared to ratios is that the staffing on any given shift can be altered to match the activity and demand. This means that managers can move the staff numbers up and down to match peaks and troughs in patient needs across a week.

It is acknowledged that the people who have signed the petition presented by the member for Dubbo want assurance that the people of New South Wales will continue to have access to world-class health services.

The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government shares this commitment. However, this commitment is best met by continuing the present staffing arrangements, rather than moving to ratios in a similar manner to Victoria or Queensland. The approach in New South Wales is the better approach.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:46):** I support the more than 10,000 people who signed this petition presented by the member for Dubbo regarding their concerns about nurse-to-patient ratios. As the Minister just said, it is necessary to acknowledge the important and wonderful work done by our nurses, midwives and ancillary health workers and doctors in this State and it is also important to acknowledge that they are doing it pretty tough. We can argue about the exact mode of delivery but it is very clear from this petition that people in regional areas are not getting the same health care as people in the city under this Government and the existing two-tier system of provision.

Country hospitals have fewer nursing staff, which compromises the safety of our patients. It is all very well for members of the Government to say, "We are better than this or that," and fudge the figures. At the end of the day, people have signed this petition because when they have not felt comfortable to leave their family members in a hospital overnight. They have seen for themselves the extreme lack of staffing in those hospitals during the day and they are very concerned about what will happen to their loved ones. This issue hits at the heart of the health system. Labor took to the last election a policy to introduce nurse-to-patient ratios in a responsible manner. That would ensure, for example, patients in emergency departments would have a ratio of one nurse for every three patients.

When we talk about health we need to look at the record of the Government. It is now more than six years, nearly 2,500 days, since those opposite made promises to my community in relation to Maitland Hospital but it has not delivered them. People in my community wait more than 30 per cent longer than four hours in the emergency department. This is a real concern. On this side of the House we are very concerned about people in regional areas. It takes more than just yelling over people, showing disrespect in the House and ignoring people in our country regions by putting out nice little statements. Those on the other side need to look at the real concerns of the citizens. If they will not listen to me, they should listen to the 10,000 people who signed the petition lodged by the member for Dubbo. Those people are not happy with those opposite and will boot them out at the next election.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **GERMAN-AUSTRIAN CLUB SIXTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:50):** I congratulate the German-Austrian Club on its sixty-first anniversary as it continues to maintain the traditional customs and cultures of the German-Austrian community. Last Saturday night I attended the sixty-first anniversary dinner. It is important that clubs such as this preserve their traditions and customs and share them with the rest of our diverse community. I congratulate President Walter Schmied, his wife, Rita, and members of the German-Austrian Society for their hard work to keep the German-Austrian Club alive and well. The German-Austrian Club remains an icon in Cabramatta. The club originated in 1956 and is the organiser of the original Fairfield Oktoberfest. The forty-seventh Oktoberfest will officially open on Saturday 30 September when club President Walter Schmied taps the first barrel of beer and cries out, "O'zapft is!"—"It's tapped!" The motto for Oktoberfest is: "Live and let live. Eat and drink well." I wish an early and happy Oktoberfest to all.

#### **SYLVANIA HEIGHTS NETBALL CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:51):** I celebrate the Sylvania Heights Netball Club, which has had two teams reach the Sutherland Shire Netball Association grand final on 26 August 2017. It was an incredibly successful season for the club's 11AR team which was undefeated and finished on top of the ladder. Congratulations to the 11AR team on its grand final victory over the Loftus Zircons, the talented players being: Mikayla Dewes, Georgia Knight, Charlotte Sauer, Jacinta Laverance, Chloe Smith, Indie Shanahan, Alyssa Newman, Brylie Caldwell, Tiffany Lausen, and their coach, Hayley Smith. I acknowledge also the 10B3 team, who were runners-up in a tough grand final against Jannali. I had the pleasure of presenting the awards to Lillian Bourke, Olivia Yates, Summer Oakman, Sarah Bourke, Kayla Jotevski, Ella Peters, Chloe Mears, Lila Jotevski, Imogen Hattersley, and their coach, Tamlyn Mears. Congratulations again to Sylvania Heights Netball Club on a fantastic year, and best wishes for the 2018 season.

#### **ROCKDALE ELECTORATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (16:52):** I recognise the strong results for Labor candidates across the Bayside local government area at the local government elections on 9 September. In the former Rockdale council area Labor saw increases of its primary vote of around 10 per cent in most areas. I am very pleased to see seven Labor councillors elected to the council. After a year with no elected representatives taking

care of the local council, I welcome the return of democratically elected councillors to make decisions on behalf of and for the benefit of residents.

Congratulations not just to the Labor councillors but to all those elected who now have the significant task of bringing the community back together and getting to the bottom of the many issues which have arisen as a result of amalgamation—including the reported cost blowout which is now predicted to be over \$8 million. Well done to Joe Awada, Liz Barlow, Ron Bezic, Ed McDougall, Vicki Poulos, James Macdonald, Tarek Ibrahim, Michael Nagi, Dorothy Rapisardi, Christina Curry, Scott Morrissey, Paul Sedrak, Bill Saravinovski, Petros Kalligas and Andrew Tsounis on becoming elected.

#### **JUSTICES OF THE PEACE**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:53):** I acknowledge the justices of the peace who commemorated 50 years of service on Tuesday at a presentation with the Attorney General, the Hon. Mark Speakman. Justices of the peace are an integral part of the community and the legal system in New South Wales. The Attorney General noted that the 347 justices of the peace recognised on Tuesday had provided more than 17,000 hours of service as independent witnesses of statutory declarations and affidavits, and certifying copies of original documents. It was a pleasure to accompany Mr Ronald Torr as the Attorney General presented him with a certificate celebrating his 50 years of service to the people of New South Wales. I acknowledge also the other Seven Hills 50-year justices of the peace, including David Letford, Dennis Spillane and Robert Susans. As the patron of the Cumberland branch of the NSW Justices Association, I congratulate all those who have given so much to their community for the vast majority of their lives.

#### **LANSVALE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:54):** Last weekend I had the pleasure of joining with past and present students, families, teachers and staff to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Lansvale East Public School. I acknowledge the hard work of Principal Rebecca Challenor, current staff and students, and all those who have contributed to making Lansvale East Public School a shining beacon of public education for the past 50 years. The school accommodates approximately 155 children with a staff of 25 teachers and teachers aides. Known as the best little school on the river, its motto of "Upright, Steadfast, True" would resonate with many past and present students. The skills that the students have learnt have served them and our local community admirably. Lansvale East Public School is an example of an organisation that is small in size but huge in heart. I congratulate everyone who has contributed to the school reaching this significant milestone.

#### **JUSTICE OF THE PEACE MARGARET RUDD**

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:55):** Justices of the peace play an integral role in our communities. They are volunteers who come from all walks of life and sections of the community. Each is appointed by the Governor of New South Wales and swears to "do right to all manner of people, after the laws and usages of the State of New South Wales, without fear or favour, affection or ill-will". They are best known for providing the services of certifying documents and witnessing the signing of affidavits and statutory declarations. Most importantly, they are trusted to be honest, careful and impartial whilst performing their duties.

This week I was fortunate enough to welcome one such South Coast volunteer to Parliament House to celebrate 50 years of service as a justice of the peace. Mrs Margaret Rudd, who I have known for many years, having taught her grandchildren, travelled from Ulladulla to Sydney to be honoured at a ceremony with Attorney General Mark Speakman. I thank the Attorney General for a wonderful event. South Coast locals Brian John Smith and Alan Pendleton also reached 50 years of service this year. I congratulate Margaret, John and Alan and thank them for their many years of dedication to our community.

#### **TRIBUTE TO DYLAN BOLCH**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:56):** I acknowledge the achievements of Dylan Bolch, who is a wonderful example of the fantastic young tradespeople we have in Lake Macquarie. From the suburb of Woodrising, Dylan is a 22-year-old welder who has been chosen to join an elite team of young tradespeople to represent Australia at the WorldSkills international competition in Abu Dhabi in October. Dylan learned his trade at the Tighes Hill campus of TAFE and is now employed by Macquarie Manufacturing at Rathmines. More than 3,000 participants from 77 countries will compete in the Abu Dhabi competition for which Dylan has taken on an arduous training schedule and skills improvement program with two highly regarded mentors since winning a national welding title in Melbourne last year. Lake Macquarie is fortunate to have a highly skilled workforce in manufacturing and the traditional trades, and Dylan's skills are reflective of a new generation that will make sure we will continue to have a skilled workforce in our region. I am pleased to recognise Dylan's efforts in this Parliament.

### COASTAL WARRIORS MID NORTH COAST

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:57):** I recognise Port Macquarie-Hastings environmental community group Coastal Warriors Mid North Coast. Passionate about tackling the issue of litter in the Port Macquarie-Hastings area, Port Macquarie residents Addam Lockley and Liam McAlary formed the volunteer group to address the problem of waste in the region. The men were spurred into action after attending a Clean Up Australia Day event at Town Beach in March. Addam and Liam have their members planning to meet once a month either at a beach or park to collect rubbish. Sixty volunteers pitched in to collect rubbish during the Coastal Warriors 2 September effort along the Hastings River foreshore.

A spokesperson for the Coastal Warriors said that the group has identified cigarette butts as by far the biggest problem. In just a few hours the volunteers collected 7,060 cigarette butts, 950 whole and remnant pieces of plastic packaging, 100 aluminium cans, 83 glass bottles and 106 metres of fishing line. Tackling the litter problem on the foreshore is a priority because once it enters the ocean it travels far and wide and becomes a danger for marine life and all of us. The Coastal Warriors next clean-up is on Saturday 7 October, targeting Rainbow Beach at Bonny Hills. I applaud Addam Lockley and Liam McAlary for their community spirit and dedication to their local environment.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### NOBBYS BEACH WHALE BURIAL

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:58):** An incident in Port Macquarie has attracted much attention throughout this week. On Sunday I received advice that a National Parks and Wildlife Service team was called to attend to a 12-metre humpback whale that was entangled in ropes and floats off Port Macquarie. The team successfully disentangled the whale with assistance from Marine Rescue and the Organisation for the Rescue and Research of Cetaceans in Australia, known as ORRCA. Sadly, the whale was in poor condition, emaciated and covered in lice. A shark was also nearby. The humpback whale died on Monday morning and was washed onto Nobbys Beach at Port Macquarie. On Monday afternoon Marine Rescue and others made attempts to tow the carcass out to sea; however, it was wedged on rocks and could not be moved in that manner.

This presented Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service with some significant challenges with regard to what to do with the carcass because there is no direct vehicular access to this beach and, therefore, no simple way of disposing of it. With the assistance of a local contractor and an excavator that managed to traverse the embankment down to the beach, on Monday afternoon the carcass was buried some 3.5 metres deep and covered in clay and sand.

Since this action was taken there has been considerable community angst about the decision to bury the carcass on the beach for fear that this could attract sharks to the area for months and possibly years as the whale decomposes and the oil leaches into the ocean. Regardless of whether there is any evidence or data that supports this view of a potential risk, I can understand the community concerns that have been raised with me. I also advise the House that, as at 3 p.m., the VR4G listening station off Lighthouse Beach at Port Macquarie has detected eight sharks since Sunday. The VR4G listening device was installed in February 2016 as part of the Government's Shark Management Strategy.

This morning a Department of Primary Industries drone spotted a 2 metre to 2.5 metre unidentified shark north of Nobbys Beach. Last night at the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council meeting councillors requested that the general manager contact me to discuss the availability of financial support from the State Government to assist with the cost of disposing of the carcass. I can confirm to the House that I spoke with the council's general manager, Craig Swift-McNair, early this morning and have also been in constant contact this week with the Minister for Primary Industries, the Hon. Niall Blair, and the Minister for Lands, the Hon. Paul Toole, to advocate for funding so that our community can continue to feel safe when enjoying our pristine and very popular beaches. As the school holidays approach and with the predicted warmer weather, I want everyone—visitors and locals alike—to be safe.

I have secured an emergency Crown Lands grant of up to \$50,000 that has been made available to the council from the Public Reserve Management Fund to cover the cost of removing the whale carcass from Nobby's Beach and to transport it to landfill. I thank Minister Toole for approving this funding request so promptly and for understanding the urgent nature of this issue. Like the majority of beaches in New South Wales, Nobbys Beach is on Crown Land. Port Macquarie-Hastings Council is the Reserve Trust Manager and is responsible for the care, control and management of the beach.

With the raising of the flags heralding the start of surf patrols on Saturday and the commencement of school holidays, Surf Life Saving NSW is working with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council to commence continual daylight little ripper drone surveillance at Town Beach, Flynn's Beach, and possibly other local beaches over the

school holiday period. This morning I also met with the new chief executive officer of Surf Life Saving NSW, Steven Pearce, to be briefed on the latest drone activity.

I assure local residents in the Port Macquarie area and the visitors who will be frequenting our beaches in the weeks ahead that everything possible is being done to ensure that our patrolled beaches remain safe for all beach users. However, it is an opportune time to remind beach users that the safest place to swim is at a patrolled beach and between the flags. Of course with hot weather predicted to start tomorrow and as we move into the swimming season, we should thank Surf Life Saving NSW volunteers for their tireless work, and I particularly thank the mid North Coast volunteers. They give up their time to protect us on our beautiful beaches and in the surf.

### DISABILITY SERVICES

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:02):** I acknowledge the many disability advocacy organisations in my electorate of Canterbury and across New South Wales. I commend the work they have done, particularly in my community. Ours is a multicultural community and we have faced many issues, including disability employment—we still do—and accessing transport. A damning report was tabled today in the other place on disability units in schools. This State has a long way to go to deal with disability inclusion, and that is why disability advocacy is vital.

I place on the record my grave concerns about the future of funding for New South Wales disability advocacy from 1 July 2018. I cannot overstate the invaluable contribution that advocacy groups make to the lives of those living with disability. They work to have legislation changed to ensure that people with disabilities get employment, that they can access transport and that their rights are preserved. Funding disability advocacy ensures that people with disabilities have equal access to community participation and that their human rights are protected. The National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS], which was supported by and is adhered to by all governments, makes clear its recognition of the importance of both individual and systemic advocacy. It is essential in ensuring that people with disability have the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their lives and advance their rights, wellbeing and interests.

The Minister said that the NDIS will not fund advocacy. He should check the bilateral agreement signed by State governments and the Federal Government. The New South Wales Government funds about 50 disability advocacy, information and peak representational organisations at a cost of around \$13 million a year. This will be significantly reduced and many of the organisations that represent people in my electorate and others will no longer continue. The Federal Government has announced funding of \$60 million until 2020. It has made it very clear that a national system "requires ongoing investment from States and Territories for their own State-run services and State-based planning". With grossly inadequate funding to New South Wales disability advocacy organisations there is concern that many people with disability will suffer the consequences, especially those living in regional and rural New South Wales, and people from multicultural backgrounds, and that it will result in reduced local advocacy on issues, including transport, education, employment and health.

In August this year NSW Labor hosted the New South Wales Disability Advocacy Alliance Parliamentary Roundtable. It was attended by representatives of advocacy groups from across the State: Physical Disability Council of NSW; Family Advocacy; People with Disability Australia; Information on Disability Education and Awareness Services; Intellectual Disability Rights Services; Citizen Advocacy Western Sydney; Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW; First Peoples Disability Network; Carers NSW; Disability Advocacy NSW; and NSW Council for Intellectual Disability. We heard some personal stories from the organisational representatives. The disastrous effect these cuts will have on people with a disability were made very clear and the impact on services in regional New South Wales was glaringly apparent—for example, New England, 1.5 advocates cut and office closure, meaning 175 fewer people with disability assisted per year; Central West, 2.5 advocates cut and office closure, meaning 300 fewer people with disability assisted each year; and the list goes on.

The Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, has committed to continue funding for disability advocacy groups. Yesterday, together with a number of crossbench members of Parliament—Ms Dawn Walker, The Greens; Mr Alex Greenwich and Mr Greg Piper, Independent members; Mr Philip Donato, Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party; the Hon. Paul Green, Christian Democratic Party—we united with our disability advocates led by Serena Ovens from the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance on one front—namely, we are urging the Premier and her Government to listen. This should not be a political matter. This is about advancing people's rights and inclusion in New South Wales. I call on the Government to fund disability advocacy post 1 July 2018.

**PERTH2PAMBULA**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (17:07):** Tonight it is with much pleasure that I inform the House about Dane Waites. Dane is a young fellow from the far South Coast who developed a passion for running as a child. His mother, June, is also an incredibly special person. I have known Dane for many years and regard him as a friend. In fact, I could not speak of a finer humanist than Dane. He is now an elite athlete and is currently running across Australia from Perth to his home town of Pambula. Those who follow him on Facebook day by day will understand how incredibly special the dream to complete this run is to Dane.

Dane has overcome many obstacles in his life. As a child he was diagnosed with classic autism, accompanied by the general notions that children with autism will not achieve in life. Up to this point Dane has achieved more than most will ever achieve in their lifetimes. He is an overachiever. He has met the challenges head on; he has learned to communicate and to recognise emotions, and he has made lifelong friendships. Dane does not forget a face. Because of his athletic ability, he has represented Australia at the Special Olympics. It was not uncommon in recent months, in the lead-up to his embarking on this amazing journey across Australia, to see Dane pounding away, running anywhere from 30 kilometres to 50 kilometres a day, six days a week, in training for his great passion and aspiration to run across Australia. However, he took Fridays off to go dancing, which is another one of Dane's passions.

Dane's dream is for others to realise that living with autism should not stop them living their dream, and that a great life can be achieved. He is running about 4,000 kilometres over a three-month period, with his primary focus on raising awareness but also to raise some dollars along the way. He is donating the funds raised along this amazing journey to a whole raft of causes including Autism Spectrum Australia, beyondblue, and Autism CRC. He departed Belmont, Western Australia, on 18 June with his beautiful mother, June, and his incredible support team. They have now spent 13 weeks running across the Nullarbor Plain and across South Australia. Very pleasingly, he will reach Pambula in the next week or so.

The beauty of Facebook in this instance is that Dane is constantly on Facebook highlighting his adventures and the people he has met along the way. On many occasions in the course of his journey he has noted on Facebook the many humble Australians who have given him care and support as he embarks on this journey. Dane's dream—Perth2Pambula—was created with his late father 14 years ago. The whole idea of running from Perth to Pambula was a dream that Dane is now fulfilling, and with incredible passion. What he is going to achieve within three months far exceeds what most of us could achieve in a lifetime. It is extremely touching and inspirational.

I urge all members to go to the Facebook page Perth2Pambula and have a look at what Dane has achieved thus far. It will be very exciting when he runs into Pambula in a week or so. I know the community will be out in force to embrace him and welcome him with open arms as he completes running 4,000 kilometres over three months. He should be very proud that, even with his disabilities, he has been able to achieve something so extraordinary. Dane is an incredible person and an incredible community champion and this entire country can be incredibly proud of him.

**WEST DAPTO AND ALBION PARK RAIL BYPASS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:12):** On Tuesday of this week, the *Illawarra Mercury* broke the news that Dapto could be cut off from the Albion Park Rail bypass. It seems that Roads and Maritime Services has refused to confirm whether an interchange will be constructed at Yallah to service the residents of West Dapto as part of the completed project. The direct quote provided to the *Illawarra Mercury* states:

Funding is yet to be allocated for the Yallah interchange as modelling shows it is not required until there is a substantial increase in traffic.

What would qualify as a substantial increase in traffic? Apparently not the 50,000 new residents who will settle in the area in the coming two decades. West Dapto is set to become a mini-city, rivalling the Shellharbour local government area in the next 20 years, with approximately 19,000 new dwellings, and yet its entire population will not be granted access to this major infrastructure project. If this interchange and the on-off ramps are not constructed, the communities of West Dapto will be cut off from the M1 and will be forced to continue using the Princes Highway, even after the project's completion. Residents will be forced to allow over 30 per cent more time for their journeys. They will be forced to use 16 additional intersections and to sit at a further six sets of traffic lights—more than any other community in our region.

To deliberately cut off thousands of hardworking Illawarra residents from the region's main arterial roads, and unfairly exclude an entire community from the benefits of this road, is simply unfair. The residents of West Dapto deserve to receive the same benefits and opportunities from this project as the rest of the region. Just



yesterday, the *Illawarra Mercury* published my community's response to this piece of news in an article called "Residents angry that Dapto could miss out on bypass". The public have been quick to voice their views on these designs, and it is time the Government started to listen.

This anger and bitter disappointment is, in my opinion, completely justified, especially considering how the project has been sold to residents over the past few months by the member for Kiama. For example, on 23 August—less than one month ago—the member for Kiama released a statement saying that the Albion Park Rail bypass was what "our community and commuters deserve". Shockingly, "our community" apparently no longer includes West Dapto. Most shamefully of all, on 12 September—less than two weeks ago—the member for Kiama said that this project would "complete the missing link for a highway between Sydney and Bomaderry and provide easy access to Dapto". To explicitly mention that the Albion Park Rail bypass would provide easy access to the area of Dapto, to publicly commit to this design and to backflip just nine days later is nothing short of a betrayal of local residents.

Finally, on the website of the member for Kiama, under the heading "Project History", he has also promised people in my electorate that the bypass "will make it easier to get to Dapto", and will allow these communities to bypass 16 intersections and cut travel times by about 30 per cent. The member for Kiama has repeatedly told the Dapto community that they will benefit from this project. He has specifically mentioned the residents in this area. Sadly, this is just one more broken promise we can add to the now frustratingly long list. We will list this broken promise right below the once-promised, no-catch \$251 million upgrade of Shellharbour Public Hospital, the disappointment about Dapto TAFE's gutting, the removal of Service NSW from Shellharbour, the lack of educational infrastructure for West Dapto, and Dapto station's dangerously overcrowded commuter car park.

It should come as no surprise to this House to learn that the recently completed Berry bypass was thoughtfully designed and made accessible to the entire Berry community. However, the same clearly cannot be said for the Dapto community—simply because its residents are in a different electorate. We cannot allow this project to become a political issue. It now makes sense that, when I requested a meeting with the Minister about this project, my office received the following response just last week. The response was that "the Minister has a very busy schedule and at this stage she is unable to meet with you". I understand that the cost of this project has already blown out by more than \$100 million dollars, but the community of West Dapto should not be forced to pay the price for this Government's mismanagement.

The Government is currently considering two options. Only one of those designs makes sense. For the past six years this piece of infrastructure has been called "much-needed", "long-awaited" and "overdue" by this Government. However, just as the construction date has finally appeared on the horizon, this Government has decided to start cutting corners and asking our community to compromise. To overlook one of the fastest-growing areas in New South Wales and give the residents of West Dapto zero consideration in this plan is not only short sighted but also cruel, considering how long this bypass has been planned and publicised in our region. We have a responsibility to ensure that local infrastructure development keeps pace with expected population growth. It is also our duty to ensure that the residents of West Dapto are provided with the same opportunities and advantages as the rest of our region. I call on this Government to listen to the residents of my electorate, to commit to this project without compromise, and to build the Yallah interchange and the on-off ramps for the residents of West Dapto. [*Time expired.*]

### ULLADULLA HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:17):** Nothing delights me more than speaking in this Chamber about public education and our public schools, particularly those in the South Coast electorate. Like other members, I try to get around to all the schools in my electorate to see what is going on. It will be no surprise to members that I have a particular affinity with Ulladulla High School, because I began teaching there when the school opened in 1976. It had been part of Milton Central School before that but it was a brand-new high school way back then, with 20 to 30 staff and about 200 students. The school is still on the same site.

The history of Ulladulla High School is, in many ways, fascinating but also frustrating. Over the years the school has grown exponentially. Upon my election to this place in 2003, the expansion and upgrade of the school was one of the first fights I took up, joining with the community to secure a multimillion-dollar upgrade of the school in order to cater for the growing population in Ulladulla and the southern Shoalhaven region. Unfortunately, the need for the upgrade was not just about enrolments; the condition of the facilities was a major concern. There were 32 demountable classrooms on site, with most taking up space in playing areas and on sporting fields. The situation was absolutely unacceptable.

I have heard the shadow Minister, a former colleague of mine at Ulladulla High School, talk about demountables becoming a part of the furniture. That is pretty rich coming from him because under his Government

the number of demountables at Ulladulla High School grew to 32. It was his Labor Government that did nothing to address this issue. When I first spoke in this House about how unacceptable it was to have 32 demountable classrooms on site, the situation was at breaking point. Then, because the school had not been redeveloped appropriately, the sewerage pipes burst and untreated sewage flowed all over the playground. That was the story of Ulladulla High School under Labor. It is hypocritical for the shadow Minister or anyone else to stand in this place and say they did a great job for 16 years when I saw firsthand that they did not. That shameful episode is one of the reasons I am in this place.

Ulladulla High School has now been redeveloped and it is fantastic. The horrible situation I described is history. We have completed a great redevelopment with many new works including flexible learning spaces and new multipurpose halls. It is now a fantastic high school with three storeys and a lift. Who could have known that that would happen to Ulladulla High School? Now, however, the school is constrained by its site and we cannot expand it any further. The South Coast electorate continues to grow. This is understandable because it is a beautiful place to live and people want to live there and retire there. We must look to the future now and ask what we can do. We do not want to get to the stage we had under Labor where they were happy to have 32 demountable classrooms on site, taking up playing fields. I note that the member for Maitland is sighing about that. Yes, there was much to sigh about when those kids had to suffer raw sewage flowing over their playground.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** We have had that at Gillieston under your Government.

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK:** As usual, the member for Maitland has no idea what she is talking about.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Maitland that members should not interject during private members' statements.

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK:** We now have a real opportunity to create a second high school for southern Shoalhaven. It is opportune that Shoalhaven Anglican School will close completely at the end of this year. They have been operating a trade training school for some time but they have decided to close it. I am keen for the Government to look at purchasing that entire school. In my view, it would be much cheaper to purchase this school than to build a new high school. I do not wish to wait until the situation becomes as dire as it was before. I have met with the Minister for Education and he has listened to my concerns and views about purchasing the former Shoalhaven Anglican School site.

A more serious issue with that site is the Gumnut kinder preschool that would be a part of the possible sale of that school. They are likely to close at the end of the year if that is the case, with 80 families and 15 staff affected. I call on the Government and the Minister for Education to look at possible support for the purchase of that school site. I also urge the Gumnut kinder facility to apply for a subdivision to prevent it from closing. I have spoken to the local council and I think it will look upon that subdivision favourably. If we can integrate the preschool with a new high school situated in Milton, which would take enrolments from Milton Public School and other primary schools in the area, it would be a great solution and a great thing for public education in the Ulladulla region.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:23):** I thank the member for South Coast for raising this important issue in the House. We on this side of the House have a long track record in increasing funding in education. In the recent State budget we saw a record spend in education—\$15.7 billion is allocated in the current financial year in the State budget. This includes \$4 million over the next four years for building new and improved schools to cater for surging public school enrolments. This is a record spend in public education and I am sure that through her hard work and track record the member for South Coast will be able to deliver for her electorate.

#### **RAPE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:23):** I inform the House about the decision of the Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia [RDVSA] to cease operating its contract under the 1800RESPECT national counselling service. This is a decision that will affect everyone in our State and, indeed, in our nation, particularly those in my electorate of Maitland. The issues of domestic violence and rape are really important. Rape and Domestic Violence Services previously operated a trauma-informed service for the Government. Going into the 2016 election, there was a clear indication that more funds were needed to cope with the growing demands for the world-best trauma-informed counselling provided by this provider. The need for more funding was determined on the basis that this service was providing to people from the royal commission into child sexual abuse and that there was an increased focus on domestic violence through the awareness-raising programs that were being undertaken by the Federal Government.

The sum total of trying to up that commitment would have been in the order of some \$3 million to \$4 million at the most, and yet the Federal Government, in its wisdom, decided to put that out to tender. It also triaged the service through the Medibank Health Services [MHS] so that people calling a domestic violence or

rape crisis centre had to be triaged. That went against all established practices. It is very clear from lots of learnings in this space that when victims of rape or domestic violence have to tell their story multiple times to different people who are not experts or good at taking those referrals, they do not proceed to counselling or court, we do not get convictions and perpetrators continue to offend. It goes against every principle of prevention that we as governments in this nation would have. It is a shame. That was the Federal Government's first response. It then called for an expression of interest from Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia to tender for that service.

It was then awarded not to RDVSA but to four different services, breaking up the expertise across the nation. It also put constraints around RDVSA that made it untenable for it to have the contract. The Government demanded that all files be provided to MHS, which would be subject to subpoenas. If anyone has ever listened to a rape victim talking about their experiences they will usually say "What could I have done?" as part of their emotional response. That is a natural, human thing. But if we see perpetrators accessing that kind of information from counselling files and then using that against them in court, we will see a perpetuation of the victim blaming that has happened in sexual assault cases in this nation and around the world since time immemorial. RDVSA was established by women in our community almost 50 years ago who recognised a need for men, women, and children who have been victims of sexual assault and domestic violence to receive specialist support. RDVSA has been doing that as 1800RESPECT as part of the national plan to reduce violence against women and children.

RDVSA is now in the appalling situation where it will not be able to provide that service. Under the arrangements with the Federal Government, staff were told that their new contract would be for less than their current contract. Special service providers would have their pay cut by \$70,000. This is an appalling contract that affects not only the employees of RDVSA but also its many clients. We need to see what the Government is going to do here, because there are up to 70 frontline domestic violence and sexual assault counsellors in our State who probably will lose their jobs as a result of this untenable and unfair contract being offered. These workers will not get redundancies because, as a not-for-profit operator, RDVSA will not have enough money for redundancies. We will call on the Government to step up and provide redundancies for those employees. We need to make sure this important service continues in the limited capacity it will have going forward.

#### AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations)**  
**(17:29):** I inform the House of concerns raised by my constituents on a move by some local councils, including neighbouring councils, to cancel official Australia Day celebrations. The date 26 January is an important day for every Australian. It is about more than just the landing of the First Fleet or the raising of the flag at Sydney Cove. Australia Day is a recognition of all that makes this country great. It is a celebration of our history and our heritage, our freedom and our future. It is a day when we proudly welcome new citizens to be part of the unfolding Australian story. However, there are disturbing signs that a minority of activists are now using our national day to divide our nation. Three local councils—Yarra, Darebin and Moreland—have decided to cancel celebrations, scrap citizenship ceremonies and remove any notion of Australia Day from their local communities.

They have based this on the premise that celebrating Australia Day is offensive to Indigenous Australians and we should be more inclusive by moving it to another day. The current plight of our First Peoples in this country should be a source of continued national shame. On nearly every social indicator—health and education to levels of incarceration—many Indigenous communities are trapped in a seemingly inescapable cycle of dysfunction and despair. Like many Australians, I have witnessed these conditions firsthand. I have met with people and communities who feel the pain of their current circumstances. But I can assure members that dividing the nation by cancelling Australia Day will not make one iota of practical difference to these communities. It will not serve to educate one further Indigenous child, save one family from poverty or rescue one community from despair.

What is needed is positive action—action that is inclusive, not divisive. Being inclusive does not mean we erase one part of our history to promote another. Being inclusive means we celebrate everything that makes us who we are. As Stan Grant has recognised, our country has three distinct histories that have shaped our nation: our Indigenous heritage, the British legacy and the richness of our migrant story. Australia is unique precisely because of the way that these different traditions have blended and enriched each other. I believe we should continue to proudly celebrate Australia Day on 26 January because it is an important marker of our western heritage that has been instrumental in forming this country. Over past generations we have seen our nation take steps to address our past and include our Indigenous communities in our nation's progress.

I believe it is now time to take the next step to celebrate our Indigenous heritage. We have an opportunity to grow as a nation by sharing more fully in the history and heritage of our Indigenous brothers and sisters, to acknowledge the sorrows but also share in the richness of a culture that has graced these shores for tens of thousands of years. A new national day to celebrate the Indigenous story would bring our nation together. I echo the calls by Federal Labor member Linda Burney that we should have a second national holiday to recognise and

celebrate Indigenous culture and heritage, and its contribution to our national identity. That is what being inclusive means: bringing people together to celebrate the good, not dividing our nation into warring camps.

It is instructive that all the councils banning Australia Day have come from the inner city. They are councils dominated by The Greens and the Socialist Alliance, which are in no way representative of mainstream Australia or the real Indigenous communities they claim to speak for. They are turning what should be a time of unity into a time of conflict. They are practising politics of division, pitting Australian against Australian, where everyone ends up losing. I regret to say it has been brought to my attention that the Labor Mayor of the Blue Mountains, which neighbours the electorate of Hawkesbury, recently rejected a motion to affirm Australia Day as 26 January.

What started with The Greens is now moving into the Labor Party. As we have seen so often, where The Greens are today Labor will be tomorrow. That is why it is time for the New South Wales Labor Party to come clean and to be honest with the community about where it really stands. I call upon the Opposition to condemn Labor councillors in New South Wales and elsewhere who are threatening to undermine our national day. I call upon the Opposition to affirm its support for Australia Day, our national heritage and our national story in a spirit of solidarity with the whole Australian community. I call upon the Opposition to help bring people together rather than driving them apart.

#### NANA GLEN HALL

#### WOOLGOOLGA CURRYFEST

**Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (17:39):** This weekend I will attend two events. I compliment the organisers of both. The first will be held early Saturday morning celebrating the opening of the extension to the Nana Glen hall. For those who do not know where Nana Glen is, it is the home of Russel Crowe. Garry Dew is a well-known resident of Nana Glen. Garry and the committee have been working for a number years to upgrade the hall. It is utilised by many community groups for functions and meetings. On Saturday I will open the extension that was partially funded by a government grant. In small communities such as Nana Glen a meeting place for the community is essential. The community members work tirelessly, volunteering their labour and time to supplement the government grant.

Following that event and celebration at Nana Glen I will travel to the Woolgoolga Curry Festival. I compliment Mrs Pamela Fayle and the committee that organises the curryfest. It was the first curryfest in New South Wales and this year will be the twelfth year of celebration. There is a strong Sikh community in Woolgoolga, many of whom turn up to the festival wearing their turbans. It is a fun day. Preparations begin at daybreak, but it officially opens from 10 o'clock. The Lions Club, Rotary Club and the community assist with the preparations. They charge a family \$5 for entry, and it is a day of fun and activity. There are Punjabi dancers from Sydney and many community groups provide entertainment on the day.

Last year I posted on Facebook a blindfolded man wielding a sword to cut bananas in half on top of a person's head—without injuring the person. The skill displayed was amazing. In years past I may have volunteered to have a turban placed on my head, but I did not volunteer to be a part of that act. It drew great applause from the crowd, as did the dancers. The range of food is representative of the diverse ethnic backgrounds in the community. There will be at least 15 varieties of food from locations around the world. It is a fantastic family day. I compliment the Woolgoolga community, the Sikh community and the people of Coffs Harbour.

People travel from Sydney and Newcastle to this festival. The money raised goes back into the community via the service clubs and committee that organises it. The State Government sponsors this regional community event. It is growing in size, stature and reputation across New South Wales. If I get in a cab in Sydney that is driven by a Sikh and if I mention that I am from Coffs Harbour the driver will speak of the Sikh games or the curryfest and tell me of his attendance or intention to attend. I encourage members to attend for the weekend. If not this year, come next year and celebrate the delicious curries from mild to very hot. I am mid range.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** No vindaloo?

**Mr ANDREW FRASER:** Some of the vindaloos are not too bad, but while I give curry in this place I like to eat my curries a little milder than what I dish out here. I compliment the committee of the Nana Glen hall and the committee for the curry festival at Woolgoolga.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** I believe the member for Coffs Harbour can speak a few words of Punjabi.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER:** *Sat sri akaal je.*

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** I welcome to the Parliament my brother John Provest and his son Tom.

### **VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:39):** I note that the New South Wales Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017 will soon be debated in the Legislative Council. This bill strikes at the heart of so many in our community. There is nothing more fundamental than a person's right to treatment, palliative care and support when dealing with a terminal or life-changing illness. Previously in this place, I have spoken about the need for greater investment in palliative care services, particularly in rural and regional areas of this State, and this is something I remain committed to. However, it is easy for opponents of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017 to see the bill as providing an alternative to skilled and well-funded palliative care, when this is so clearly not the case. This kind of polarising argument denies the fears, needs and concerns of many people facing a terminal illness or suffering unbearable pain in the last months and weeks of their lives.

I am saying that we need both well-funded and well-resourced palliative care as well as other end-of-life options for people whose needs cannot be met by palliative care alone. What this bill provides is choice for those suffering unbearably, with no hope of recovery, to have access to a medically assisted, quick, peaceful and dignified death. As has been well documented in countries where such legislation exists, a relatively small number of people will choose voluntary assisted dying. Yet this important legislation provides reassurance for those suffering that should it become too great, they can control when they wish to end their own lives, surrounded by those who love them.

I acknowledge the personal struggles of people living with terminal illness and those involved in the care of the terminally ill, including family members and carers, palliative care doctors and nurses, non-government agencies and support services. It is currently illegal to assist people facing unbearable pain to end their own suffering. This not only places dying people in an unenviable situation but also places their families and others involved in their care in the same situation. Should a dying person wish to end their pain and suffering, they may be forced to end their life prematurely and alone so as not to legally implicate their loved ones. Surely this is not the way that an advanced society such as ours should treat people at the end of their lives.

I acknowledge that this legislation raises mixed emotions; however, I believe what must remain at the centre of this debate are the rights and dignity of those suffering. I assert that voluntary assisted dying is a dignified and reasonable choice for competent people to make when their medical condition results in untreatable and incurable suffering and pain. Further, when they have already lost more than we can imagine, having this choice can be of great psychological benefit. Even if they never take this option, knowing it is possible can provide enormous relief. I urge members to become educated on the issue and familiar with the experience of the countries where assisted dying legislation exists. Please listen to those directly affected. Blue Mountains advocate Anne Gabrielides suffers from motor neurone disease. With her husband, Paul, at her side, she sought my support for this legislation to ensure end-of-life choices for terminally ill people. Anne appealed to me:

Of all people, you understand the importance of your voice in convincing, negotiating with and inspiring your audience.

Similarly, my job up until a year ago was to convince, negotiate and inspire parents of deaf children so they could teach their children how to listen, learn and realise their potential.

Our voices, yours and mine, convey many years of learning and experience and now mine has gone.

My voice is not the only thing I've lost, but I am not going to take your time or mine complaining about the things I have lost, because they're gone and will never return.

I have accepted the fact that this disease is going to win the war but I will win some battles along the way.

But I want to win the last battle and die with dignity on my terms when I am good and ready.

Another constituent and a very dear friend of mine, Maurice Brady, died in January this year, after nearly two decades battling heart failure. End-stage heart failure is said to be one of the scenarios in which voluntary assisted dying should be available. In Maurice's case this was not an option, and he struggled on until the end finally came. On behalf of Anne and Maurice, I call on this Parliament to support choice for dying people. When a person arrives at this stage in their life, when their bodies have failed them and they have lost control of everything, the least we can do is provide them with choice and control in deciding when enough is enough. Vale, Maurice.

### **WHITE BALLOON DAY**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:44):** White Balloon Day is supported by Bravehearts, which encourages and educates people on the dangers of child sexual assault. Some brave young students from Wyong High School held a barbecue in support of White Balloon Day and they invited all students to participate to raise money to support the work of Bravehearts. Bravehearts' three pillars to prevention are—Educate: All children

receive personal safety education; Empower: All adults are trained, aware and motivated; and Protect: All systems of community and government engage effectively and adequate specialist counselling is available for all those harmed by sexual assault. Rebecca Ford organised the school barbecue. At the school assembly, held in the morning, she stood bravely in front of approximately 800 students and spoke about her personal experience. This is her speech entitled "Why are you doing this?":

I'm doing this to raise awareness because I don't want to stand for silence.

I am doing this because I want people to feel encouraged to use their voice even when they feel voiceless. I don't want to see people become victims of this crime, I want to see brave people break the silence.

After many tears, counselling sessions and people encouraging us not to give up, on Friday 4 August a father figure of mine was charged and refused bail on multiple counts of child sexual assault. This was a win for the justice system and our community. I'm not sharing my story for pity but my sister and I would like to empower you all. You have a voice that can overcome anything.

I'd like to emphasise, as Child Protection Week comes to an end, we need to be protecting kids all year round. This isn't just a barbecue. All the money raised goes to investing in children's recovery from sexual assault.

See you all in the canteen quad at lunchtime after second period.

Rebecca's sister, Sam, was a student of Wyong High School and returned to help with community volunteers. They were supported by the school community and staff. They sold balloons at the barbecue and some talented students created a massive chalk mural in the main quadrant. We should celebrate champions in our community. This young year 11 student was prepared to stand up in front of her peers to tell her experience so that they do not suffer the same. On behalf of all members in this Parliament, I congratulate brave people like Rebecca and her sister, Sam, on telling their stories, for speaking out and breaking the silence.

It is incumbent on us all to ensure that organisations such as Bravehearts are supported in their work to educate young people so they can protect themselves. The mission of Bravehearts is to prevent child sexual assault in our society. Unfortunately, there will always be evil people who do the wrong thing. We must give our young people the tools to protect themselves. More importantly, if they suffer crimes such as child sexual assault, we must support them with counselling and ensure they have support from their peers and the community. I thank Rebecca Ford for being brave enough to stand in front of her fellow students to tell her story. I also thank her sister, Sam Ford, for supporting her, her mother, teachers and staff at the school, and the community volunteers who helped to organise this day. I cannot praise Rebecca enough for her actions. She did a great job of passing on the important message to break the silence.

### ST GEORGE HOSPITAL

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:49):** I highlight to the House the open day for St George Hospital on 14 October. The Acute Services Building at St George Hospital is almost ready to be opened. It is a wonderful achievement for the hospital and the community, and it is also one of this Government's election achievements. The \$277 million upgrade of St George Hospital will see the opening of the new Acute Services Building, the tallest building in Kogarah. The open day will be on Saturday 14 October from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. Members on both sides of the Chamber will be interested to hear that this building on Gray Street, which is almost complete, is the main stage of St George Hospital's \$277 million redevelopment. It is in addition to the new emergency department that opened three years ago after a \$41 million redevelopment.

The brand-new emergency department was relocated, which was a great win for St George Hospital after so many years of neglect—16 years of failure—by those opposite. It is true: St George Hospital was part of Labor's Bermuda Triangle. Labor had clearly forgotten about it for 16 years. When we came into government the first thing we did was rebuild the emergency department with \$41 million, and we continued with stage two of the redevelopment of St George Hospital.

The new building will help the hospital deliver first-class care facilities for patients and staff. The doctors and nurses at St George Hospital, who do a wonderful job, see this as a great win for the local area. On the open day community members will tour this wonderful new facility. This is a way of giving back to a community that continues to support its local hospital. Some of the key additions include eight additional operating suites, a new intensive care unit with 52 beds and an additional 128 inpatient beds. It is fitting that such an important facility for our community is also architecturally pleasing and easy to identify in the skyline. This is a major win for our local hospital. Visitors will be given insight into clinical areas that are generally off limits to the public when St George Hospital opens the doors of the Acute Services Building.

I thank all those who have assisted in putting this together. In particular, I thank the former Minister for Health, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, the current Minister for Health, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, and our Premier and former Treasurer, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, who last year provided an additional \$30 million or \$40 million to fast-track the redevelopment of this Hospital. This new building will help the hospital deliver first-class care and facilities for patients and staff.

### KU-RING-GAI LIONS CLUB VOLUNTEER AWARDS

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:52):** Volunteers are the backbone of our society and help maintain our social infrastructure. They are as important as the physical infrastructure that the New South Wales Government continues to deliver—perhaps more important. In September I attended the annual Lions Club of Ku-Ring-Gai Volunteer Awards. I honour all local volunteers for their hard work and commitment in serving the community, but I especially recognise the award winners. Charles Frew received the Services to the Community Award. He was recognised for his voluntary service to community health organisations in fundraising roles. He began volunteering with cancer projects after becoming involved with CanTeen in 1991. Kate Breen received the Services to the Aged Award. Kate is a registered nurse who has volunteered for nine years. Her voluntary work includes helping at St Michael's Primary School, North Shore hospital and Montefiore Hunters Hill, as well as collecting for the Red Shield Appeal and participating in the Oxfam Trailwalker 100-kilometre walk.

The Services to the Environment Award went to John Dailey, who played a pivotal role in the creation and successful operation of the Turramurra Lookout Community Garden. John continues to play an active role in the garden, which provides a community hub for the area. Phillip Gibson received the Services to Youth Award. Phillip has held positions as a cub scout, scout and venturer leader. He is currently leader in charge of 1st North Turramurra Scout Group. He is also a member and qualified trainer of North Harbour Scout Water Base Fellowship where he often volunteers his time and was a manager and coach at Bannockburn soccer club for nine years. Hugh Bennett received the Services to Sport Award. Hugh is now 96 years old and has volunteered his time to coach croquet at Killara Croquet Club since he retired in 1985. He has also volunteered his time at Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, Gordon West Public School Parents and Citizens Association and Neighbourhood Watch.

Helen Wallace received the Humanitarian Aid Award primarily for her voluntary work in Nepal as part of a plastic surgery team for lips and palates between 1996 and 2002. She is currently a volunteer at Eryldene, where she has been part of the gardening team since 2010 and took over as garden committee coordinator in 2015. Louise Smith received the award for services to junior sport. Louise was part of the leadership team that helped St Ives Junior Cricket Club grow from 63 members to more than 600. She was also part of the committee that worked with council and the New South Wales Government to help build a clubhouse and raised funds for a kit room.

Last but not least, Cathy Bedwell received the Services to Health Award. Cathy currently works as a volunteer in emergency care at Sydney Adventist Hospital, where she provides support to staff and patients. She also volunteers for other organisations including fundraising for the Lions club and providing food and clothing for a homeless shelter in Hornsby and two orphanages in Fiji. The difference all these volunteers make by serving their communities with selfless and passionate energy is admirable, and truly valued. I especially congratulate the Ku-ring-gai Lions Club, currently led by its president, Graeme Harvey, on its wonderful work since it was established in 1954. They run these awards on an annual basis in an exceptional fashion.

Last month I was also privileged to attend the annual NSW Volunteer of the Year awards for the Sydney North region, and present awards along with the member for Manly and mayors of Willoughby and Ku-ring-gai. These important awards celebrate the work done by volunteers in community organisations who deliver a wide range of vital community services to some of the more vulnerable people who live amongst us. I congratulate all those nominated, including the winners: Emma Van Brugge, Youth Volunteer of the Year; David Cowell, Adult Volunteer of the Year; Meg Stevenson, Senior Volunteer of the Year; and members of the Cerebral Palsy Alliance Aquability team, Volunteer Team of the Year.

Volunteers need to be nurtured and valued for the valuable service they provide. I congratulate the Centre for Volunteering on the wonderful job it does to inspire, motivate and recognise people who continue to provide their services on a voluntary basis, especially at a time when many people have less spare time. Thanks to all the volunteers in the northern region of Sydney and across New South Wales who make a real and positive difference to the lives of many people, and who build strong communities in the process.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 17:58 until  
Tuesday 10 October 2017 at 12:00.**