



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 12 October 2017**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday, 12 October 2017**

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

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

### *Bills*

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (SYDNEY DRINKING WATER CATCHMENT) BILL 2017**

#### **LOCAL LAND SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2017**

#### **Returned**

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

### *Budget*

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

#### **Debate resumed from 21 September 2017.**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (10:12):** The comments made by the member for Kiama in his notice of motion this morning were spiteful—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. The member for Shellharbour is reflecting on notices of motion, and we are currently debating budget estimates and related papers.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Shellharbour will return to budget estimates and related papers.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** I do want to speak about the budget, or the lack of spending by this Government in the electorate of Shellharbour. Politics in the Illawarra should be less about spite and effectiveness and more about real issues. The member for Kiama this morning again demonstrated his stand on spitefulness versus politics.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** It's called delivery.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Kiama that the member for Shellharbour will be heard in silence.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** The Government's 2017-2018 budget was yet another disappointment for the people of Shellharbour. This Government has completely failed the Shellharbour electorate once again. Prior to the 2015 State election, this Government promised an \$800 million infrastructure investment in the electorate, and the member for Kiama came out beating his chest about this promise. The investment consisted of a \$250 million upgrade for Shellharbour Hospital and a \$550 million upgrade for the construction of the Albion Park rail bypass. The community of Shellharbour has been waiting for some years to see any action on either of those promises. This budget has once again—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: The member for Shellharbour is misleading the House. She could not get a commitment from her side of politics, which has never committed to any spending in her electorate.

**The SPEAKER:** That is not a point of order. The member for Kiama will resume his seat.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** That point of order says more about the member for Kiama than it does about me. This budget has once again confirmed that this Government has no intention of delivering on its promises anytime soon. The allocation of further planning money, instead of construction funds, is a disgrace. The people of the area, particularly those in the Shellharbour electorate, deserve better. In 2015 this Government promised a much-needed \$250 million upgrade to the Shellharbour Hospital. What did we get? Nothing but talk. First, this Government stalled any action on this promise with two consecutive budgets allocating nothing but planning money for bureaucratic shuffling around the NSW Ministry of Health.

The member for Kiama stood shoulder to shoulder with the then Minister for Health and announced a \$250 million upgrade, but the upgrade has yet to occur. There was no funding in the budget for the hospital's actual upgrade. When this Government could not stall the upgrade any longer, it made a surprise announcement that Shellharbour Hospital will be privatised. In this budget, the Government has thrown only some small change in the hospital's direction; a mere \$5 million of the \$250 million promise has been allocated. This allocation is not to upgrade the hospital but is planning money. This is far from what the Government promised in 2015. While I acknowledge that planning is required before action is taken—nobody would argue against planning—we are sick of waiting. Those opposite said that the promised upgrade to Shellharbour Hospital would be delivered during this current term of government. That seems to be more and more unlikely as time goes by.

This Government should not believe that the people of Shellharbour electorate will sit back and accept more planning money and a plan for privatisation, instead of a promised upgrade. Planning should not take this long, and the hospital should certainly not be privatised due to this Government's incompetence and the incompetence of the member for Kiama in delivering on election promises. This is nothing short of a disgrace. This is further proof that this Government cares only about its interests, not about the interests of those in need. The people in my community need the services offered by their public hospital to be substantially upgraded and to stay in public hands. The member for Kiama is especially disgraceful. He has barely batted an eyelid at the prospect of Shellharbour Hospital being privatised. He has not condemned the Minister's announcement.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 53. The member for Shellharbour is adversely reflecting on other members. If she wishes to move a substantive motion, she should do so, but this debate is about budget estimates. The member is making claims about privatisation, which are not true. She is continuing to mislead the Parliament and she should not be allowed to reflect on other members.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** To the point of order: That is not a point of order.

**Mr Nick Lalich:** That is not a point of order. The member for Kiama is just filibustering.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! It is a point of order and I will not tolerate members pre-empting the Chair's decision. The member for Shellharbour has been very direct in her comments about the member for Kiama. The member for Kiama has taken his point of order under Standing Order 53, noting that such comments should be made by way of substantive motion.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** The member for Kiama has not condemned the Minister's announcement about a privatised Shellharbour Hospital and is clearly open to the idea of the privatisation going ahead. Where was his notice of motion against any moves to privatise Shellharbour Hospital? If the member opposite really cared about the Illawarra as much as he makes out on his Facebook page, he might stand up to the Premier and the Minister for Health on this issue. I suppose he is not bothered about it anymore, since he will probably leave his State colleagues to head to Canberra for the next election anyway.

On the other hand, Labor knows hospital privatisation does not work. It does not improve services, decrease waiting times or improve patient outcomes. Instead it is the short-term buck-passing of a government that does not want to honour its election promise of a \$250 million upgrade for Shellharbour Hospital. If this Government had any idea about long-term planning, it would have done some research on hospital privatisation—and it would know that the privatisation of Port Macquarie Base Hospital by a Liberal Government was such a disaster that the hospital had to be repurchased by a Labor Government. This budget is yet another failure by this Government to uphold its commitments to the people of the Shellharbour electorate. A mere \$5 million in planning money and a push towards privatisation falls short of the \$250 million upgrade to Shellharbour Hospital that was promised before the last State election. Shellharbour deserves better than this.

Another failure of this Government is the stalled Albion Park Rail bypass. As I have said many times, this Government continues to drag its feet on starting construction of this vital project. The people of Shellharbour are left sitting in traffic, continuing to waste precious time day in, day out, because of the incompetence of those opposite. I am disgusted that it has taken the Government so long to deliver on something it promised prior to the 2015 State election. Despite committing further planning and preconstruction funding in this budget, this Government has not stuck a shovel in the ground. I have repeatedly called for this Government to start construction of the bypass, yet we have not seen any action. By the time the construction of the bypass has finally started—if the Government ever does it—this Government will have been in office for eight years. Stalling construction for eight years on an infrastructure project that is so critical to the southern Illawarra is unacceptable. It is the region's missing link in road infrastructure. Time and again I have called for a construction timetable to be released, but all we have is a proposed start date in early 2019.

The member for Kiama can say what he likes and insult members on this side of the House, but it is no coincidence that construction is now on track to commence in early 2019, right before the next State election. He

and his Government have let down the people of Shellharbour and the southern Illawarra by stalling the commencement of this project purely for political gain. If this Government was serious about its infrastructure commitments, construction of the Albion Park Rail bypass would have already started. Perhaps if the member for Kiama spent a fraction of his time convincing the Premier to start things earlier—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Gino wouldn't have written this.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** You need to stop talking about how important you are, Gareth. We all get it: you are important.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Kiama must be very important, as the member for Shellharbour has referred to him 48 times throughout her speech.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** The member for Kiama has made a lot of promises but nothing has been delivered—that is why I am talking about him. The construction of the bypass might have been started by now but it has not been. At this rate the beloved hard hat and hi-vis vest of the member for Kiama will be sitting in the cupboard getting dusty. The member for Kiama loves that hard hat and hi-vis vest. I think he wore them to open every car park in Oak Flats.

Once again this Government and the member for Kiama have failed the people of the lower Illawarra. We will fight for the construction of the Albion Rail Park bypass to start this year, because this infrastructure is critical to the Illawarra and it cannot wait until it suits the political agenda of this Government. Once again this Government has failed the Shellharbour electorate and its kids. We now have a school maintenance backlog of more than \$8.7 million in the Shellharbour electorate alone. Eighteen schools in my electorate have put in maintenance requests only to be told, "Wait. Wait some more. Hang on—wait a little more. Wait some more." It is not good enough.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Bad local member.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** I note the interjection by the member for Kiama, who has just said, "That's just bad luck."

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: I did not say that. For the record, I am glad the member asked. I said, "That's because they've got a bad local member." Now it is on the record.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** It is on the record: The member for Kiama said what he said. Some schools, like Oak Flats High School, have a backlog of almost \$1.8 million of maintenance. Yet this Government has allocated only \$96,434 for maintenance works. This is shameful. It equates to only 5 per cent of what that one school needs. At this rate of funding, kids at Oak Flats High will have to deal with this maintenance backlog for the next 18 years. The member for Kiama may think that is good enough, but the people of Shellharbour do not.

This Government says that a maintenance backlog is inevitable, but a backlog as large as \$8.7 million in my electorate alone is abhorrent. A trickle of funding in every budget will not make a dent in what needs to be fixed in the electorate. This is a problem across the Illawarra and the State and this Government need to step up. Our kids deserve better than to have to deal with broken windows, leaking roofs, old toilet blocks and old sewerage systems. I call on the Government to scrap its plans to privatise Shellharbour Hospital and instead deliver on its 2015 election promise of a \$250 million upgrade of the hospital, which is much needed after six years of neglect by this Government.

I also call on the Government to begin the construction of the Albion Park Rail bypass well before the 2019 election and to provide the people of the Illawarra with a construction timetable. We have waited for too long for this Government to plan the bypass, and now is the time to act. The member for Kiama will be able to get out his hard hat and hi-vis vest again. He will love that: "There's a camera. Take my photo! Here I am!" He is a legend in his own lunchbox.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Yes, I am!

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** Finally, I call on the Government to start acting on the atrocious school maintenance backlog in the Shellharbour electorate. I am disappointed that the member for Kiama is not taking this seriously, because I can assure the House that the people of the Shellharbour electorate take it seriously. Once again, this budget has done nothing but fail the electorate of Shellharbour. This Government has managed only to deliver empty promises and to drag its feet on getting anything done. It is about time that it started the Albion Park Rail bypass and scrapped plans to privatise Shellharbour Hospital, because the people of the southern Illawarra deserve much better than the member for Kiama.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (10:27):** I will outline the benefits of the 2017-18 New South Wales budget, particularly to my electorate of North Shore. I congratulate the Treasurer on a budget



that builds on our strong fiscal and economic track record and invests our State's success back into the families and communities of New South Wales, including those on the North Shore. I am proud that the New South Wales economy is leading the nation and that the New South Wales budget again shows a strong surplus for the next four years with a record surplus of \$4.5 billion expected in 2016-17.

Strong financial management has meant that the Berejiklian Government can invest in local communities across New South Wales. This budget is delivering where it matters: health, education, roads and transport, support for families, help for those who need it most and the right conditions for business to grow. North Shore will benefit from this soaring budget result with investment in the Beaches Link and Western Harbour Tunnel, the Sydney Metro, upgrades to local train stations and ferry wharves and the delivery of cycleways. Local families will also benefit from investment in kids' sporting participation, early childhood education, palliative care and mental health funding. We have enjoyed economic growth of 3.5 per cent throughout 2015-16 and our economy is outpacing those of the other States. This economic growth is also delivering jobs. New South Wales has the lowest unemployment rate of all Australian States and since April 2011 employment in New South Wales has increased by almost 370,000 jobs, more than any other State.

Our healthy budget position means we are able to invest in the future of New South Wales. We have record levels of investment in infrastructure that is the envy of the world, with \$72.7 billion committed over four years in this budget. The electorate of North Shore is reaping the benefits of this strong budget in many areas. The Government has reaffirmed its commitment to the construction of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link by allocating \$103 million to planning research, geotechnical work and property acquisitions. With money earmarked for not only investigation and preliminary works but also acquisition of property, residents in the North Shore electorate can be reassured of the commitment of the Berejiklian Government to the full completion of this landmark infrastructure.

The Berejiklian Government will deliver this vital piece of infrastructure for our community. Leader of the Opposition Luke Foley has already iterated in the media and in this place that he would scrap the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link. Let me remind members that when independent bodies ascertained the need for infrastructure across our State and in Sydney, they prioritised the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link as one of the most crucial pieces of infrastructure. I represent the electorate of North Shore which, like every other community across our State, deserves a fair share of the windfall gains of this Government. However, I am concerned that if the Opposition is ever elected to this place it would scrap such an important piece of infrastructure. That demonstrates to me that the Labor Party has no interest in the community of North Shore or in resolving traffic congestion in electorates throughout our State.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 76. The member for North Shore should remain relevant to the issue before the House and not resort to petulance as other members have done during debate on the budget estimates. The member has an opportunity to refer to those matters that are in the best interests of her community rather than taking cheap shots.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I have heard the member's point of order. I find it difficult to believe that a member on the same side as the last contributor would take such a point of order.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Further to the point of order: That is precisely my point. I was referring to members opposite who continually interjected when the member for Shellharbour was making a contribution to the budget estimates take-note debate.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** Investment in infrastructure relates to the budget, especially the \$103 million that has been allocated for this tunnel.

**Mr Greg Warren:** The member referred to Opposition members during her contribution, which has little or nothing to do with—

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** The Leader of the Opposition made reference to it in his budget reply speech.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I have heard nothing in the contribution of the member for North Shore that is outside the budget take-note debate.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** The Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link is a crucial piece of infrastructure for our State and my local community.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Prospect should listen to what his counterpart is saying.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** If she says something worthwhile I will.

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

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** It is concerning that Opposition members are not aware of what their leader stated in his budget reply speech. As this debate is about the budget it is entirely appropriate for us to consider what Government and Opposition members are saying about infrastructure investments in my community. When the Leader of the Opposition says in his budget reply speech that he will scrap the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link, it is appropriate for me to discuss that issue in this place, particularly when my community will be the most affected. I remind members opposite that they can review the independent analysis conducted by Infrastructure Australia that states this is one of the most important pieces of infrastructure for our country. The member for Gosford should restrict herself to the impact of the budget on her electorate while I speak about mine.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for North Shore will direct her comments through the Chair.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** The member for Gosford should allow me to speak about my community and she can focus on hers.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for North Shore may continue but should direct her comments through the Chair.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** I reassure the community of North Shore that only the Berejiklian Government will deliver the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link. With an additional allocation of more than \$100 million for investigative works this Government is committed to getting on with the job. If Opposition members had ever travelled along Military Road they would know it is one of the most congested roads in this State. Last week a report was released which revealed that Military Road is the most congested road in this State. Investment in this arterial road is crucial to my electorate.

Other areas of investment will benefit my local community. My electorate has one of the highest rates of kids participating in sports and the lowest rate of obesity in this State. The \$401 million budget allocation for the Active Kids program and sporting clubs in my electorate is an incredible investment in local families. They will be the big winners from this year's record \$401 million sports budget. Parents in New South Wales are eligible for a \$100 rebate to cover sporting club fees, including swimming lessons for every school-aged child. Over the next four years \$207 million has been allocated for the program to increase participation in sport. The sports budget also includes providing more than 2,500 defibrillators to local sporting clubs across the State through the \$4 million Local Sport Defibrillator Program.

Since my election as the member for North Shore I have been fortunate enough to spend time with a number of local sporting clubs. In particular, I have spent time with the Mosman Swans Junior Australian Football Club. More than 600 kids are involved in Australian Football League [AFL] locally, including a number of girls teams and players who are now in the AFL women's competition. Families and kids in the North Shore community are investing significantly in local sports and are contributing to the broader community. I mention the importance of local schools and our investment in them. The Minister for Education, who is in the Chamber today, spent a lot of time with me discussing the needs of my local schools. He accompanied me when I visited local schools, most recently Neutral Bay Public School, and he met with the parents and citizens association and the principal.

I know that the Minister spent time with my predecessor, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, who actively pursued investment in Neutral Bay Public School amongst other local schools. We are fortunate in that our local public schools and our primary schools in particular are recognised throughout the community. Every parent wants to send their kids to our local public schools because they are so good. Our teachers and our principals provide such a wonderful educational environment that everybody wants to go to our schools which means that we have to invest in them. We must make sure that we have the capacity to meet the growing needs of our community as more families are being raised in apartments.

A record \$4.2 billion has been allocated in this budget for school capital expenditure to cater for surging enrolment across the State, including investment in the new senior campus at Cammeraygal High School. The Cammeraygal High School junior campus, which was recently built, now has a full complement of year 7 to year 9 students. The senior campus will soon be built across the boundary in the electorate of the member for Willoughby—the Premier's electorate. This new public school is a significant investment by the Berejiklian Government to meet increasing enrolments across the public school network. I acknowledge Kathy Melky, principal of Cammeraygal High School, for the work that she does locally. Cammeraygal High School is a great example of a local public school in my community. Investment in that school will ensure that more and more local kids can attend a public school.

More than 120 new schools and major upgrade projects will commence in the next two financial years because of the work of the Minister for Education and this Government's investment in school infrastructure and assets across the State. The 2017-18 budget will also fund 1,000 additional teachers—a significant investment, given the role of teachers in our educational institutions and throughout our communities. The 2017-18 budget will also provide funding for an anti-bullying strategy. With the amount of pressure on our kids these days this is an important investment. This year's budget will also provide funding for teachers' professional development, student counselling and wellbeing services.

Locally we are also seeing a record \$1.9 billion investment in mental health across the State. That is particularly important, given that this is Mental Health Month and that we recognise Mental Health Day this week. The Minister for Mental Health, the Hon. Tanya Davies, will deliver that record investment from the 2017-18 budget. That is an increase of \$87 million on last year's budget. A key initiative of this budget is an extra \$20 million to support further implementation of the New South Wales mental health reform package totalling \$95 million this financial year to shift the balance from hospital care to community care.

I have witnessed and experienced that investment in mental health in my local community in the past couple of weeks during Mental Health Month. Last week I visited the Royal North Shore Children and Youth Mental Health Service and met with leading doctors, practitioners and community support people who run the service. I also viewed the inpatient facilities at Royal North Shore Hospital. This amazing facility cares for and nurtures consumers. It involves people at high risk at their most vulnerable time who can easily transition back into the community, particularly if they are having significant episodes of any extreme psychiatric illness. I met with the psychiatrists who treat and provide services and with the staff of the community centre at the Royal North Shore Hospital. I know that the Government's investment in mental health is making a difference to the lives of people in our community.

I also appreciated the opportunity to attend the Neuroscience Research Australia [NeuRA] briefing in Parliament House provided yesterday to acknowledge Mental Health Month. Many people would be aware that NeuRA has world-class scientists undertaking research into mental health. Given my experience of my father being an undiagnosed schizophrenic throughout my childhood, the impact that had on my family and the violence in our household, I am incredibly proud of the work being done by the researchers and doctors I met yesterday. Their groundbreaking evidence and analysis, particularly with regard to schizophrenia, which is an acute neurological disease, is amazing.

Schizophrenia affects about 1 per cent of the community and has some of the most significant impairment rates of any illness across the world; it is seen as one of the top 10 impactful diseases and has incredibly high suicide rates. While these doctors and researchers are working to find a cure, they are also working to ensure they can treat patients effectively. While we have antipsychotic medication for people with schizophrenia, it often results in their leading a less than fulfilling life and being impaired by significant levels of obesity and diabetes. It could also mean that they are homebound and do not have meaningful employment. That is the experience of many people with acute schizophrenia who must rely on drugs to manage their psychosis but then cannot have a meaningful existence in the community because of the side effects.

We heard about the breakthroughs that NeuRA has achieved. I will not try to explain the science involved because that is not my forte. However, the researchers are trying to isolate some of causes of these psychoses by examining the way in which proteins interact with neurons in blood vessels in the brain and potentially using existing immune drugs to treat these diseases and their symptoms. I pay tribute to NeuRA and its researchers. I know that they rely heavily on government research funding, and that is why I am so proud of this Government's record \$1.9 billion investment in mental health.

**Debate interrupted.**

### *Bills*

## **PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS (PROHIBITION ON SUPPLY BY RETAILERS) BILL 2017 (NO 2)**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Luke Foley, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (10:44):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Single-use plastic shopping bags are banned in South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory, and the Northern Territory. Wealthy nations such as China, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, and South Africa

have either banned bags or imposed a levy on their use, as have 20 American States. The High Court of Kenya paved the way for the world's strongest ban on plastic bags. That law, representing Kenya's third attempt in the past decade to impose a ban, comes with harsh penalties of up to four years in prison and up to \$50,000 in fines. Poorer nations like Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, and Somalia have also banned plastic bag use. However, to date, New South Wales has failed to act, and the object of this bill is to address that inaction.

Consumers understand the reasons for the introduction of this legislation—plastic bags do not degrade for decades and they travel deep into natural ecosystems because of their light weight. A ban will do more than simply reduce litter; it will reduce something that harms wildlife. More than 60 million bags are littered in this State every year. The bill before the House is based on a successful Australian Capital Territory ban which states that retailers cannot provide single-use, lightweight polyurethane bags of 35 microns or less and which allows retailers to charge for alternative reusable bags. The bill does not prevent the supply of a plastic bag that is an integral part of packaging before sale, barrier bags dispensed from a roll to hold items such as loose fruit and vegetables, bin liners, the heavy retail bags typically used by clothing and department stores, or biodegradable bags. All of those types of bags will still be legal.

The New South Wales Government has researched biodegradable bags under the auspices of the Meeting of Environment Ministers through the Council of Australian Governments process, but nothing else has been done. There has been only more talk about continuing to work with the Federal Government and other States. We have had endless talk while the problem steadily worsens. The Labor Party supported the Government when it moved to implement a container deposit scheme. That display of bipartisan support should now be reciprocated on this issue. This Parliament has passed legislation on plastic containers with the support of both sides of the House, and now is the time to legislate on plastic bags. As the Opposition's shadow Minister for the Environment and Heritage, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, pointed out in the other place, no amount of awareness will get this done; action is required.

To their credit, the supermarkets are moving. Coles and Woolworths said in July that they will voluntarily stop supplying single-use plastic bags to customers. The Premier then said that she did not see the need to put a ban in place because plastic bags would not be provided by the two big supermarket chains. That ignores the evidence that the supermarkets' voluntary and unenforceable action will still leave at least 10 million bags to litter and to pollute the State every year. The Premier's determination to ignore clear scientific evidence is regrettable. A policy that leads to less landfill and a serious reduction in environmental damage deserves the support of all sensible people.

When the Australian Capital Territory reviewed its first two years of the plastic shopping bag ban, it found there had been a 36 per cent decrease in the number of plastic bags sent to landfill, 71 per cent of people said that they did not want the ban overturned, and 68 per cent said it should be implemented nationally. In South Australia the move led to 400 million fewer plastic bags being used in that State each year. While businesses are prepared to take the step voluntarily, we need clear legislation. An industry scheme to reduce plastic bag use was in place from 2002 to 2005. It worked but the year after it ended use increased by 17 per cent. Businesses such as Target attempted to go plastic bag free but had to backflip in the face of consumer pressure. Industry initiatives alone will not solve the problem; we need to act in this Parliament.

New South Wales, on the best estimates available, uses 34 per cent of Australia's 8.5 billion plastic bags—light and heavy weight—every year. That means New South Wales uses almost three billion plastic bags. We can live without plastic shopping bags. Our wildlife can live—literally—without them. In December 2014 a rare Risso's dolphin died at Manly after eating a plastic shopping bag. Some of the most common problems at Taronga Zoo's wildlife hospital are related to plastic bags. Sea turtles see them and think they are jellyfish. Of all the turtles at Taronga Zoo's hospital, 70 per cent have ingested plastic. One in five ends up dying as a result.

The CSIRO survey of marine debris found that three-quarters of all rubbish along our coasts is plastic. It is highly concentrated around major cities. The figures produced by the survey are astonishing. It is estimated that there are at least 124 million individual pieces of visible plastic littering our coastline. Even if it is not directly ingested the plastic begins to break down into smaller pieces and enters the food chain. Clean Up Australia reports that plastic kills up to one million seabirds, 100,000 sea mammals and countless fish each year. Once they die from choking or starvation, the plastic is released from the decaying wildlife and spreads back into the environment again. It is a deadly cycle. The plastic is free to cause harm all over again.

There are minimal financial costs involved in this legislation. It is a matter of will, not money. All retailers will have to comply with the ban. It would be an offence to supply a banned plastic bag to a customer. Fines would apply. The phase-out can be completed over six months through consultation with business, unions and residents. There is every expectation that the idea will continue to enjoy widespread community support. The adjustment should be relatively easy. It is a sensible policy that has been implemented elsewhere to community benefit—a simple, practical response to solve the major problem of plastic waste and significantly reduce the impact on the

marine environment, particularly on marine ecosystems. Future generations will benefit and thank us. Our current generation will benefit and thank us. Plastic pollution is a global crisis. Consider that in the short time I have been speaking, around 10 million plastic bags have been used worldwide. That is in the past few minutes alone. New South Wales should be at the forefront of the solution. If Eritrea and Rwanda can act, surely prosperous, first-world States such as New South Wales can act too. The community wants action; the Government should join Labor in delivering it. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

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

### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 3 August.**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (10:55):** I will continue to explain why the Local Government Amendment (Amalgamation Referendums) Bill 2017 is poorly drafted, unnecessary and a waste of time and money for many communities as well as the Electoral Commission. Merged councils would be required to run plebiscites under the proposals in the bill. It is a poorly thought out bill from a party borne from a single issue—protesting against the sensible gun control which was introduced by former Prime Minister John Howard. In recent years, member of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party have focused on rebranding themselves. This bill is another trick by them to try to convince communities that they care, but because they do not understand the mechanics of local government, the cost of the proposed local plebiscites will place a burden on local communities that the Government cares about.

To get an indication of the cost of those plebiscites it is instructive to go back to the NSW Electoral Commission's summary of the 2012 council elections. The merged Northern Beaches Council is made up of three former councils. In 2012 Manly Council's costs were \$196,509, Pittwater Council's costs were \$313,521 and Warringah Council's costs were \$602,297. Five years ago a grand total of more than \$1.1 million in costs to those local councils was paid for by the residents. The Inner West Council is made up of three councils. In 2012 Ashfield Council's costs were \$184,239, Leichhardt Municipal Council's costs were \$210,889 and Marrickville Council's costs were \$322,016. In 2012 terms alone, the plebiscite would cost more than \$700,000—all paid for by local ratepayers. In our city's south, the Georges River Council is made up of the former Hurstville City Council where costs were \$332,160, while Kogarah City Council's costs were \$265,573. In 2012 terms, the cost of those plebiscites to ratepayers was just shy of \$600,000. As I have previously mentioned, the most expensive bill was that of those local councils which combined into the Central Coast Council.

Their combined cost when they were separate councils was more than \$1.3 million. That is \$1.3 million, I repeat for the benefit of those opposite to make them understand that plebiscites are expensive and in this case are unnecessary. Were plebiscites to be held to support this bill—which the Government rejects—they would be an added cost to local communities across New South Wales. If the proposals in the bill were implemented and plebiscites were required for each of the former council areas, what would that add up to? The answer is, an extravagant waste of ratepayers' money. That is Labor's way; we know that. Labor knows how to spend other people's money and throw it up against the wall. Labor spends taxpayer and ratepayer money on its promises but does not deliver. That is shameful. This bill would mean an unnecessary expense to councils, paid for by ratepayers. As I said, it is Labor's way and the way of Labor's new regional buddy. Who is Labor's new regional buddy, I wonder?

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Tell us.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** Oh my goodness, it is the Shooters. Labor has form on this, as we know. If I were to explain all the strange bedfellows Labor has had and has picked up in rural and regional areas over the past 20 years, I would need more than the time that has been allotted to me today. To put it simply, Labor and the Shooters are involved in a big con, and as with all cons someone else has to pay. And it is not the money of those opposite; it is ratepayers' money. That money could be better spent elsewhere on resources that local communities need. This bill is purely a stunt by the Shooters and Labor, and they have co-opted The Greens again. Labor says one thing but does another, and that is also the case when it comes to councils. Those opposite falsely claim it is about the people. In fact, it is all about power and the internal politics of the Labor Party; it is all about branch stacking and whatever it takes.

On 9 September people went to the polls and voted for their new councillors. Those councils and councillors should be able to get on with the job that they were elected to do: providing services to their local community. One thing that is certain is that the merged councils are delivering significant benefits to their communities, and they will continue to deliver significant cost savings and financial benefits to their communities.

in the future. The proposals in this bill would reverse those benefits and impose additional unnecessary costs, as I have already outlined.

Those supporting this bill are suggesting that the local government reform process has somehow impinged on people's democratic rights, but of course that is not true. The residents of those 20 new council areas have now elected their councillors. Those councillors will be leading councils with stronger financial outlooks and greater resources to provide improved services to their local communities. That is what they have been elected to do. It will not come as a great surprise that I do not support the Local Government Amendment (Amalgamation Referendums) Bill 2017, and nor does the Government. It is a sure-fire way to cause confusion and frustration for voters in those local communities. If a majority of voters in just one former council area wants to de-merge the whole of the new council area will have to de-merge. That is equivalent to unscrambling an egg. Has anyone been able to do that? No. Administrators would again need to be appointed and voters would again have to go back to the polls, for a third time in a very short period, in order to elect councillors for individual de-merged councils. That egg cannot be unscrambled.

Electors who fail to vote at any one of those three polls can be hit with fines, as voting is compulsory for both the council elections and the plebiscite. Is this how residents and ratepayers want to spend their Saturdays—revisiting merger decisions over and over again? Is this what councils and ratepayers want to spend money on—multiple elections? Then there is the issue of unscrambling the egg of the merged council's IT and payroll systems, staffing, and community buildings and assets. The merged councils should be allowed to get on with the job of serving their local communities; ensuring the delivery of vital everyday services, such as collecting rubbish; maintaining the roads by fixing potholes and adequate line marking so that safety is a priority in their local communities; maintaining council pools; and looking after the wonderful parks across our great State. The merged councils need to get on with the job of making sure those important day-to-day services are available to their local community members.

Merged councils should also be allowed to get on with developing strategic plans so they can deliver the improved infrastructure and vital services their community need. If the harebrained proposals in this bill went ahead, there would be enormous ongoing costs and inconvenience for local communities. The future benefits of those mergers would be lost. The opportunity of a strategic vision that, together with the State and Federal governments, these new councils will take to their ratepayers as a plan for the future would be seized from their hands. That opportunity is essential to ensure they can deliver to their local communities. If the people were asked whether they wanted money to be spent on improved services and infrastructure and a forward-looking vision for their local areas or on dragging them out on Saturday for yet another election, I think they would support improved services and infrastructure and a strategic vision for their local areas. As I said, these merged councils are already delivering in spades benefits and savings for their communities.

Let us not forget that the Government's Stronger Communities Fund provided merged councils with up to \$15 million to kickstart the delivery of projects to improve their local communities, services and infrastructure. As members opposite know, that fund included a \$1 million community grants program which allocated grants of up to \$50,000 to incorporated not-for-profit community groups to build projects that created more vibrant, sustainable and inclusive local communities. Many members on the other side of the House had no problem with that. In fact, they were very happy to turn up to the ceremonies at which the cheques and opportunities were made available to their local communities. They stood behind that investment into their local communities. They fronted up for their local communities.

Those members were pictured in their local papers standing with their local communities to back the Government's reforms. I do not think members on the other side of the House would want to tell their local communities that they have to take those cheques back. I am sure they do not want to do that. Labor, the party that has put forward this bill, wants to take back from local communities the good prizes, the good investments that this Government is able to make because it is financially prudent. Shame on them. The Government supports these new councils and communities. This bill is designed to tear them down. I ask: Why do the Shooters, Labor and The Greens want those communities to miss out? I do not understand, it does not make sense, and it does not serve the New South Wales community and their local communities.

Do Opposition members want to accept the collateral damage that will result from missing out on all that support for local sporting groups, charities and pensioners, and the vital infrastructure upgrades? Do they want to take responsibility for that when they go to their local communities? Some Opposition members have been happy to have their photographs taken for the local press when they have accepted these cheques and backed them in. I think it would be highly embarrassing if I were to name those members—I will not name them in this Chamber—who have accepted the Government's investments in their local communities.

Members on this side of the House stand up for their communities. We want to make things easier for the workers, for small business, for families and for concession cardholders. We want to make it easier for councils

to deliver for their local communities. This bill will do nothing to support councils to improve services and infrastructure for local residents. It is a massive step backwards. It will cause further disruption and confusion. It is a costly recipe for disaster. The Labor Party, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and The Greens may be comfortable with that outcome but the Liberal and Nationals parties will not stand for it. The Government does not support this bill.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (11:10):** I am nearly speechless. It takes a lot to make me speechless but I have represented my electorate in this place since March 2015 and I have not seen a bigger hypocrite take the floor than the Minister. She was the most passionate of protesters in her electorate against this Government's amalgamation agenda. When this policy, along with the greyhound issue, brought this Government to its knees, the member for Vaucluse was rewarded with the poison chalice—

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order: The member has been speaking for at least five minutes. I note that the clock is not timing her.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The member for Oatley should understand the proceedings in the House before he takes a point of order. As the member for Maitland is leading for the Opposition in this debate she has unlimited time. The member for Maitland has the call.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I could start again if the member for Oatley did not hear everything. When the point of order was taken, I was pointing out the hypocrisy of the Minister. This Minister was given the poison chalice of the Local Government portfolio after being at the forefront of the protest against this policy in her own electorate. She has the hide and temerity to talk about this bill as if it represents a single issue that has been poorly thought out, when she was at the forefront of protests in her community against the basket case of a policy introduced by the Government. She says that this is a Coalition-led policy, but The Nationals members jumped ship. The Leader of The Nationals, the Deputy Premier, walked away from the policy of local government amalgamations in the bush. When we reminded him that parts of the Hunter were in the bush he walked away from the policy of amalgamations there too. This is not a joint Coalition policy by any stretch of the imagination.

The bill before the House is essential to restoring democracy to local government areas where this Government has consistently ignored the will of the people and forcefully amalgamated councils. Government members constantly speak about the problem of numerous elections. Most of the elections, including the current set of by-elections, were brought about by the failure of this Government to get its own people on board its botched policy. This is a government of backflips. I have brought to the attention of this House before the Government's flip-flopping on policy on issues such as the greyhounds and the fire and emergency services levy. If those on the other side of the Chamber want to talk about waste with respect to local government councils, let us talk about the Government pulling legislation at the eleventh hour because it was going to upset some poor old ladies in Wahroonga who were going to have to pay massive levies. The Government was not worried about what the legislation would do to farmers, to the business sector or to anyone else, but when some old ladies in the Premier's own—

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Don't you have farmers in Maitland?

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** There are farmers in Maitland, for sure, and the Opposition was concerned for them. The Government pulled the legislation because it cannot put together a cogent policy on anything—greyhounds, local governments, or fire and emergency service levies. The Government has these grand ideas but when it comes to their delivery and execution it is a botched mess. Even the Minister admits that the policy that she has put together is an omelette. It is a mishmash of ideas which basically amounts to a gerrymander. The joke is on the Government because it has lost out. It has lost a Premier, a Deputy Premier and numerous council positions because of this failed policy.

When the Opposition offered the Government an olive branch—the chance to restore some semblance of democracy to local government—the first thing those on the other side of the Chamber said was, "No, we don't want democracy; it costs too much." This is the joke. The member for Wyong has been talking about the cost of mergers in his electorate—\$150 million—yet the Minister says that we cannot afford democracy in this State. She says that we have to keep the gerrymander that this Government tried to put in place and failed. The Government gave the council in the Wyong electorate \$20 million to make up the \$150 million shortfall. In my electorate, thank God, Nationals members decided to walk away from the mergers. That meant that the on again, off again merger of Maitland and Dungog councils did not proceed. So my community did not inherit a \$50 million backlog of infrastructure. The Minister said that this bill represents a con. The biggest con of all is this local government amalgamation debacle. Members on the other side of the House should be ashamed about it.

The price of democracy should not be counted in beans. The Minister's speech about all the great things that have come out of amalgamation was a fantasy. It was as if she was in the story of *Jack and the Beanstalk*—

she sold everything and received a bag of beans. But there is no goose that lays a golden egg at the end of this story; there is only a gaggle of geese. The Government refuses to consult on this issue. It is forcing its agenda on the people of New South Wales. The plebiscites that are proposed in this bill will allow the residents to have a say. If this Government cannot convince the majority of people to merge councils it should immediately abandon the mergers and go back to what was in place before. The Government has taken an ideological approach to councils in this State. It has gone to war with Clover Moore again and again. The Government has cost every council in the State thousands of dollars in preparation for the fire services and emergency levy only to abandon it at the last minute. This Government's hard right-wing agenda has been on full display with its adoption of the forced council mergers.

**Mr Mark Coure:** More politicians, more waste, more red tape.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** That is so true. The Government wants to create red tape through these amalgamations. The Government wants to make things more complicated. It is impossible for members of the Liberal and Nationals parties to agree to anything from the community. They are at ideological odds with the community. That can be no more clear than with respect to their attitude to this bill. The Government's stand on this bill is a testament to its stunning incompetence. This Government has managed to unite all non-Government members of this place in opposition to it. In response to this policy, residents from Mossman to Dungog have protested and fought against this Government's forced amalgamations policy. The Opposition beat the policy in the Hunter. The Government should let the people of those city electorates—people who have been forced against their will to have their councils amalgamated—return to the positions they were in before the amalgamations, where the councils were in touch and had grassroots connections with the members of their communities. The members opposite should loosen the grip of this iron-fisted, hard-right, unfeeling, uncaring Government on those communities.

It is terrible that the Government has acted against the will of the people to forcefully merge councils and send administrators to do its bidding. Government members talk about the benefits of administrators in the process, but what about the costs of that which is borne by communities? After administrators had served as leaders of councils undemocratically for 12 months they since have been elected, which is pathetic. The amalgamation policy has been a dog's breakfast from day one. If the Government has learned anything from the past two years, it should have learned that it is not possible to continue to implement unpopular policies and ignore the residents of this State. If not, they will be facing more polls than just those being held on the weekend.

Government members should be reminded that they serve at the will of the people, not in spite of them. Just as they were silent on the greyhound ban, The Nationals members have been complicit in forcing regional councils to merge. The Nationals took no action about their city cousins. From the beginning of the amalgamation process, it has just been terrible. After the resignation of the former Premier, Mike Baird, the then Deputy Premier and former Nationals leader made the haughty statement that the New South Wales Nationals no longer will be taken for granted. However, The Nationals have been taken for granted and they are accepting crumbs from the Liberal Party table in this State. The Nationals have been reduced to being sycophants of the Liberal Party instead of being true Coalition partners and have become the afterthought to the Sydney-obsessed Liberals.

This House has a representative of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party because The Nationals have failed to represent rural communities. The Nationals members for the electorates of Tamworth and Myall Lakes should be very scared and shaking in their boots because it is not just those involved in the greyhound racing industry or regional councils that have had to impose the fire services levy but also the commercial fishers. The Nationals members should ask themselves what their vote margins were at the last election because I believe the commercial fishers will further erode The Nationals vote. The Nationals have been asleep at the wheel as far as regional Australia is concerned. Time after time Country Labor has stuck up for the people of rural and regional areas of New South Wales and will continue to do so. I have been to 35 different communities throughout this State that have expressed their disgust and embarrassment about The Nationals.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maitland will direct her comments through the Chair. The member for Tamworth and Parliamentary Secretary will refrain from directing his comments across the Chamber. I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Labor has filled the vacuum created by members of the Coalition who have been asleep at the wheel as far as country New South Wales is concerned. Labor has stuck up for the people of rural and regional New South Wales time after time, and will continue to do so. As I said, I visited 35 towns across the State—in the north, the west, the east and everywhere in between—and the overwhelming opinion expressed is that The Nationals are not representing the will of country communities. After six years, the empty statement that is repeated over and over again by The Nationals—that The Nationals represent regional New South Wales and are the advocates for regional New South Wales—has been shown to be a lie. The Labor Opposition knows



that this Government is not fond of listening to its constituents, but even the Government's own data shows that the amalgamation policy has been a failure.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet published a report of a survey of 10,000 residents in forcefully amalgamated or standalone councils. In eight out of the 10 measures for which opinions were sought, the standalone councils outperformed amalgamated councils because the standalone councils had a commitment to their local communities. The Government's own report states that the amalgamated councils performed "significantly lower than existing councils". Labor will always stand on the side of the people of New South Wales and against this Government when it attempts to implement foolhardy policies.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and advocacy of the Hon. Peter Primrose of the Legislative Council who, as the shadow Minister for Local Government, consistently has held this Government to account in relation to amalgamations. I condemn the statement by the Minister for Local Government when he referred to people being conned and to unnecessary cost, which is the stuff of fairytales. The Minister for Local Government is the queen of unnecessary costs in view of the cost burden that has been imposed upon local communities as a result of this Government's policy. That is an absolute disgrace.

The Government should be supporting the bill. It is possible to unscramble an egg and that should be done because local government amalgamations are a bad situation. There is a major disconnect between people who represent local councils and the communities they serve. People do not want mega councils. People want councils that are accountable and responsive to their communities. The Government and the Premier have not learned from past failures. The Premier herself said, "Is this policy the right one? Yes. Did we get the implementation wrong? Absolutely." This is the Government's chance to unscramble the egg, fix the implementation and do something to create real democracy in this State. But of course this hard-headed Government will keep its head in the sand. The policy of forced council amalgamations is the goose, but unfortunately there will be no golden eggs for Coalition members.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (11:25):** Here we are listening to advocacy from Opposition members that is straight from Sussex Street. Labor Opposition members have been speaking about democracy and listening to the people, but that is coming from an Opposition which, when in government, sent faxes on a Friday night sacking councils, without any consultation. The last people from whom the Government will take advice relating to democracy are those who are prepared to prorogue Parliament to avoid having a debate on electricity generator sales. The comments made by Labor Opposition members are truly staggering. I am pleased that the member for Wyong is present in the Chamber because earlier he said that his electorate had not received any funding as a result of the amalgamation process. I hope he remains in the Chamber because I will point out when his electorate received funding. I assume he will be happy to hand the funding back if the Government de-amalgamates councils.

**Mr Mark Coure:** He just wants his name on the plaque.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I am sure the member for Wyong will be there when the ribbons are being cut. If the member for Wyong supports the bill to de-amalgamate councils, it will be interesting to see whether he, the member for The Entrance, the member for Gosford and the member for Swansea will hand back funding that has been granted to community organisations. At a later stage I will go through the list of some of the recipients of that funding. The Government and I do not support the bill. At the outset the proposal for this bill may have been based on good intentions, but I have my doubts. If this bill is passed, it will impose a financial slug on unsuspecting ratepayers.

From the start, the formulation of this bill obviously did not include the consequences of who will pay for the referendum. We are not talking about just a few dollars but, rather, millions and millions of ratepayers' dollars. That is not the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers' money, it is not The Greens' money, nor is it Labor's money. The money will be taken from ordinary mum and dad ratepayers, who will have to pay for a referendum. Opposition members who are hell-bent on supporting this poorly thought out bill should be brave enough to talk about the consequences of passing the bill. For approximately the past half an hour, members present in the Chamber endured the complete rubbish spoken by the member for Maitland about this bill. I will explain in simple terms how this legislation will pan out.

The bill will require the New South Wales Electoral Commission to run plebiscites in 20 merged council areas within one month of assent to the bill. Those councils are the ones that recently held elections. Since that time the world and the communities have moved on. People voted and elected their councillors and the sky did not fall. The tight time frame for implementation of this bill alone will put a question mark over the whole process. The time allowed obviously is too short and plainly is not practical. The bill's rushed job will cut corners and has the real prospect of alienating many people in our community who have got on with their lives.

We now have the amalgamated Central Coast Council, and only those opposite—including the member for Wyong—really want to bring back the Gosford City and Wyong Shire councils. They could not even organise a dodgy mayoral vote a couple of weeks ago when councillors were arguing about who should be mayor. They could not even organise that little rabble, but the Central Coast Council is getting on with the job and investing millions of dollars the council received through the amalgamation. The council got on with the processes of merging all the systems, life on the Central Coast is going on, and the community is benefiting.

Under this poorly constructed bill the NSW Electoral Commission would not be able to follow the normal time line that applies to local government elections, polls and referendums in relation to plebiscites. I know that my arguments are a bit too technical for those opposite, but if they concentrate they might realise the folly of this badly constructed legislation. Under the Local Government Regulation 2005, the roll of electors for local government elections closes 40 days before an election. The regulation also requires the Electoral Commission to give notice of that fact to anyone entitled to vote. That notice has to be given at least 14 days before the closing date of an election, constitutional referendum or council poll. That is going to make the Electoral Commissioner's task virtually impossible, since the bill gives only a month from the date of assent to conduct plebiscites. The Electoral Commission certainly needs more than 40 days to comply with the statutory time frames for elections and the Local Government Act.

The bottom line of such a hastily ill-conceived and poorly worded bill is that the outcome of the process cannot be trusted and has absolutely no credibility. Having no credibility means that there is hardly a mandate for breaking apart a merged council. Those opposite need to take a chill pill, especially the member for Maitland who earlier today screamed her views across the Chamber. They are hell-bent on taking away the benefits of mergers and obviously do not care about the proper processes.

**Mr David Harris:** I am still waiting for you to tell us what money we got.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** For the benefit of the member of Wyong, who continues to interject, and the member for Oatley I will go through some of the benefits of amalgamated councils and where these funds are being distributed around the electorate. The Central Coast Council is awarding \$1 million in community grants to community projects around the Central Coast including Swansea, The Entrance, Wyong, Gosford and Terrigal. But under those opposite the projects would have to hand back the funds they have been allocated. Central Coast Montessori Primary School received a grant of \$10,000, and that would have to go back. The Ourimbah Rugby Club Inc. would have to hand back its \$10,000—"Sorry guys, bad deal, give it all back". The Cancer Council NSW Central Coast would have to hand back its \$10,000—"Guess what, guys, hand back the \$10,000; sorry you cannot have it". Youth Off The Streets Ltd—"Sorry, guys, please hand back your \$10,000". Rotary Club of East Gosford would have to hand back \$10,442.50—I am sure the member for Gosford would be thrilled to have to tell the club that it has to hand back its grant funding.

The bunch of guys who run the Davistown Progress Association Inc. are lovely—I know them all and I was talking to the president this morning. I would have to tell her that because of those opposite the association has to hand back \$10,824.50. There are so many more groups that would be affected. The Central Coast Bicycle User Group Inc. would have to be told, "Guys, bad news, according to those opposite you have to hand back \$11,300. Sorry about that, you cannot have it." I would have to tell the EDSACC Croquet Club Inc., "I have some bad news for you guys, you have to hand back your \$12,472."

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. This is not an opportunity for the member for Terrigal to talk about the pork-barrelling that this Government has done in relation to local government. This legislation is about a plebiscite to restore democracy.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** That is not a point of order. The member for Maitland will resume her seat.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** Those opposite cannot handle the fact that they would have to tell these groups that they have to hand back all the money because this bill stinks and is wrong. There are a lot more groups that would be affected. In whose electorate is the Soldiers Beach Surf Life Saving Club Inc.? It is in the electorate of Wyong. The member for Wyong would have to go to the club and say, "Guys, I have a bit of bad news for you. Because of the bill I am supporting, you are going to have to hand back \$15,695."

**Mr Mark Coure:** Never mind, we will tell them.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** If the member for Wyong will not tell them, I will—do not worry about that. Road Safety Education Ltd—as if road safety is not a serious issue. Mr Temporary Speaker, I seek an extension of time.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I move:

That an extension of time be granted.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....47  
Noes .....29  
Majority.....18

**AYES**

Anderson, Mr K	Ayres, Mr S	Berejiklian, Ms G
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)	Brookes, Mr G	Conolly, Mr K
Constance, Mr A	Coure, Mr M	Crouch, Mr A
Davies, Ms T	Elliott, Mr D	Evans, Mr L
Fraser, Mr A	George, Mr T	Gibbons, Ms M
Goward, Ms P	Grant, Mr T	Griffin, Mr J
Gulaptis, Mr C	Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A
Humphries, Mr K	Johnsen, Mr M	Kean, Mr M
Leong, Ms J	Maguire, Mr D	Marshall, Mr A
O'Dea, Mr J	Patterson, Mr C (teller)	Pavey, Mrs M
Petinos, Ms E	Piper, Mr G	Provest, Mr G
Roberts, Mr A	Rowell, Mr J	Sidoti, Mr J
Smith, Ms T F	Speakman, Mr M	Stokes, Mr R
Taylor, Mr M	Toole, Mr P	Tudehope, Mr D
Upton, Ms G	Ward, Mr G	Williams, Mr R
Williams, Mrs L	Wilson, Ms F	

**NOES**

Aitchison, Ms J	Barr, Mr C	Car, Ms P
Catley, Ms Y	Cotsis, Ms S	Crakanthorp, Mr T
Dib, Mr J	Donato, Mr P	Doyle, Ms T
Finn, Ms J	Harris, Mr D	Harrison, Ms J
Haylen, Ms J	Hornery, Ms S	Kamper, Mr S
Lalich, Mr N (teller)	Lynch, Mr P	McDermott, Dr H
McKay, Ms J	Mehan, Mr D	Mihailuk, Ms T
Minns, Mr C	Park, Mr R	Scully, Mr P
Tesch, Ms L	Warren, Mr G	Washington, Ms K
Watson, Ms A (teller)	Zangari, Mr G	

**PAIRS**

Barilaro, Mr J	Atalla, Mr E
Dominello, Mr V	Chanthivong, Mr A
Lee, Dr G	Daley, Mr M
Notley-Smith, Mr B	Foley, Mr L
Perrottet, Mr D	Hoenig, Mr R

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I appreciate those opposite allowing me an extra 5½ minutes after trying to gag me. I was about to mention the Soldiers Beach Surf Life Saving Club, which is in the electorate of the member for Wyong. Under this bill the \$15,695—

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 76. The member has been speaking for a long time about grants, but he has not explained to us why under this bill these groups would have to give the grants back. There is nothing in this bill that says that those grants have to be given back. The member should have to explain why the Government is going to rip that money back off them.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The content is relevant to the bill.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I outlined before that under this bill all of the funding given by these grants through the amalgamations would have to be given back. Without the \$15,695, Soldiers Beach would have to do without the National Broadband Network [NBN] coverage, wi-fi and its shark and observation tower, which provide connectivity and training opportunities for the lifesavers. The member for Wyong would have to begrudgingly say to them, "Sorry, guys: I supported a bill that means you have to hand back your \$16,000 grant."

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order: I am not quite sure which standing order my point of order relates to. I am a new member and I am trying to work through the standing orders.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member for Kogarah will come to the point immediately.

**Mr Chris Minns:** I think it may be Standing Order 121 or Standing Order 125A.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member will be specific.

**Mr Chris Minns:** I think it is Standing Order 74 or Standing Order 76.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member for Terrigal has the call.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** Road Safety Education will receive almost \$18,000 through the grants available as a result of the Government's amalgamation of the Central Coast Council. In addition Central Coast Primary Care would have to hand back \$20,000, should this bill be enacted, because there would have to be a rollback of grants. In addition the Umina Beach Police Citizens Youth Club would lose almost \$28,000 in grant funding it received through the council amalgamation. There is some bad news for the Wyong District Tennis Association too.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: I think it is—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. He is wasting time.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** The Wyong District tennis club would lose \$30,000 of funding.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 76.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** That was raised previously and I ruled against it. The content is relevant to the short title of the bill.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I have 2½ minutes left. The San Remo Neighbourhood Centre would have to hand back \$50,000. The others include Disability Matters with \$800,000—

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** That does not apply. The member for Rockdale will resume his seat.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** Given the completely frivolous interjections of those opposite, I seek another extension of time.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** That is not possible.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** Disability Matters would have to hand back \$800,000; Community Facilities, \$580,000; San Remo BMX facility, \$640,000; Peninsula Leisure Centre, \$135,000—

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 76. There is nothing in this bill that relates to the Government's pork-barrelling of communities. It is about the plebiscites—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member for Maitland will resume her seat or she will be called to order. This point of order has been raised three times, and it has been established that the content is relevant to the bill.

**Mr David Harris:** To the point of order: Members' speeches should pertain to the content of the bill. The member has not demonstrated what part of the bill—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member for Wyong previously raised this, and I ruled that it is relevant to the short title of the bill. I call the member for Wyong to order for the first time for raising frivolous points of order.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I am addressing the bill because under the grant funding via amalgamation would have to be handed back. For Niagara Park playground renovation, \$122,500 would have to be handed back and from Alan Davidson Oval, Wyoming, \$349,000. Through council amalgamation by this Government, Austin Butler Oval in Woy Woy received \$900,000, Avoca Beach received \$2.8 million for foreshore protection and Terrigal received \$2.2 million to improve pedestrian movement and traffic flow. A total of \$8.996 million in funding was provided by the State Government as part of the amalgamation of the Central Coast Council. This bill puts all that funding at risk. Labor amalgamated councils on a Friday night via fax and sacked them all without consultation, but it is now prepared to risk almost \$10 million of funding provided to and chosen by the community. This bill needs to be opposed.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:48):** I speak in support of the Local Government Amendment (Amalgamation Referendums) Bill 2017, which was introduced by the member for Orange. He is in this place with the enormous support of the people of Cabonne, having won a swing of 65 per cent in the town of Molong, the heart of the Cabonne Council, which was one of the biggest victims of this Government's failed amalgamations policy. The community I represent is now covered by the Cumberland Council and the City of Parramatta. In both those areas the amalgamation process has been a debacle. We finally have elected councillors but only after the most complex and messy amalgamation of all. Cumberland had bits of Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd councils combined to create a council that will be financially unsustainable in the long term because it does not have a large commercial or industrial rate base. Those parts of Auburn and Parramatta are all now in the City of Parramatta, which the Liberal Party set up to be the jewel in the crown with their lord mayoralty forever. What a pity for them that they could not convince the people of Parramatta to vote for them in large enough numbers to secure the lord mayoralty.

**Mr Mark Coure:** What are you talking about? We have a Liberal mayor.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** Somebody you expelled from the party twice after losing preselection, but then you had to go through a backroom deal to make him the mayor. You have independent mayors in both councils and certainly an independent mayor in Parramatta where you could get only six of the 15 councillors elected with your dodgy branding that people utterly reject. In both those councils we have seen backroom deals that have presented the mayoralty to the Our Local Community party. They have done extremely well across both councils, managing to be elected as a new party. Of course, the Labor Party did particularly well in both councils as well. We had eight councillors elected in the Cumberland Council. The Minister put herself forward as a huge opponent of council amalgamations. She stood up for the Woollahra Council, until she was told not to, and spelt out the word "local" L-O-C-A-L, to her community. She has now turned her back on them and is the biggest advocate for council amalgamations. The Minister turned up at budget estimates hearings and refused to rule out any further amalgamations.

The new Liberal Mayor of Cumberland, Greg Cummings, was elected as a Labor councillor as the biggest opponent of the abolition of the Holroyd City Council. He is now the mayor, with the support of the Liberal Party—the ones who abolished the Holroyd council. The people in my electorate are very keen to see their council de-amalgamated. I am not sure if the mayor will give them that leadership. I think it is quite hypocritical to be a huge opponent of council amalgamations and then be the first mayor of that amalgamated council with the support of the political party who abolished the council that he loved so much. Nevertheless, there is still enormous support in the community I represent for bringing back the Holroyd council so that the people of Granville, Guildford and Merrylands can be back in the Parramatta council area. There is even a smidgen of support in the adjoining electorate of Auburn for the old Auburn council, but most people are pretty glad to be rid of the Auburn council.

This morning I was flabbergasted to see the Minister—whose YouTube video is still up for all to see—who was such a champion of the Woollahra Municipal Council's independence, talking about how important the amalgamation process had been and then criticise members on this side who had been supportive of their local communities receiving grant funding. That grant funding does not have to be handed back under this bill. That is a totally unrelated matter. I was very proud to see organisations in my community apply for community grants from the new councils. Both the former councils had strong community grants programs that were, of course, abolished along with those councils. Many of the groups who had previously sought funding and run programs successfully sought funds from the new councils through the \$1 million one-off sweetener that the Government presented.

There are many projects that need to be funded and that have received funding through this process, which will not be dismantled. We will not be pulling apart the future youth and community centre at Granville brick by brick and handing them back if this bill is passed. That is not contained in the bill and it is not necessary.

It is an utter furphy created by the members opposite. This bill is an attempt to create a process whereby democracy can be returned to local government. That will require the support of a large number of people in the newly formed councils wanting to return things to the way they were. If the Government gets it right, which will be extremely surprising, that will not be supported. But if it is supported and people want to retain their previous councils, they will be able to do that.

We also will be able to amalgamate councils and require that councils to be amalgamated go through a referendum process. This should not be forced upon people in the way the Government has done. It was an utter disgrace. As I have mentioned previously, I was one of the hundreds of councillors across New South Wales who were sacked through the amalgamations process. An email was sent to the Lord Mayor of Parramatta who was then asked to notify the councillors. We were not even given the courtesy of a direct personal email. I found out from one of the members opposite giving me a tip-off in the lift that morning. I knew before the lord mayor did. But that is not the way to do things. There was no "thanks for your service". None of that. It was an email to the mayors telling them to tell their councillors that their services were no longer required. It was an utter disgrace.

The bill before us today proposes a far better process, one that involves lengthy and proper consultation rather than just dismissing councils and putting in place consultation processes, the results of which are ignored, as the next step is taken towards putting forward a model that everybody hates. That is what this Government has done. That is why they performed so badly and were roundly defeated in the most recent council elections, and that is why this bill is absolutely necessary.

**Debate interrupted.**

### *Motions*

#### **NATIONAL AMPUTEE AWARENESS WEEK**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (11:56):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the importance of National Amputee Awareness Week [4-11 October] in building awareness and support for amputees throughout the community.
- (2) Supports the implementation of the Government's Disability Inclusion Action Plan that seeks to remove systemic and attitudinal barriers for people with disability.
- (3) Promotes initiatives, such as the State Tobacco Plan and State Health Plan, that address risk factors for amputation such as smoking and diabetes.

Amputee Awareness Week is an important event that takes place from 4 to 11 October with the aim of building awareness and support for amputees in our community. More than 8,000 lower limb amputations are performed annually in Australia; approximately one every hour. In New South Wales each year more than 2,000 amputation procedures are performed. The national Amputee Awareness Week seeks to minimise the stigma that amputees can face in the community as well as to encourage people to lead healthy lives in order to reduce the risk of amputation. Amputees are doing amazing things in our community.

In Manly, for instance, I am reminded of Mr Sean Fong of Freshwater, who faced significant challenges after losing his right leg and his left arm after a tragic accident as a child. He has gone on to smash swimming records and recently represented his gym, Gracie Barra, and Australia in Abu Dhabi as part of the Jiu Jitsu festival and world championships. Recently the Invictus Games wrapped up in Toronto, where a number of athletes who were amputees competed and showcased their skills. What all of these things together demonstrate is that amputees are leading fantastic lives, which is why this notice of motion is important.

Amputation has a significant and lifelong impact for the amputee, changing body structure and function. Given the significant impact of amputation it is important that every effort is made to reduce the risk of amputation for the people of New South Wales as well as ensuring that those with an amputation can access the services and support that they need. The main causes of amputation include diabetes, vascular disease, cancer, traumatic accidents, infection and congenital birth defect. Limbs 4 Life reports that more than one person a day suffers the loss of a leg or a foot as a result of smoking. Programs that address these risk factors for amputation can reduce the number of amputation procedures being performed every year.

These programs include initiatives such as the NSW Tobacco Strategy that aims to reduce smoking in order to decrease chronic disease and associated harms, such as limb loss. The NSW Tobacco Strategy has a focus on addressing smoking in populations with high smoking rates, particularly Aboriginal communities, women smoking during pregnancy, mental health consumers and people in correctional facilities. The strategy includes enhancing programs to help smokers quit as well as protecting people from harmful second-hand smoke in outdoor areas and restrictions on tobacco retailing and promotion.

In 2017 the Government committed to the delivery of leading better value care initiatives in all local health districts in New South Wales. Health care is adapting to suit the changing needs and expectations of communities, patients and carers. New South Wales must meet the challenges of planning, funding, delivering, and evaluation of services that are posed by increased demand, an ageing population, and the increased prevalence of chronic disease. These initiatives include inpatient management of diabetes and high-risk diabetic foot clinics. They will ensure earlier detection of diabetes in our hospital system and an expansion of high-risk diabetic foot clinics to reduce the need for amputations.

Diabetes is a chronic condition marked by high levels of glucose in the blood. Chronic high blood glucose levels are associated with long-term damage, dysfunction and failure of virtually every organ, especially the heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys and nerves. Unfortunately, one in 11 people aged over 16 in New South Wales has diabetes. Diabetes accounts for 11 per cent of all hospitalisations in New South Wales public hospitals and people with diabetes stay in hospital three days longer than people without diabetes, resulting in increased costs and trauma for their family and friends.

The Premier's priority to reduce overweight and obesity rates in children aged between five and 16 years by 5 per cent over the next 10 years includes a comprehensive approach to supporting individuals to achieve and to maintain a healthy weight and to support healthier environments in which we live and work. As part of the Leading Better Value Care Clinical Initiative, the New South Wales Agency for Clinical Innovation Rehabilitation Network and the NSW Diabetes Taskforce are supporting the implementation of a statewide approach to improving glucose management for patients with diabetes in hospital to improve patient experience, to reduce adverse events and length of stay in hospital, and to avoid failed hospital discharge.

For those who need an amputation, the rehabilitation network has developed minimum standards of care for amputees that reflect the lifelong journey that is the experience of living with limb loss. Given the significant impact of amputation, it is important that minimum standards of care be developed to ensure that all residents of New South Wales obtain consistently high standards of care. By clearly describing the minimum standards of care that are expected of services in this State, undesirable variations in care can be reduced, clinical practice will increasingly align with the research evidence, and standards of care will continue to improve.

The Government's commitment to full implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme across New South Wales will ensure that amputees are supported to live full lives with all the necessary supports to enable them to participate in community and vocational activities of their choosing. The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan outlines the Government's commitment to addressing attitudes and systems that can create obstacles for people with disabilities. The plan focuses on promoting positive attitudes and behaviour; creating liveable communities; providing equitable support and processes; and supporting access to meaningful employment and opportunities. Events such as National Amputee Awareness Week reinforce the need for sustained action by both the Government and all members of the community in encouraging people to lead healthy lives, minimising the stigma and impact of amputation, and raising awareness of amputees in our community. I commend Limbs 4 Life for its promotion of this important week.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:02):** I thank the member for Manly for moving this motion. During National Amputee Awareness Week, and on every other day of the year, many of us take for granted the normality of four functioning limbs. Sarah Walsh was born with fibular hemimelia and had her right leg amputated below the knee when she was 18 months old. I met her when she came to a Wheelchair Sports NSW Junior Wheelies Christmas Camp Program when she was nine years old after being encouraged by a teacher to take up parasport. She had a state-of-the-art prosthesis and I lent her my sports wheelchair for the weekend. For the first time in her life, she was fully included in sport. Sarah dumped the world of wheelchair sport early in her career to pursue a future as a long jumper. At age 18, Sarah represented Australia at the Rio Paralympic Games and jumped 4.82 metres, which placed her sixth overall. Sarah has just been placed fourth in the world championships. I encourage members to watch out for Sarah Walsh at the Tokyo Paralympic Games.

Amputees in this State have been represented by Amputees NSW for more than 30 years. This year more than 2,000 amputations will be performed in New South Wales alone. With the rise of chronic illnesses such as diabetes in our community, it is inevitable that complications such as amputation also will increase. Amputation is a critical health concern that will leave a footprint in areas such as social welfare, employment, transport and health care. Both Amputees NSW and the Victorian-based Limbs 4 Life are supported by a volunteer team of amputees who are trained as peer mentors to support new amputees or others who need support in various stages of their new lives.

A few months ago, I spoke with Newcastle resident Darrel Sparke—himself an amputee—when he was coordinating a team of amputees to help an older amputee with gardening. That is completely normal in Darrel's world. Darrel is a passionate supporter of amputees across our State and speaks of the necessity of amputation in many cases to prevent death. Darrel spoke about the many reasons for amputation. In some cases it is the result

of trauma. My friend Paula said that one of the best days of her life was when she chose to have her foot amputated. Amputation can be the result of chronic injury, but it is usually done to achieve a cure; that is, it is a clinical measure undertaken to prevent death. In all cases it changes the individual's lives and their family's lives forever.

Growing evidence points towards post-traumatic stress as a direct clinical outcome of non-elective amputation. That is not surprising. Both Amputees NSW and Limbs 4 Life advocate that peer-to-peer mentoring using experienced amputees—ideally matched according to cause, age, gender and level of amputation—provides the best support. Amputees NSW is developing support programs and affirmative actions to support all aspects of living well with amputation. It also hosts a fabulous annual Amp Camp for young people living with "limb difference", linking heroes such as above-knee amputee Paralympic swimming gold medallist Ellie Cole with new amputees and those needing support. Amp Camp addresses the loneliness and isolation of difference to help young amputees find independence and to develop friendships with others who understand how it feels. Ellie was diagnosed with cancer when she was two years old and her leg was amputated after chemotherapy did not work. She is a very important role model for female amputees.

Whilst not all amputees are destined to be Paralympians, kids with disabilities also need heroes. Role models like Ellie are extremely important to young and older amputees struggling with body image concerns and seeking acceptance and inclusion in their community and value in their contribution. Amputees NSW is connecting with Homes for Heroes and RSL NSW to provide the best possible solutions for returned service men and women. It is also negotiating with Roads and Maritime Services to ensure that new amputees are not required to start from scratch to obtain their driver licence again. It would much prefer to have recognition of prior learning and driving experience. As if being a new amputee is not challenging enough, navigating life without a limb is already a huge challenge. Amputees NSW also is working to expand the education of health professionals and to share the stories of experts in the amputee space—the amputees themselves.

his will empower occupational therapists, physiotherapists and other healthcare professionals to understand the real-life practicalities and challenges of living as an amputee and, in turn, they will be better able to support amputees. I encourage everyone to discover and to support their local and State amputee community organisations. I congratulate all organisations that advocate for the rights of people who live with disabilities in New South Wales. On behalf of those organisations, I urge the Government to continue funding advocacy beyond 2018 as we transition into the difficult world of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I have no doubt that soon we will see more preventative treatments rather than amputation. Today and every day, I wish all amputees in New South Wales the strength and energy they need to achieve a good quality of life, full inclusion and a positive contribution to our community.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:08):** I acknowledge the great work of the member for Manly and congratulate him on moving this motion. It recognises the importance of National Amputee Awareness Week in building knowledge and support of amputees across all levels of government. It also acknowledges and supports the implementation of the Government's Disability Inclusion Plan. Of course, that plan also involves local government. It seeks to remove systemic barriers to people with disabilities, promote initiatives such as the State tobacco plan and State Health Plan and address the risk factors for amputation such as diabetes and smoking.

There are close to 200,000 people living with limb loss across Australia. As a result of the significant impact of amputation, evidence-based care standards and support for living with amputation are essential. While the main causes of amputation are diabetes and vascular disease, amputations also occur due to traumatic accidents, infections and congenital birth defects. Regardless of the cause of amputation, many individuals who lose a limb experience detrimental outcomes which negatively impact their ability to regain independence and lead fulfilling lives. The impact of disability is not only restricted to the individual who has lost a limb but also negatively impacts their caregivers, family, friends and colleagues.

I acknowledge Limbs 4 Life, the peak body for amputees across Australia. Tens of thousands of Australian amputees and their caregivers rely on the programs and services of organisations like Limbs 4 Life for assistance before, during or after a limb amputation. Without organisations like Limbs 4 Life, many amputees and people with congenital limb deficiencies of all ages and their families would be forced to face the trauma of limb loss alone. Since its formation, Limbs 4 Life greatly has extended the support programs available to amputees, their families, primary caregivers and healthcare staff. Limbs 4 Life offers support through the provision of one-on-one peer support, current health-based wellbeing information, social inclusion events and activities, and information and assistance tools provided through social media and online. Recently I was on its website and saw the great work that Limbs 4 Life does. Limbs 4 Life supports trained volunteers to act as mentors to others commencing on the journey of limb loss. These mentors greatly assist new amputees to gain confidence, gain independence, feel socially included and return to work.

NSW Health recently developed minimum standards of care for people with an amputation to ensure that all residents of New South Wales can expect to receive a consistent standard of care. Limbs 4 Life participated in



this important piece of work. These standards reflect the lifelong journey that is the experience of living with limb loss, in addition to reflecting the different needs of people throughout their journey. The minimum standards of care are consistent with the best available research evidence or are informed by the expertise of the working group where evidence is lacking. I thank the member for Manly for moving this motion in recognition of National Amputee Awareness Week.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (12:13):** The causes of amputation are many and varied. Currently there are multiple programs to address risk factors as no single intervention or approach is appropriate for all people. These programs and approaches offer flexibility which empowers individuals, supports choice and promotes a healthy lifestyle. NSW Health is committed to supporting the Government in many statewide initiatives and promoting national programs such as A Healthy and Active Australia, the Healthy Weight Guide, and health workers. Rates of type 2 diabetes within the community are alarming, as one in 11 people over the age of 16 is diagnosed with diabetes. The complications of diabetes are serious but with appropriate lifestyle changes and attention to blood glucose control, the risk of complications can be substantially reduced. Complications occur because persistent high blood glucose levels can damage the body's organs over time. Taking action today can make a huge difference tomorrow. With the support of healthcare teams, individuals can develop a daily self-management program that includes setting goals, taking responsibility and making positive lifestyle choices.

Primary care and general practitioners [GPs] are key players in managing this growing tide of diabetes in our community. The most socially disadvantaged Australians are twice as likely to develop diabetes. Primary care services offer effective diabetes care which empowers individuals to take charge of their diabetes management. Management includes checks on the many parts of the body that can be affected by diabetes including eyes, heart, kidneys, nerves and feet. GPs play a crucial role in helping individuals keep on track and remember when and how often to get tested, promoting an annual cycle of care.

NSW Health is supporting the development of the patient-centred medical home. The patient-centred medical home is at the heart of an integrated health system that wraps around the patient. It supports an approach to healthcare delivery that is patient-centred, accessible, comprehensive, coordinated, continuous and committed to quality and safety. In Australia this medical home is typically a general practice or Aboriginal health service which uses a team-based approach to fulfil the individual's required care. Team members include the patient and GP. Depending on the practice and the patient's needs, the team also may include practice administration staff, practice nurses, and allied healthcare providers such as physiotherapists, podiatrists, dieticians, diabetes educators and psychologists.

Another good program is the NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy. Preventing people in New South Wales from becoming overweight or obese is another important step in reducing the impact of lifestyle related chronic disease in New South Wales. This Government is making a strategic and coordinated investment across agencies and sectors to change environments and support individuals to achieve and maintain a healthy weight throughout life. In doing so, they will avoid preventable chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and their associated impacts such as amputation. Care for amputees occurs across numerous care settings and with numerous healthcare providers. Coordination of these care settings is key to supporting each person across his or her care journey. I thank the member for Manly and commend him for moving this important motion.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:17):** I also thank the member for Manly for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. It gives me the chance to talk about the New South Wales Government's implementation of a number of initiatives aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing childhood obesity and addressing overweight and obese adults in an attempt to reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. These initiatives will lead to a reduction in the number of people who require amputation. For example, NSW Health is committed to further reducing tobacco-related harm.

The NSW Tobacco Strategy 2012-2017 outlines a comprehensive set of policies, programs and regulatory initiatives to achieve the ambitious tobacco control targets in the Government's New South Wales 2021 plan. Focus areas of the strategy broadly include addressing smoking in populations such as those in my electorate which have high smoking rates, enhancing programs to help smokers to quit, taking measures to protect people from harmful second-hand smoke in outdoor areas and placing restrictions on tobacco retailing, advertising and promotion. To date, NSW Health resources have been directed to target groups with high smoking prevalence such as Aboriginal smokers and pregnant women who smoke.

NSW Health is leading better value care, a key goal to improve value for patients. In doing so, it will unite the interests of all healthcare system stakeholders, patients and their families, New South Wales residents, clinicians, local health districts and the Ministry of Health. Two initiatives under this umbrella focus on care for people in hospital with diabetes in providing access to services specifically for people with diabetes who are at risk of amputation. Foot ulceration is one of the leading causes of hospitalisation for people with diabetes. It

affects more men than women, something I learned when I worked on the World Diabetic Foot Conference at the Liverpool Hospital. It was the first of its kind and it was phenomenal.

People from New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States of America gathered at the Liverpool Hospital for that amazing conference. I learned far more about foot ulceration than I needed to, but I learned how important it is to debate such a motion in this House. It is estimated that on average 19.6 per cent of people with type 2 diabetes are at risk of foot ulceration. In 2014-15 the hospitalisation of people requiring diabetes-related foot amputation cost the New South Wales health system \$327 million, and diabetes-related foot complications account for 8 per cent of total deaths secondary to diabetes. There is an urgent need to address this growing burden and to take that pressure off our community.

People in New South Wales have inequitable access to high-risk foot services, with significant variation in amputation rates in some population groups and geographical regions. Research indicates that the rate of diabetes-related foot amputations is more than four times higher for Aboriginal people than it is for non-Aboriginal people. The project's overarching goal is to enhance access for a person at risk of foot complications to high-risk foot services, including Telehealth. This enhanced access seeks to reduce amputations, prevent unnecessary emergency department visits and admissions, reduce length of stay through better inpatient care, reduce the costs associated with hospitalisation for diabetes-related foot complications and enhance confidence in accessing multidisciplinary care after discharge.

The inpatient care of people with diabetes initiative is currently underway. Its overarching goals are to develop and implement processes to support continuous improvement in inpatient diabetes care and enhance the capability and/or capacity of general ward staff in the care of patients with diabetes. There is so much more, but through regular contact, advice and coaching, participants can adopt and maintain healthier lifestyles. With the indulgence of the House I mention Paul de Gelder, an amputee I met a few years ago in this House at a literary luncheon. Paul taught me a lot about amputee awareness. I give his book out to as many children as I can. He was the victim of a shark attack in Sydney Harbour and has an amazing story to tell. I encourage members to read his book.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:21):** I commend the member for Manly for moving this important motion. In the Tamworth electorate on Sunday 22 October there will be a Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation walk in which I will participate. It is a big issue related to a lot of parts of the health cycle, particularly obesity. We need to make sure we keep a keen eye on it. I again thank the member for Manly for raising the issue in the New South Wales Parliament today. Those of us in the Coalition are focused on these issues and we look forward to supporting our community groups in those areas in any way we can.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:22):** In reply: I am grateful for the contributions from a number of members—first, the member for Gosford and her interesting and heartfelt story about Sarah Walsh, an amputee with whom she has a strong relationship and who will be participating in the Tokyo Paralympic Games. That is fantastic. I look forward to seeing how she performs. I did not know the significance of the challenges of post-traumatic stress following amputation, so I thank her for that contribution. She also mentioned Amp Camp, which sounds like a wonderful opportunity for young amputees to form strong friendships.

The member for Oatley outlined the importance of an evidence-based care approach and its role in supporting the journey of amputees to regain independence and lead fulfilling lives—things that have been a theme in the documentation I have read about the issue and in the contributions of other members. The member for Drummoyne gave a wonderful insight into the primary care services provided by this Government, which is doing incredibly hard work to roll out the healthy living strategy that help to deal with the concerns of amputees. I am grateful for the insights of the member for Holsworthy. She brought to the fore the issue of diabetes in amputation. I was not aware, and I am sure not many members of the House are aware, that diabetes is a significant cause of amputation. She spoke of her presence at the World Diabetic Foot Conference in her electorate, which sounds like a great experience to learn and understand more about the issue.

As I mentioned earlier, there are significant contributions and efforts of amputees throughout the community. In my electorate we have held our second Amputee Surf Day, which was hosted by the Manly Surf School and Össur Australia. That brought amputees to Manly Beach for a fantastic day in the surf. Yesterday, as I talked to the Minister for Health, he had a great perspective on the concept of disability generally. "Don't DIS My ABILITY" is a great approach in discussing these issues. He is doing a lot of good work in this area, for which he should be commended.

Ultimately this motion recognises the great and incredibly important work of Limbs 4 Life. The consistent themes that emerged from other members' contributions were around making sure amputees have appropriate support from the Government, that they can lead independent lives and that the lives they live are

fulfilling. That is incredibly important. I thank all members who contributed to debate on this motion and I commend the motion to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **TAREE AIRPORT UPGRADE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:26):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Minister for Tourism and Major Events on the opening of the Taree Airport upgrade.
- (2) Notes the Government contributed \$405,800 towards the costs of the upgrade with MidCoast Council contributing more than \$300,000.
- (3) Notes the upgrade includes more parking, a modern surveillance system, advanced technology and sustainability systems, passenger touch screen information and a state-of-the-art visual aid system to assist aircraft land in all weather conditions.

As the motion states, the New South Wales Government contributed \$405,800 to the project and partnered with the MidCoast Council, which contributed \$300,000, putting more than \$705,000 towards this project. The completion of the project is another example of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government supporting rural and regional tourism by funding critical visitor economy infrastructure. The New South Wales Government's Restart NSW Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund invested \$110 million to create infrastructure that will support the growth of regional locations as great destinations for work and travel.

The Government was proud to support the upgrade of the Taree Airport as this project will provide a significant boost in the region by improving accessibility to jobs, services and people, and providing better links between business activities across the State. This will benefit the whole of the MidCoast Council area, which includes the Gloucester region, the Great Lakes and the Forster-Tuncurry region, Harrington, Taree and the hinterland. The Taree Airport is one of the gateways to the Manning Valley and the gateway to the MidCoast Council area. It is important that when people fly into Taree Airport they get that "Wow!" experience and the people who live there can be proud of that gateway. First impressions count, and people may want to visit Taree again if their first experience of flying there was a good one.

It is estimated that this project will result in a \$40 million return to the local economy. There will be greater flight passenger numbers, more overnight stays and more tourist dollars ending up in the pockets of local businesspeople. It is interesting to note that in the calendar year 2016, 16,500 passengers landed at the Taree Airport—a 14 per cent increase since 2015. We hope that visitors numbers will increase further. The upgrade of the Taree Airport included improvements to the quality and quantity of services of the airport. The large-scale renovation included more parking for airplanes, a modern surveillance system, more advanced technology and sustainability systems, and a state-of-the-art visual aid system to assist aeroplanes to land in all weather conditions.

When I visited the airport I enjoyed looking at the digital tourism display. A touch screen highlights destinations in the area, including accommodation and things to do, and it is possible to manipulate the map on screen. The Taree Airport is one of the few places to have such a display, and I am sure it will be rolled out to other airports. The precision approach path indicator is a visual aid for planes to land in all weather conditions, which is very important as it increases safety for airplanes and passengers. It is expected that the upgrade of the airport will mean an increase in passenger numbers, more overnight stays and more tourism dollars. It also provides an opportunity for the growth of aviation services in the region. Just before the opening of this upgrade an aviation park was completed in the area. That will provide opportunities for businesses and freight and will mean that flight training and other activities will be able to happen at the airport.

The airport can now take significant numbers of airplanes, passengers and freight. It will mean that other types of planes, such as leisure planes, will be able to come into the area. It will benefit the whole region that the airport services—an area of over 15,000 square kilometres. The Government has been able to partner with the MidCoast Council, a newly merged council that is getting on with the job of kicking goals for the people of that area. Some people were naturally concerned about the amalgamation but there is now overwhelming support for that merger across the entire district. The MidCoast Council and its staff should be extremely proud of the way they have conducted themselves in the merger of the councils and in building relationships with all levels of government. The Government appreciates being able to work with the council to deliver partnership proposals like this for the benefit of the entire community.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (12:33):** I say from the outset that the Opposition supports the intent of this motion. The member for Cessnock would agree with me when I say that those on this side of the Chamber

love regional jobs, growth and investment. We certainly welcome more jobs, given the number of full-time jobs that have been lost in regional New South Wales. As the member for Myall Lakes has indicated, the Taree Airport is an important piece of infrastructure. My research shows that just under 20,000 passengers pass through the airport each year. That equates to about 3,518 aircraft movements. The airport supports a number of businesses, as has been suggested, including aircraft manufacturers and fabricators, an aircraft restorer and a skydiving school.

There was a skydiving operation at the Warnervale Airport in my electorate but it moved to the Belmont Airport. Skydiving is quite popular; I do not understand why. Some people enjoy throwing themselves out of planes. As the member for Myall Lakes said, this upgrade to the airport is timely in that it complements the \$3.1 million facility upgrade at the aviation business park nearby, which will support other businesses such as freight businesses. The MidCoast Council area currently supports a population of 91,958. It is suggested that by 2036 the population will rise to 112,962, which is about 22.24 per cent growth. It is important in all the regional areas that are growing—particularly in electorates like mine on the coastal fringe—that the infrastructure grows to match the growing population.

The area has a gross regional product of \$3.27 billion, which equates to 0.6 per cent of the State's total gross regional product. It supports 6,542 local businesses and 31,549 jobs. So it is very important that the MidCoast Council develops infrastructure such as the airport to support growth in local businesses and local jobs. I may be corrected on this by the local member, who would know more about it than I do, but I am led to believe that there is a destination management plan that is still in draft form at the moment. I was reading this morning that that plan provides an outline to meet sustainable tourist development over the next 15 to 20 years. Obviously, this airport will support growth in tourism. The economic assessment made by council indicates that through the upgrade of the airport there is a potential to increase the number of visitors by 8,405 over the next three years, generating more than \$2.62 million in further revenue for the area. According to the newspaper article I was reading, Councillor Hogan was the mayor when the project was announced. Is he still the mayor?

**Mr Stephen Bromhead:** No. That was the original proposal, not the delivery.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** When Councillor Hogan was mayor, he called the airport a vital piece of business and community infrastructure which is a key link for tourists and visitors. The member for Myall Lakes has indicated this morning that he certainly agrees with that. This is one of 17 upgrades of regional airports in this State. Originally the council applied for \$455,000; it received \$405,800. The \$50,000 shortfall was made up by the council, bringing its total contribution to over \$300,000. Given the proximity of Taree to Sydney, the main gateway into New South Wales, airport infrastructure is incredibly important. Even though the Pacific Highway is being upgraded in stages, it is important that people are able to travel from Sydney directly to regional New South Wales. I think it is the Rex airline that operates flights into the Taree Airport. This gives an opportunity for overseas tourists to visit a very nice part of the world.

When I was in Griffith recently, I discussed with the member for Myall Lakes good waterskiing places and he set me straight on a nice stretch of water adjacent to a caravan park that is an excellent skiing location. I appreciate his providing me with that information, which I may use later this year. Airports are gateways that provide access to tourists, but because of Taree's distance from major capital cities the transportation of freight both into and out of the region also is important. Hopefully the airport upgrade will provide opportunities for people involved in agriculture in the Myall Lakes electorate to move their products through Taree as a result of the Taree Airport's expanded capacity.

I again thank the member for Myall Lakes for moving the motion, which acknowledges the importance of the Taree Airport. Opposition members sometimes are critical of the self-congratulatory parts of Government members' motions, particularly those that laud Ministers, but this is an exception. I know that the member for Tamworth and Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads, Maritime and Transport is a nice fellow. I visit his electorate and he visits mine. I am very pleased he was able to facilitate the grant that has enabled the upgrade of the Taree Airport.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:40):** It is with pleasure that I contribute to debate on a motion relating to airport upgrades in regional areas across New South Wales. In Tamworth, the Government has provided almost \$6 million over the past 12 months for apron upgrades that will enable the Tamworth Airport to accommodate much larger aircraft than previously, such as the Boeing 737-800, as well as airport terminal upgrades. Tamworth visitor numbers have grown significantly with almost 200,000 passenger movements in the 2016-17 financial year, which represents an increase of 9.4 per cent from 2015-16. Tamworth currently has four regional carriers servicing the area with regular services to Sydney and Brisbane. Tamworth provides 118 commercial flights per week, which is an increase of 21 per cent on the services available last year. The improvements do not stop there.

Currently there is a push to have airlines consider additional destinations that include Melbourne, Canberra and the Gold Coast. At the beginning of 2015, Tamworth had one airline providing a service to one destination. In less than two years, Tamworth now has four airlines travelling to major capital cities, and this competition is driving down the price of airline tickets. People should make no mistake: the Government is turbocharging the Tamworth region by putting infrastructure in place that will drive economic growth, create local jobs and drive local business. The Government is delivering on projects in the Tamworth region and providing infrastructure that under previous governments people could only dream of. The Government's policy is about building for future generations and ensuring that the Tamworth region is recognised as an economic powerhouse for regional New South Wales.

The first stage of the wider redevelopment of the Tamworth Airport will be the apron upgrade to accommodate larger aircraft. Later this year \$4 million will be provided for upgrading the airport terminal to cater for additional flights and services as well as travel to the additional destinations of Melbourne, Canberra and the Gold Coast. The Government's policy is: build it and they will come. The low-growth scenario suggests that annual passenger demand will be 214,000 in Tamworth by 2035. The medium-growth scenario with an annual growth rate of 3.4 per cent suggests an annual passenger demand of 320,000 by 2035. The high-growth scenario suggests an increase in passenger demand increasing to 430,000 by 2035. This Government will continue to turbocharge the Tamworth region across all transport sectors—road, rail and air. We need to continue to open up regional New South Wales, and transport networks are the key to achieving that. I am very proud of the Tamworth Airport. I congratulate the Tamworth Regional Council on its effort to make the airport an attractive place. When passengers fly in, the airport looks warm and welcoming. The airport terminal has Slim Dusty's magnificent—

**Mr John Sidoti:** Saloon?

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Drummoyne, but no. The airport has a very large display of Slim Dusty's written sheet music for *Lights on the Hill* and provides lots of information about the Tamworth Country Music Festival, which is approximately 95 days away in January. The people of the Tamworth region look forward to welcoming people through our beautiful airport, which is being upgraded. The Government wishes to continue investing in regional areas of New South Wales. The Government is turbocharging the Tamworth region right now.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (12:45):** It is with great pleasure that I contribute to debate on the motion moved by the member for Myall Lakes, and I congratulate this very excellent member. I receive a great deal of good feedback from my constituents about my neighbouring parliamentary representative; really I do. The member for Myall Lakes and I share a boundary on the eastern part of my electorate near Gloucester and Stroud. Upgrading of the Taree Airport is very welcome news. The people of Gloucester, who are now represented by the MidCoast Council, use the Taree Airport and regard it as a very valuable piece of community infrastructure.

A great deal of discussion has occurred, including a recent discussion in the House, about successful mergers of local councils. The MidCoast Council resulted from a merger of Taree's Great Lakes Council and the Gloucester Shire Council. I remind the House that one of the key drivers of a successful merger always will be scale and capacity. The Taree Airport upgrade was achieved because of scale and capacity. The Government has given the MidCoast Council the ability to implement community infrastructure upgrades that individual councils previously struggled to bring to fruition because of a lack of funding. My electorate incorporated the former Gloucester Shire Council and the feedback I have from Gloucester residents is that they are very happy with the new MidCoast Council and the success of the merger. Works are being carried out in Gloucester and Stroud that never would have been able to have been done previously.

The MidCoast Council has been so successful that, effectively, a saving of \$4 million a year has been achieved. The new council has applied \$15 million to community infrastructure that previous individual councils would never have been able to do. The Taree Airport upgrade is one of those infrastructure projects. The MidCoast Council has committed to spending \$14 million on roads and bridges upgrades, which will increase the capacity of the region to freight agricultural products to market and will provide a safe mode of travel for residents, visitors and tourists. Residents and visitors who travel by road around my electorate know that a major section of The Bucketts Way extends to Gloucester. I congratulate the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight for providing \$8.5 million to upgrade The Bucketts Way under the Fixing Country Roads program. Every infrastructure improvement helps, and the Taree Airport is yet another success story.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:49):** In reply: I thank the member for Wyong, the member for Tamworth and the member for Upper Hunter for their contributions to the debate on the Taree Airport upgrade. The member for Wyong touched on the fact that a number of regional airports are being upgraded as part of the Government's \$110 million airport upgrade program for regional New South Wales. These upgrades are due to The Nationals representing regional New South Wales being in government in this State. The

New South Wales Government is a responsible economic manager and is therefore in a position to invest vast sums of money in infrastructure in regional New South Wales.

It is The Nationals in government that has ensured that 65 per cent of the Roads budget over the last four years has been spent in regional New South Wales. It is The Nationals in government that has ensured that this State was the first to sign up for the Gonski education reforms, which has meant extra funding for schools and education. People talk about the roles of Independents and minor parties. They are always on the sidelines, yelling and screaming, throwing spears, but they are never in government and therefore never in a position to deliver for regional New South Wales.

**Mr John Sidoti:** They criticise all the time.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** All they do is criticise.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** We just want more spending in our regions.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** Never before has regional New South Wales benefited from such generous government spending. Wherever we go in this State we see new roads, new bridges, new schools and upgraded schools, new hospitals and upgraded hospitals. This Government is not just spending on infrastructure; we are making our communities safer by employing more frontline police and we are improving educational outcomes through Gonski funding. Upgraded hospitals are improving the health outcomes for people living in regional New South Wales, who deserve the best health care. This Government is focused on the people of this State, and sometimes our critics forget that fact. We are looking after our communities and listening to what they want so that we can deliver for them with an unprecedented level of spending on infrastructure.

Councils in regional New South Wales, whether or not they have amalgamated, will receive \$1.3 billion over the forward estimates for programs to drive jobs creation and small businesses to turbocharge our regional economies. This Government has allocated \$100 million to sporting infrastructure, so that this State does not get left behind on sporting venues. This Government has allocated \$100 million to heritage and environmental projects and the arts. We have allocated money to connecting communities through better telecommunications, including through the National Broadband Network, and tackling black spots that affect mobile telecommunications.

Right across regional New South Wales infrastructure spending is improving the living standards of residents at an unprecedented rate. This is a golden time for regional New South Wales, and I am very proud to be part of this Government that is delivering for regional New South Wales. Part of the State's infrastructure development is the upgrade of regional airports. It is great that the Taree Airport received funding for an upgrade. Taree Airport is the gateway to the mid North Coast region. This Saturday the airport will host a massive emergency services exercise to ensure that all the emergency services work effectively together. I commend this motion to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **TAHMOOR PUBLIC SCHOOL BREAKFAST CLUB**

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (12:54):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Tahmoor Public School on its breakfast club for students, which operates three times per week providing breakfast for up to 50 children each day.
- (2) Thanks Wollondilly Community Links for supporting the program by replacing a canteen freezer which was stolen on 11 February 2017.
- (3) Thanks the Lions Club of Tahmoor for delivering ice blocks and frozen treats on hot summer days.
- (4) Thanks Community Links and Foodworks for sponsoring the breakfast club by donating \$2,000.

I love to talk about organisations in my community that do a great job to improve the lives of community members who are in need. There would be very few people who would argue that breakfast is not the most important meal of the day. On a sitting day many members of this place, including the member for Drummoyne, eat breakfast. Breakfast quite literally breaks the overnight fasting period, replenishes the supply of glucose and provides other essential nutrients to keep energy levels up throughout the day. That is why it might surprise or even shock members in this House to discover that a survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found as many as one in seven Australian school children is skipping breakfast.

This is a massive concern, given that breakfast is a meal scientifically linked to improved school performance as well as a lower body mass index [BMI] in children. There are decades of scientific evidence supporting the role of breakfast in the better brain function in children. According to the Hunger in the Classroom report 2015, teachers report that hunger in the classroom is extremely noticeable, estimating that the average student loses more than two hours a day of learning time when they come to school hungry. If they were to arrive at school hungry once a week, a student would lose more than a whole term over the course of a year, which is very serious. Four out of five teachers also report an increased workload due to hungry students as the children find it harder to concentrate, are lethargic and demonstrate behavioural problems.

The reasons given for not eating breakfast are usually poor time management or lack of appetite. In my local area in particular, a lack of time is often the case as parents need to leave early to get to work, with more than 70 per cent of residents travelling to work outside the shires I represent. This means that some children skip breakfast and many children eat breakfast so early that they arrive at school hungry again. Poor understanding of the health benefits of breakfast by our school-age children is a factor. Some girls, and even some boys, have the wrongly conceived idea that skipping breakfast will help them with weight control. As a former Minister for Mental Health I had a lot to do with girls and boys with eating disorders. Most alarming is that some children and teenagers are downing energy drinks in place of traditional breakfasts. Eating habits also are linked to parental influence.

The positives and negatives of eating breakfast, or not eating breakfast, are clear and have been well established. The question becomes: What can we do about it? What can we do to make sure those children missing out on this most essential start to their day are looked after? Breakfast clubs have become becoming increasingly normal in our primary schools. School breakfast programs are not new to Australia; they can be traced back to the late 1970s. The Australian Red Cross Good Start Breakfast Club was developed in an attempt to combat food insecurity and disadvantage in low socio-economic areas. Programs like this help communities to develop breakfast programs that suit schools' needs by providing facts sheets on issues such as funding the programs and sourcing volunteers.

I am proud to say that a number of breakfast clubs operate in the Wollondilly and Wingecarribee shires in my electorate, including at the Hilltop Primary School, which I plan to visit soon. One of clubs I will highlight is the Tahmoor Public School, which operates three times per week and provides breakfast for up to 50 children on each of those days. That may not seem like a large number, but it is significant in terms of the overall school population. After the school identified some issues with students buying junk food like soft drinks and chips in the morning, it decided to act. The school confirmed that, indeed, behavioural issues in class could be linked back to students who had not had breakfast.

The breakfast club initially started off small, with some help from teachers and a parent with connections to Community Links Wollondilly and the local Our Community Pantry. Our Community Pantry works closely with Foodbank and soon started to deliver weekly food boxes containing enough provisions to cater for about 50 students. Each week Our Community Pantry has been donating supplies such as bread, milk—sourced from local dairy Country Valley, which is arguably the best milk in Australia if not the world—fruit, vegetables, juices, cereals and condiments. Three times a week students would help with the washing up and talk about healthy eating habits at breakfast club. The club grew in popularity and soon needed a more appropriate space.

With the help of the fantastic Parents and Citizens' Association [P and C] it moved into the canteen, offering free breakfast prepared by a rotating roster of many teachers and volunteers. Unfortunately, the canteen was broken into during school holidays earlier this year and the freezer—essential to the program's success and operation—was stolen. A call for help went out to Community Links Wollondilly, which is a fantastic organisation that has had a partnership with the Tahmoor Public School for years, and it came to the rescue. It even gave the school a FoodWorks card worth \$2,000.

This is a story of the entire community working together to produce tangible results. It significantly reduced the number of students consuming lollies, chocolates and soft drinks in the morning, and the school reports an obvious reduction in behavioural issues in morning classes. The principal at the Tahmoor Public School, David Schofield, and his entire team of teachers and administration staff do amazing work—and I will talk more about that at another time. Our Community Pantry understands that a school breakfast program is much more than feeding hungry children; it is an investment in Australia's future.

According to the statistics, every kilogram of food that goes to Australian children each week in a school breakfast program provides a long-term social return of \$110 in terms of improved physical health and school performance. With an average of 40 kilos of food donated every week to the Tahmoor Public School, Our Community Pantry is investing in the long-term future of local families, our local community and our nation. I thank Greg Duffy from Community Links; the Lions Club of Tahmoor; the Tahmoor Public School; Tracey Ballango from the Parents and Citizens Association; Boris Ballango, who teaches at the school and is part of the

Tahmoor Lions Club; Our Community Pantry's Paula Zrilic; and the entire team. They do an amazing job. There are many people I could mention—but if I did so I would probably be here for another hour—and each and every one of them is recognised, thanked and appreciated. They are local treasures and local heroes.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (13:01):** On behalf of the New South Wales Opposition, I thank the member for Wollondilly for moving this motion. As a former primary school principal and teacher for more than 20 years, I know that breakfast clubs are very important institutions in our schools. Many of the schools I worked at had breakfast programs. The member for Wollondilly highlighted the great work that has been done at the Tahmoor Public School and acknowledged that such programs run with support from community groups—in this case, the Tahmoor's Lions Club, Community Links and FoodWorks. These programs cannot run without support from outside groups and volunteers. I am reminded of a recent visit to the MacKillop Catholic College at Warnervale where, after doing a safe walk to school, I was able to partake of breakfast provided by the breakfast club that had been set up by students. One girl set up the program, and when she left after year 12 her younger sister ran it. The volunteers and organisers of these programs are very important.

I will focus on how breakfast clubs benefit students. As the member for Wollondilly said, research shows that if children are hungry they do not learn very well. When children are hungry their behaviour deteriorates, particularly in the morning, and they find it more difficult to concentrate. The research also shows that the morning session is the key learning time. If children are not well fed at breakfast, learning difficulties and behavioural issues can arise. I agree with the member for Wollondilly that students are eating breakfast earlier in the morning because parents are required to travel longer distances through traffic to get to work. As a consequence, the whole family has to get up early—sometimes at 5.00 a.m. or 6.00 a.m.—so by the time the children come to school, which starts at 9.00 a.m., they may have gone four or five hours without food. The assumption is sometimes that children are not having breakfast but that is not necessarily the case; they may be having breakfast very early.

The member for Wollondilly also correctly mentioned that if students do not have healthy options at school they will stop at the corner shop or servo and buy less healthy items that tend to increase their blood sugar levels, which creates behavioural issues. A well organised, strong breakfast program in a school is a vital part of the total school operation. The member for Wollondilly mentioned that the Red Cross operates breakfast programs in many schools. That was the case when I was at Gwandalan, and Wyong Grove had a program that ran for a long time until, unfortunately, the school was shut. The Wyong Public School and many schools in my electorate run breakfast programs because principals, teachers and parents see the benefits for students.

This Chamber often has an adversarial atmosphere and there is plenty of argy-bargy, but that disappears when motions like this are moved, which not only congratulate a particular school but also highlight an issue that is important to every member of this place. I urge all members to contact their local schools to see whether they have breakfast programs in place and, if they do not, to point them in the right direction to help set them up. I also urge members to visit and chat to students about how important these programs are in their lives. For a lot of children who suffer neglect and do not get proper meals, coming to a breakfast club with other children and adults is also great for socialisation, and those children do not feel as left out as they might while waiting for recess. In fact, many schools have reversed their breaks and now have lunch first and recess in the afternoon to make the most of research that shows full bellies make for better learners. I thank the member for Wollondilly and commend him for moving this motion, which has the full support of the New South Wales Opposition.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:06):** I support the motion moved by the member for Wollondilly, and I thank him for his strong advocacy for youth in his community. Breakfast is often referred to as the most important meal of the day, but unfortunately not all children, or even adults, ensure that they eat breakfast—and I am guilty of this myself—whether because of rushing to get to places in the morning or family socio-economic factors. Knowing this is the case, I am glad the member for Wollondilly has recognised the Tahmoor Public School for running its breakfast club and ensuring that up to 50 additional students are getting breakfast each day. These types of clubs are a wonderful opportunity to ensure that our students receive the nutrition they need to study and work hard throughout the day.

These types of programs are fantastic, and I also recognise and congratulate the students of the Holsworthy High School and the local social and youth workers who have volunteered their mornings to prepare breakfast for students. In the past six years the school has held a breakfast club as part of the Youth Clicks project. This program involves students volunteering their mornings and getting up early to serve breakfast to their classmates. The breakfast club started in 2011 with 40 students attending, and since then numbers have increased to around 230 students. The breakfast club aims to increase social inclusion, develop life skills and give the students a balanced meal and a great way to start the day. I acknowledge a not-for-profit organisation, The Junction Works, for providing the equipment and produce needed to make the breakfast successful. I also recognise the many students from the Holsworthy High School, including Morgan O'Hanlon, Maddy Cram, Cara Baker and Kyle Cropper, who also volunteer at The Junction Works after school and for its vacation program. Many of the



students who volunteer for the breakfast club say it has increased their confidence and leadership skills, which is a great additional outcome.

It is important to acknowledge the important work that Lions clubs do across our State. They provide valuable and important assistance to our community, including the Tahmoor Public School breakfast club initiative. It is great to see that the Lions Club of Tahmoor delivers ice blocks and frozen treats to students on hot summer days. I know they would enjoy them immensely. Within my electorate we are blessed to have some great Lions clubs, such as the Wattle Grove Lions Club, which has only been in existence for a few years but is going brilliantly, and the Liverpool Lions Club. These clubs have done some amazing work in my community. The Wattle Grove Lions Club is holding a charity movie night on 16 October to help fund the Liverpool Men's Centre, which provides crisis accommodation, and a case management centre run by St Vincent de Paul Society for disadvantaged men of the Liverpool area. Liverpool Lions also runs fundraising barbecues and conducts environmental clean-ups across Liverpool. It makes a huge difference.

Lions club members are not always recognised for the work they do helping our community. As members of Parliament, we are all grateful to our local Lions clubs. I particularly thank members of the Wattle Grove and Liverpool Lions clubs, and all the other Lions clubs across the State. I also thank the Tahmoor Public School, the Holsworthy High School, Community Links Wollondilly, The Junction Works, the Tahmoor Lions Club and FoodWorks for ensuring that our State's students are fed and ready to challenge the obstacles and lessons that the day throws at them. I am sure a simple thing such as having breakfast will make a huge difference to their futures.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (13:10):** I congratulate the member for Wollondilly on moving this important motion and on the work he does so diligently throughout his community. I congratulate the Tahmoor Public School on the establishment and functioning of its breakfast club for many students of the school. The member for Wollondilly and the member for Holsworthy spoke about the benefits of a healthy breakfast for every student, which plays a pivotal role in their growing into healthy adults as well as providing educational benefits, such as aiding concentration, and ensuring that nutrition plays a vital role in their lives. During National Amputee Awareness Week we have been made aware of the importance of diet. A bad diet may lead to diabetes and other health problems. Diet plays a vital role for students, particularly in the early, impressionable years.

In my electorate I have 15 schools and each is better than the other. It is a fantastic community. We bond and work together for a common cause. The member for Wollondilly spoke about the Tahmoor Public School and the wonderful job it does for its community. There are many volunteer organisations throughout the State. Community Links Wollondilly has supported its community, particularly when a canteen freezer went missing. It is to be commended for raising valuable funds to replace it. I commend also the Tahmoor Lions Club for delivering ice blocks and frozen treats. It is important that communities bond together and that various community organisations gel and work towards a common cause. I know that Lions clubs play a vital role—they do in my community in the inner west—as do the many local Rotary clubs. They continually meet and greet, organise functions, raise money and volunteer for many community events.

We are approaching Christmas and I know that Rotary supplies volunteers for carols and many other community events, enabling them to run successfully. Without those volunteers our communities would not function well and events would not take place. Volunteers put a lot of time into their communities, for which they often receive no thanks. It is important that we recognise and thank them constantly for their contributions. I thank the member for Wollondilly for bringing this motion to the House and I thank members for the bipartisan support they have shown in debate on this very sensible motion.

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (13:13):** In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Wyong, Holsworthy and Drummoyne for speaking to and supporting this motion. As all members in this House have attested to today, this is an important issue. It is encouraging that we can all come together on these important issues. This is a topic that was very important to me when I was not only the Minister for Mental Health but also the Assistant Minister for Health and had responsibility for these issues and programs such as Crunch&Sip and making sure that the Premier's target of reducing childhood obesity in this State was met. It is something that we took very seriously, and still do.

Progress is being made every single day. Making sure that our schoolchildren are adequately nourished and get the best possible start to the day is of profound importance if we are going to give them the best chance of success academically and in life more broadly. We have heard from all the speakers today what their communities do for their schools. Whether it is Lions clubs, Rotary clubs, other community clubs or individuals, we come together in times of adversity to help one another through fire or flood. It is very important. This motion congratulates Community Links Wollondilly, Our Community Pantry at Tahmoor, the Tahmoor Public School, and the mums and dads.

I mentioned previously the Hill Top Public School and its principal, Mark. I spent a morning at the school and, as the member for Wyong mentioned, it is a good chance to see the work it does. Some fantastic volunteers and businesses got together and they donate food every week for the schoolchildren. The children are responding. According to the principal and some teachers, grades and concentration levels are improving and there is less stress in the classroom for both teachers and students. Everybody gets a chance to do what school is about—and that is to learn. It was good to see that happening at the Hill Top Public School. The Tahmoor Public School is the subject of this motion. I talked about Our Community Pantry and its link to Foodbank. Next week the member for Macquarie Fields and I will co-host an event with the former member for Blacktown, who is now the executive director of Foodbank, at which Foodbank NSW & ACT will provide us with updated findings from this year's Hunger Report. We know that food insecurity is experienced when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious foods for normal growth and development that allows them to lead active and healthy lives. We are looking forward to hearing what John Robertson has to tell us.

We also thank Foodbank for the support it provides in Wollondilly and Wingecarribee shires and right across the State. Foodbank recently donated a van to Our Community Pantry at Tahmoor so that even more people can be helped. At the launch I met many families who said that if it was not for Our Community Pantry, Community Links Wollondilly and Foodbank they would not know how they would survive. Some families do not have enough money to put nutritious food on the table for their children. This is a very cheap way to get nutritious fruit, vegetables and milk—wholesome food. It is an amazing opportunity for my community. I commend the motion to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **WALLSEND ELECTORATE POLICING**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:18):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Central Hunter Local Area Command received only two new probationary constables in the latest allocation of new recruits.
- (2) Notes that crime in the Wallsend electorate is increasing.
- (3) Calls on the Minister for Police to review how resource allocations are made to local area commands. Residents of Wallsend are calling on the Minister for Police to say what he plans to do to reduce crime in our area. After two new officers were allocated to the Central Hunter Local Area Command in April, and no officers at all were allocated to the Newcastle Local Area Command in August, Wallsend residents are wondering when this Government will finally listen. Our local police officers do an excellent job, but they are operating with limited resources. This news will not make things any better. Vast areas of the electorate of Wallsend are located far from the nearest police station. As a result, response times suffer, residents are concerned, and criminals can act with impunity.

In August, 226 new officers joined the NSW Police Force. A staggering 83 per cent of them were stationed in Sydney, with the rest of the State sharing the remaining 17 per cent. I have lost count of the number of times I have stood in this Chamber and called for action to increase policing resources and to reduce crime in Wallsend. Beresfield and Tarro, which are serviced by the Central Hunter Local Area Command, provide a prime demonstration of the need for stronger policing. Crime in the area increased dramatically in the first months of this year. There was a 450 per cent increase in crime in January and February alone. Maree Miller, the president of Wallsend Neighbourhood Watch, stated:

Crime in the area is rising, particularly petty crime, and people won't report because they believe police won't come. There are only so many police, so they have to triage how they use their resources, but we need more police in the area, a stronger police presence with more resources.

Local policing is the issue most frequently raised with me every time I visit Beresfield and Tarro. That occurs across the electorate, but it is especially true in Beresfield and Tarro. Criminals in the Beresfield area know that police officers must travel 12 kilometres from Maitland or from as far away as Cessnock or Waratah to respond to an emergency call. The coordinator of the Beresfield-Tarro-Woodberry Neighbourhood Watch, Lloyd Frith, agrees, and stated:

The crime stats are through the roof in the Beresfield area and central policing does not work out here. It might work in Sydney, but the current system just isn't cutting it in our area. We need more police and local policing.

The local police station at Beresfield is open only one day a week, and locals have told me that it is consistently understaffed. In a situation where every second counts, a resident told me, "Criminals feel that they'll be able to get away with it because it might take the police 20 minutes to arrive." According to a constituent who phoned my office this morning, last night in Wallsend it took police 17 minutes to arrive at an emergency situation. Her husband was at work and she was at home with two young children when a man came to assault her next-door

neighbour. She was on the line with officers at the Waratah police station throughout the incident, but it still took 17 minutes for police officers to arrive and to secure the situation. Despite this, the Government says the area is well resourced with police officers.

I invite the Minister for Police to accompany me next time I have a mobile office or a street stall in Beresfield or Tarro. If he steps out of the Sydney Basin he might understand how residents in Wallsend and Newcastle's western suburbs feel. I acknowledge the hard and dangerous work that our police officers do—day in and day out. They do their best to keep people safe, but the support they receive from this Government is not good enough. The residents of Wallsend and surrounding areas deserve much better. I call on the Minister for Police to review resource allocations. Wallsend expects better, we deserve better, and our police officers deserve better.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (13:24):** After more than 10 years in this place, most people would expect better of the member for Wallsend than this motion. I like the member and acknowledge her good intentions in moving it. However, it displays her lack of understanding of police resourcing and allocations. To say the least, that is very disappointing. So, out of the goodness of my heart, I have decided to use my time to explain how it all works. There are two simple rules. The first rule is that the Commissioner of Police and his team are responsible for the allocation of police officers based on operational requirements. The second rule is do not ignore the first rule. It is certainly not the role of the Minister for Police to dictate to operational experts where, when and how they should allocate operational resources. I know the member for Wallsend knows that, but she has probably forgotten for political reasons. The Labor Government might have done that, but it is not something this Government will do.

That said, another thing should obviously be explained to the member for Wallsend. It is apparent that she does not understand the difference between "authorised" and "actual strength". The authorised strength of the NSW Police Force is the number of positions within the organisation. As at the end of August, police authorised strength is at a record level of 16,757 sworn positions, including 157 sworn positions allocated to the Central Hunter Local Area Command. Actual strength is a headcount—that is, the number of officers being held against positions. As at 31 August 2017, overall actual strength was above the authorised number at 16,760. Therefore, the Central Hunter Local Area Command was 20 officers over strength at the end of August 2017. Given that, I am not surprised the command was allocated only two probationary constables. As I said, it is not our place to second-guess the commissioner's decisions on the allocation of operational resources. However, those numbers would suggest that, at the moment, the Central Hunter Local Area Command has more bodies than seats.

This Government is responsible for ensuring that the NSW Police Force has the funding it needs to secure appropriate operational resources, and this Liberal-Nationals Government is delivering—again at record levels. The NSW Police Force has total expenses of \$3.4 billion and a record capital works budget of \$243.7 million for 2017-18. Under this Government, the NSW Police Force has been funded to create 951 additional authorised positions since December 2011. As I said, this Government is delivering. In addition, 13 of those positions have been allocated to the Central Hunter Local Area Command. Not only are there more police officers on the ground, walking the beat, on our highways, and on public transport, but we are policing smarter. The Government is delivering on its election commitment to establish the Policing for Tomorrow Fund to allow the NSW Police Force to trial and to implement innovative crime fighting equipment. It has allocated \$51.3 million in capital and recurrent funding in 2017-18 to progress implementation of the fund, which is part of a \$100 million commitment over four years.

I am advised that the fund has delivered 2,050 mobile phones to frontline officers across the State. This allows officers to access police systems instantly in the field—for example, to issue infringements. A further 550 phones have been funded by Transport for NSW, bringing the total rollout under the Mobile Policing Program to 2,600 phones. In addition, 69 portable drug-testing devices have been rolled out under the fund to assist in identifying unknown chemicals and drugs in the field. It is a great honour to serve in a government that stands up for the hardworking officers of the NSW Police Force. On behalf of members on this side of the Chamber, I congratulate the Commissioner of Police and, most importantly, all the men and women of the force—from Murwillumbah to Moree and Moama and, of course, Maitland in the Hunter—on the outstanding work they do in keeping the people of this great State safe from harm.

**Debate interrupted.**

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

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome all our guests in the gallery this afternoon and wish a happy birthday to the member for Heathcote, who is remarkably young. I welcome his son Cameron, who is in the gallery. I also welcome Georgie and Felicity Williams, guests of the member for Lismore and Deputy Speaker. I extend a warm welcome to John Boag and his brother Charles Boag, who are father and uncle of Jane Boag from my office. I welcome Abdullah Sankari from the Sir Joseph Banks High School, guest of the Speaker and member for South Coast, and the member for Oatley. I acknowledge Georgia Whitlam, a student at the Newtown High School of Performing Arts who is undertaking work experience in the Deputy Premier's office. She is a guest of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business

I acknowledge another delegation from the Kiama Mixed Probus Club, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, Parliamentary Secretary for Education and member for Kiama. I also welcome students and teachers from the North Haven Public School, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health and member for Port Macquarie. I welcome to the Chamber Mr David Brady, chief executive officer of Hear For You and chair of the Deafness Forum of Australia. He is a guest of the member for North Shore.

*Announcements***TERRORISM AND HOMICIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY**

**The SPEAKER:** I bring to the attention of the House that today is New South Wales Terrorism and Homicide Victims Remembrance Day, a day for everyone to come together and remember the victims and their loved ones. Today also commemorates the fifteenth anniversary of the atrocities which occurred on 12 October 2002 in Bali, Indonesia, in which 202 innocent people were killed, including 88 Australians and two young men from my electorate, Craig Dunn and Danny Lewis. As a sign of respect and in memory of those who have lost their lives in such an unspeakable tragedy, the Parliament has lowered its flags to half-mast. We remember those who have been lost and who we will never forget.

*Ministerial Statement***MEMBER FOR ORANGE**

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (14:21):** It gives me no pleasure to address this matter. On Tuesday 10 October 2017 at 8.24 p.m. the member for Orange gave a private members' statement. In that statement he said:

In fact, Deputy Commissioner Gary Worboys refused to speak with me regarding these amalgamations... That statement misled the House. It was untrue and impugned the reputation of decorated police officer Deputy Commissioner Gary Worboys, APM. Mr Worboys advised me this morning that he has not received a request to speak with the member for Orange, nor has he ever refused to speak with the member for Orange or any other person who has requested to meet with him in relation to re-engineering. I therefore call on the member for Orange to stand up in this place now and leave will be granted so that he can withdraw this misleading and offensive statement. He can apologise to the House and to this Parliament.

**Mr Michael Daley:** I inform the House that the Opposition had no prior knowledge of the content of the ministerial statement.

**Mr Philip Donato:** I will obtain advice from the Clerk before I respond.

*Question Time***BROKEN HILL WATER PIPELINE**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:24):** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier agree to suspend work on the Wentworth to Broken Hill pipeline until the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] concludes its current investigations into corruption in her Government's administration of water?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:25):** When we make a commitment about providing vital infrastructure to the people of this State, including rural and regional New South Wales in particular, we stick to our commitments. Why should the people of Broken Hill and far western New South Wales not have safe and secure water like the electorate of every other member in this place? When those opposite were in government they managed to deny rural and regional New South Wales infrastructure for 16 long years.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** They did. And they will look at any opportunity to ask us to cancel projects—and we will not! We will keep building. We will keep building in Broken Hill and every part of this

State. Let's not forget—and this is very disturbing—when they were in government it was not just water they wanted to deny regional New South Wales. They promised hospitals in Forbes, in Parkes, in Wagga Wagga and several times in Bega—not once, not twice but several times. Did they deliver anything? No. Their record is zero infrastructure and zero care for rural and regional New South Wales. I recently found out—and it was extremely concerning—that when they were in government not only did they fail to deliver the hospitals, the schools, the water security, the roads and the rail that rural and regional New South Wales rely on but also they closed more than 30 maternity units, including in places like—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. The question is about the Broken Hill pipeline. I think the Premier said she would not suspend it but I ask that she answer the question and confirm that that was her answer.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Premier is being relevant. The member will resume her seat.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The question is: Do we commit to what was announced on infrastructure? Yes. Since I was asked the question about whether we are proceeding with our infrastructure I was highlighting the lack of commitment of those opposite to rural and regional New South Wales infrastructure. We often hear interjections from that side of the House about what they would like. But it concerned me when I went through the list of things they had said they would do in government and had not delivered. In particular it concerned me that instead of new hospitals—they promised a number of new hospitals and failed to deliver them—they also closed more than 30 maternity units—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I have ruled that the Premier is being relevant. Does the member have a different point of order?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It is Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** I have ruled on that point of order. That is not a different point of order. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** She is speaking about health. I am talking about the pipeline.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Labor managed to close maternity units in rural and regional New South Wales where women need them the most, in places like Finley, which I visited—Finley is a great town—in Burren, in Coonamble, in Hay, in Yass, in Pambula, and the list goes on.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: With respect, an answer to a question about an ICAC investigation into water administration that is responded to with commentary about maternity services in Finley cannot possibly be relevant to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** It is relevant. The member will resume his seat.

**Mr Luke Foley:** It is?

**The SPEAKER:** Yes.

**Mr Luke Foley:** You make a farce of question time.

**The SPEAKER:** So do you. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the third time. If she continues to be disorderly she will be directed to leave the Chamber for three hours.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Guess who regrets asking that question. Guess who does not want us to highlight the Opposition's failure in rural and regional New South Wales. The Opposition does not like what we have to say. Opposition members do not like the truth. They can't handle the truth! I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition even knows where Finley is. Has he ever been there? The Labor Government closed down the maternity units there. Yes, I have been there. I have been to the famous pie shop in Finley. It was great; it is on my Facebook page.

#### REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (14:30):** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government securing jobs and building infrastructure?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:30):** I was concerned that I had used all my material but there is so much more to talk about. Members on this side of the House know that the Government

parties are the parties for jobs and for rural and regional New South Wales. We have demonstrated, time and time again, our commitment to rural and regional New South Wales, not just on infrastructure but also on the provision of vital services. I am very pleased to reiterate the benefits that will flow from the announcement made by the Deputy Premier and me at the Murray cod farm in Griffith in August of the \$500 million Growing Local Economies fund.

The Government knows that on many occasions businesses want to set up shop in regional New South Wales but what stops them might be lack of local infrastructure such as the necessary road upgrades, utilities or other associated infrastructure. This fund will increase business confidence and activity in rural and regional New South Wales and will increase the number of jobs, which are so vital to growing communities. The Government appreciates the enormous potential this fund offers for the future of rural and regional New South Wales.

Another part of the success story of regional jobs growth is the record amount of infrastructure investment we are making in our communities—schools, hospitals, highways, bridges, railways and sporting and cultural infrastructure. I am very pleased to say that in addition to some of the health infrastructure that I have spoken about the Government has delivered more than 50 new schools and major upgrades to education. I thank the Minister for Education and his predecessor for that. School upgrades include Holman Place School in Cowra, Parry School in Tamworth, Denison College in Bathurst—and the list goes on.

The Government has introduced a program to support high-achieving students in regional and remote areas of the State to aim even higher by creating a virtual selective school. This was launched in Griffith and it will mean that students in Griffith are able to receive lessons from a specialist teacher at James Rouse High School. The Government is adhering to the principle that every child in this State deserves to have equality of opportunity. It does not matter where students live; they can access the best level of education in this State because of the work this Government has done.

No matter where they live, people in this State will be able to access the best form of health care. I have gone through the list of healthcare infrastructure in which this Government has invested but I am pleased to also say—I know that the member for Wagga Wagga is very pleased about this—that the Government is committed to palliative care in rural and regional New South Wales. Everybody in New South Wales, no matter where they live, deserves a dignified and comfortable end of life. I have visited rural and regional communities and heard of some of the challenges that exist because of the distances, so I appreciate how important palliative care initiatives are in those regions.

The member for Wagga Wagga and many other colleagues on this side of the House, as well as members of the community, have asked for extra funding. I am pleased to announce today an extra \$2 million towards a new 10-bed palliative care facility at the Forrest Centre hospice on top of the other services offered. People in the entire Riverina and Murrumbidgee communities—in places like Griffith, Temora, Young, Cootamundra, Junee and Tumut—will be able to use this option if they are faced with those very difficult circumstances. This is part of our record \$100 million palliative care package. This package was announced as part of the budget process and was put together by the health Minister and the Treasurer. It includes 300 scholarships for rural and regional staff to enhance palliative care skills. If people choose not to go to a hospice or cannot get to one they will have the opportunity to have palliative care specialists closer to home. These are very important initiatives that matter to the people of rural and regional New South Wales.

When it comes to health and education, business and job opportunities, everybody in our State, no matter where they live, deserves to have the opportunity to reach their full potential and to reach the level they deserve. As Liberals and Nationals, members on this side of the House are committed to improving the quality of life of every citizen. We are committed to providing opportunities for jobs for generations to come. We have a vision that means growth in rural and regional New South Wales. We have a vision that the best jobs should be available. We also know that rural and regional New South Wales punches way above its weight in providing vital services, products and goods and services that our State relies on. [*Extension of time*]

On many occasions Government members have highlighted the hypocrisy of those on the opposite side of the Chamber who, unfortunately, did not turn their attention to those matters when they were in government. For 15 years, rural and regional New South Wales was denied the vital funds that the community relied on. The Opposition's response to rural and regional New South Wales was to close down facilities, deny funds and deny those communities the opportunity to reach their full potential and to be their best. It is very concerning. We have listened intently to those opposite. I have not heard a single policy initiative or a single announcement that will help rural and regional New South Wales. I have not heard of a single policy initiative put out by the Opposition in support of rural and regional New South Wales. The only thing those members care about in rural and regional New South Wales is preference deals—nothing else.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Kogarah that interjections are disorderly at all times.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Leadership is not just about delivering infrastructure and services; it is also about principle. I commend the member for Summer Hill, who said in November last year:

We must never become complacent about our gun control laws. ... Former Prime Minister John Howard's gun control laws were courageous, appropriate and necessary.

That is what those on this side of the House believe as well. It is a pity that the Leader of the Opposition has no principle and cannot support that policy.

#### NEWCASTLE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (14:37):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Given that the chief executive officer of Keolis Downer this week admitted that the privatised Newcastle bus system is not world class as he promised, will the Minister admit that the Government's privatisation has seen bus services go backwards?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:38):** I can assure the member for Wallsend—having met with Keolis Downer representatives in the last fortnight—that the organisation is looking to make some changes to improve services. In fact, the member for Swansea and I had a meeting the other day and I committed to her that I would take a consultative approach to the services being provided by Keolis Downer. The company has been there only since July and is bedding down a completely new transport system. It has been consulting with the community about how it can enhance services.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** This franchise happened when patronage on Newcastle buses decreased in the order of 13 per cent over the past five years.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Ultimately, there will be a terrific turnaround. While I have been asked a question about Newcastle, the heart of change relating to Newcastle transport is the rollout of light rail and the subsequent revitalisation of the city, which is going incredibly well. There is no doubt that the \$2 billion in private sector investment in Newcastle is because this Government had the guts to lift the heavy rail line and look for more modern modes of transport, and that has led to enormous change.

As usual, the people who opposed the redevelopment were the member for Newcastle and the member for Wallsend. Nevertheless, the Government will continue to invest in Newcastle. This Government is a government for all communities across the State. I notice the Opposition is talking about cancelling projects. I can assure Opposition members they will not be in government so they will not be cancelling anything. The bottom line is that the Government's infrastructure program in regional areas of New South Wales such as the Hunter and—

**Dr Geoff Lee:** Parramatta?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** —and Parramatta is very important. One point I would make about members of the Liberal and Nationals Government is that we understand regional New South Wales.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** We know that the people of New South Wales do not want former Prime Minister Howard's gun laws, and the effort he made in conjunction with Tim Fischer, reversed by the Labor Party getting into bed with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. That is what we do not want to see occurring in regional New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I point out to the member for Rockdale that the member for Port Stephens is waiting for silence to state her point of order.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I fail to see the relevance of the Minister's ramblings on gun control versus the very important issue of the privatisation of buses in Newcastle and the service that is being delivered, which is far from world class.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! So far the Minister has been relevant. I will continue to listen.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** We are talking about regional New South Wales, and the last time I looked the Hunter was in regional New South Wales. Regional people do not want to see the Labor Party in bed with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and unwinding some of the most important gun law reforms the nation has ever seen. We do not want to see semi-automatic weapons return to our communities, which Luke Foley, in bed with the Shooters, is supporting. That is the issue for the people of Murray and Cootamundra.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I said earlier that I would listen further and I have. The Minister is straying from the original question. We would all appreciate it if the Minister returns to the leave of the question.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The Deputy Premier pointed out that buses backfire when they are run by the unions and the Labor Party. It is a bit rich for Labor Opposition members to be asking about private sector bus operators. There are some tremendous private sector bus operators in electorates such as Cootamundra and Murray but the Labor Opposition wants to nationalise their businesses. The commos are asking questions about the State Transit Authority [STA] when they are about to nationalise the bus services in electorates such as Cootamundra and Murray, and they will do that in cahoots with the Shooters.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time. If she continues to interject, she will be removed from the Chamber. The member for Gosford will come to order. The member for Gosford will cease interjecting. Interjections are disorderly at all times.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Yesterday the representative of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in this House said, "Don't call me a Shooter", and has not returned to the Chamber since. Obviously, there are a few issues and he is preparing a few statements. I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition is not writing them for him. But the point is that we will see the provision of great things when it comes to the delivery of bus services in Newcastle in the same way as we see tremendous bus services being delivered by country operators across the State, particularly in electorates such as Cootamundra and Murray.

### REGIONAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:43):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. Will he update the House on how the Government is delivering for regional health across New South Wales?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (14:43):** I thank the member for Port Macquarie, who is the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health, for her question. She is doing a fantastic job. As most members would know, earlier this year she was speaking to communities right across the regions about palliative care. As a result, the Government has delivered a \$100 million package to regional care. The Premier acknowledged the member for Wagga Wagga for his strong advocacy relating to palliative care in his electorate, particularly the Forrest Centre's new hospice. Today the front page of his local newspaper carries a story about the Government committing an additional \$2 million, part of the \$100 million provided for palliative care, to ensuring that the Riverina, the Murrumbidgee area and Wagga Wagga all have the very best palliative care.

It is particularly interesting that the community is very excited about it. The local community acknowledges the importance of receiving that funding. What was said by the member for Wagga Wagga provides an interesting insight into the by-election that will be held on the weekend. He said, "There has never been a better time to be a member in government to get things done." That is spot-on. I also point out that there has never been a better time for the community to support The Nationals candidates in Murray and Cootamundra because, as members of the Government, The Nationals candidates will get things done. That is what is occurring across the State.

**Ms Kate Washington:** But what are the people of Blacktown going to get?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** In response to the interjection by the member for Port Stephens about Blacktown, I point out that the member for Riverstone, who is a great member of the Government, advocated on behalf of Blacktown and Mount Druitt and those electorates received \$700 million in health funding. The member for Parramatta successfully advocated for almost \$1 billion for Westmead Hospital. That shows it is great to have the ear of government when it is a Coalition Government. The Liberals and Nationals are delivering for the entire State.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Breathe in, mate. You're about to burst.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I love my job and I love the fact that this Government has turned this State around and ensures that we deliver for the regions.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** What about the maternity services?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Listen to the member for Canterbury, who came from the upper House. She got lost and ended up in the lower House. I will tell her what happened to maternity services. The Government allocated \$720,000 for maternity services in Griffith—that is what happened.



**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Canterbury will cease interjecting. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. The member continues to interject. The member for Fairfield's outburst—

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Madam Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I point out to the member for Fairfield that I am speaking. I call the member for Fairfield to order for the first time for his outburst.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** If the member for Canterbury does not know that, it is because she has not been down to Griffith. I have been to both.

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

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Kogarah left the Chamber at 14:46.]*

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: In the interests of the wellbeing of the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research, I ask that he address his comments through the Chair, not over the table, because I do not want to use the automatic defibrillator on him. He will keel over.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Fairfield is not serious. The member for Fairfield will resume his seat. I call the member for Fairfield to order for the second time.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Because this Government turned the economy around, over the past few years in New South Wales there have been more than 70 hospital projects completed across the State. More than 50 of those are in the regions of New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Maitland that if she continues to interject she will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** It does not matter where in the State we look, there are projects that this Government has completed.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** As I said, more than 50 out of 70-odd hospital projects have been located in the regions. The projects underway currently include Lismore, \$180 million; Dubbo, \$150 million; Tweed Heads, \$48 million; the Port Macquarie mental health unit, \$15 million; Broken Hill, \$30 million; and Armidale, \$60 million.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I could go on for half an hour informing the House of health projects across New South Wales. I make clear that the people of Cootamundra and Murray will have the very best opportunity to vote for a Nationals candidate on Saturday.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maitland and the member for Swansea will come to order. The level of noise from the Opposition is unacceptable.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** I am coughing.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I was not referring to coughing by the member for Maitland but rather her voice and her interjections.

*[Extension of time]*

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** There was an interjection about maternity services a few minutes ago by the escapee from the upper House opposite. This Government has spent \$750,000 on maternity services in the local electorate.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Stop the clock.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 75. Whatever the Minister's reference about the member on this side of the Chamber, it was entirely outside the standing orders.

**The SPEAKER:** There was nothing offensive about the Minister's remark.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Madam Speaker, I suggest you look at—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Liverpool needs to quote the standing order that is being breached.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** I did quote Standing Order 75.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** In the by-elections in Cootamundra and in Murray this weekend, voters have an opportunity to vote for either a member who has the ear of government and who can continue to deliver or a Labor member. What has Labor promised for Griffith, for example? Absolutely nothing, zip. What has the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party promised for Griffith? I would say zip but someone from Labor has suggested a shooting range. That is about it. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party would promise a shooting range and semiautomatic weapons, which we know are exactly what the community does not want.

I find it remarkable that the Leader of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, the Hon. Robert Borsak, was quoted as saying, "The people are getting over Port Arthur." I suggest that the voters in Cootamundra and in Murray think about this statement when they cast their ballots on Saturday. My advice to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is that we have not forgotten what happened at Port Arthur. The families who lost loved ones at Port Arthur have not forgotten what happened at Port Arthur. We certainly have not forgotten what has happened in shootings in the United States. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party stands for semiautomatic weapons; it would support having machine guns in Cootamundra. Candidates for The Nationals will deliver the ear of government and many more new hospital facilities. The Premier has promised another \$35 million for the upgrade of Griffith Hospital and there will be more to come. My advice to the communities of Cootamundra and Murray is to vote Nationals and make sure they have the ear of the government.

#### NEWCASTLE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (14:52):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Can the Minister provide a guarantee to the Davy family of Merewether that their son will not be left on the side of the road again, given that two buses that were meant to take him to school failed to appear?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Maitland is interjecting before the Minister has started his answer. I direct the member for Maitland to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maitland left the Chamber at 14:53.]*

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:53):** I note the member for Newcastle is not interested in listening to my answer, which is interesting. I will tell the Davy family of the member's apparent lack of interest, if I can track them down. I made some general inquiries about claims being made by the Opposition that literally hundreds of schoolkids were missing out on bus services. From the advice I saw, it turns out that one bus service did not arrive because of an error made at the depot. I will not blame the workforce, which is something that those opposite might do. If the wrong direction was given at the depot in relation to this bus, I apologise to the affected family. The driver who failed to arrive at the bus stop has been driving the route for many years, which is interesting. I am seeking an explanation from the driver and the depot manager.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Are you going to blame the worker?

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

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Port Stephens left the Chamber at 14:55.]*

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The point is that we are not talking about hundreds of kids being affected. It is interesting that the Labor Party is rubbishing private bus operators. When Labor was in government, it signed up 80 per cent of the bus services in this State to the private sector. The then Minister for Transport in the mid-2000s, John Watkins, was particularly active on this front. In metropolitan Sydney, in particular, 11 of the 15 contract regional bus services are provided by the private sector, in many cases because they were signed up by the Labor Party when it was in government. Ultimately, when there is a transition from public to private ownership some challenges do arise, and we are working through them. However, Labor makes out that somehow a massive number of schoolkids are missing out on services, when that is not the case. As usual, those opposite play politics when, by accident, one bus did not turn up. That is a bit rich.

In relation to school bus services, I remember recently the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU], in concert with the member for Strathfield and the Leader of the Opposition, supported a wildcat strike at 6 o'clock on a Wednesday night. The next morning thousands upon thousands of schoolkids missed out on their bus services, having received no notice of the strike. Those opposite are happy to receive donations from the RTBU—somewhere in the region of \$206,000—to spruik the position of the union. I think that is a bit rich. Those opposite

are well funded by affiliated unions that control preselections. Now, lo and behold, those opposite unethically ask questions to spruik the position of the RTBU. This afternoon the member for Newcastle asked a question for a donation, which is outrageous. Crackers, this is really poor form from you, mate. I will continue to focus on the member for Newcastle. Crackers, were you not—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Newcastle that if he continues to interject he will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Mate, I need you to stay for this. Were you not relieved that Nuatali was re-elected of mayor of Newcastle? You were out there handing out how-to-vote cards so that she does not challenge you for preselection, but she may still do so.

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** Point of order: Madam Speaker, I ask that the Minister direct his comments through the Chair.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The good member for Crackers is very happy that Nuatali was re-elected as mayor because his preselection was under threat. Hang on, the lift attendant is back.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It is going to take more than you to get a rise out of me, mate.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The lift has not reached the top floor, when it comes to the member for Strathfield.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: The Minister's time has run out.

#### REGIONAL EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (14:58):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is this Liberal-Nationals Government providing quality education to the students of regional New South Wales?

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (14:59):** Like every member of the Government, the member for Lismore shares a passion for education in rural and regional New South Wales, particularly in his beautiful electorate on the Far North Coast. Lismore itself is a real hub of education with a great university, a great TAFE, some great local Catholic and independent schools and some great New South Wales public schools of which we are particularly proud. To give an example, the member recently joined the Wyrallah Public School community to celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is the longest continuously operating public school in the Lismore district, and it opened in 1867—one year after the Coalition Government passed the Public Education Act establishing public schools in New South Wales. Wyrallah Public School is one of the very first public schools in New South Wales. I put on record our congratulations to the principal, Lisa Fahy, who is an amazing educator, and all her team, and the families who are served by Wyrallah Road Public School.

The Government cares about the education of students across the State. I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of students from North Haven Public School. Mrs Wild and her amazing team provide quality education in the Port Macquarie area. This Government has a strong record of delivering for regional and rural New South Wales. It does not matter whether children go to a school in the city or to one of the 40 per cent of New South Wales schools outside the metropolitan area, they can expect to receive an outstanding education wherever they go. However, there is no doubt that there are many educational barriers and challenges in regional, rural and remote areas across the world, and rural New South Wales is no exception. Research shows lower educational outcomes for students in rural and remote areas, including lower levels of attendance, engagement and transition to further study. As I mentioned, this is not unique to New South Wales—it is a global phenomenon—and certainly the Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] results, particularly for reading, indicate that this malaise affects almost every OECD jurisdiction.

That is why this Government has listened and considered the evidence. That is why we are delivering record levels of needs-based funding for schools. We have implemented world-recognised education reforms for students and teachers in New South Wales, explicit education and teaching, and place-based learning. Programs the Government is currently delivering have a renewed emphasis on professional development and school leadership with our recent School Leadership Strategy. We are revitalising the incentives for recruitment and retention of staff to encourage more great teachers to take up careers in schools across rural New South Wales. The Deputy Premier spoke yesterday of our \$46 million investment in Connecting Country Schools, which is a world-leading investment in better information and communications technology infrastructure. The environmental education centres operating across regional New South Wales are an example of place-based learning. It was great

to be with Glen Halliday, who is leading the environmental and zoo education centres, at the annual conference and to see the incredible work in place-based learning that is being provided in environmental education.

Between 2011 and 2020-21, this side of the House budgeted \$11 billion towards school infrastructure and maintenance funding. That represents funding for more than 3,000 new classrooms since 2011, providing around 70,000 additional student places. We have built on our commitment to continue to bring down the reported \$1 billion school maintenance backlog Labor left behind. We are investing a record-breaking \$747 million over the next four years to tackle the planned maintenance liability to address important maintenance projects such as roof repairs, painting, and replacement of carpets, to mention some of the recurrent maintenance challenges that affect public infrastructure wherever it is. [*Extension of time*]

To put this in context, consider that Labor routinely spent around \$60 million on schools maintenance every year, compared to the more than three times as much that we will spend over the next four years alone.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Rob, you left us one billion. It was \$147 million under us; \$785 million under you.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** Far be it from me to shoot the elephant in the room, but they have triggered a reaction.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** What did you say?

**Mr ROB STOKES:** They have triggered a reaction. I will not go off half-cocked on this issue because the fact is that we are spending more than three times as much on planned maintenance than Labor did when it was in office. The facts speak for themselves. To choose two communities at random—Murray and Cootamundra, for example—we have spent around \$32 million on maintenance and capital works in the Murray electorate since coming into office and almost \$29 million in the electorate of Cootamundra. In the seat of Murray, we have committed \$25 million to deliver improvements to the provision of secondary education in Griffith. Following consultation, a new educational model will see a great new high school and new facilities and new offerings operating in Griffith and Wade high schools. This is one example of the ways we are delivering for regional and rural New South Wales and making sure that our vision for regional and rural New South Wales and our vision for equity and excellence in education extends to every student and every family across New South Wales.

#### DOONSIDE RAILWAY STATION UPGRADE

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:06):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

**Ms Gladys Berejiklian:** Seriously?

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I am serious, actually. The people of Blacktown are pretty serious about this. My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will the Minister complete the upgrading of Doonside station in this term of government?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:07):** All I have to say to that is: 16 long years. Labor could not even look after a lift in one of the safest Labor seats in the State when it was in government. One person who can definitely not fix lifts is the member for Strathfield; she is too focused on the passengers. There is a clear methodology that relates to the Transport Access Program. It is interesting that the Labor Party now has worked out that lifts are in the program. I note that the Labor Party is running this bloke Bali in the Blacktown by-election this weekend. He made the point that Doonside should be upgraded before stations like Edgecliff and Redfern because, as I understand it, he believes that more people catch trains from Doonside. I can assure him that across the network this Government has delivered 38 new lifts to train stations. That has been done according to a methodology, as opposed to politics, based on the nature of the commuters who are dependent on the lifts and the numbers. The Government will assess Doonside when it is ready, not when the Labor Party kicks and screams about it. A lot of good programs across the network need to be revised.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** If Opposition members want to talk about infrastructure in Western Sydney we will bring it on. They want to cancel major projects across the Sydney metropolitan area and, in particular, the game changer for Western Sydney—WestConnex. The Leader of the Opposition wants to cancel that. I would have thought that those opposite might back the 50,000 families dependent on our infrastructure program but obviously they do not. It is somewhat bemusing to hear Labor members asking questions about infrastructure when it is the party of cancellations.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** What about trains that do not fit the tracks?

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** It is interesting that the member for Blue Mountains referred to that matter. Let me help the good member for Blue Mountains. Labor purchased a number of trains that cannot go to the Blue Mountains because of the tracks. This Government fixed the tracks. Seven different train types now service the Blue Mountains electorate. Labor wants to continue to run 40-year-old V-set trains through the Blue Mountains because of the tracks. This Government will standardise the tracks in the Blue Mountains. It has the financial ability to do so as it manages this State's finances. This Government knows how to manage money and it knows how to build infrastructure—something that those opposite do not know how to do. If Opposition members do not want the trains they should get their mate Jodi to cancel them. This Government, through the Transport Access Program, will continue to build railway tracks right across the network. The member for Seven Hills knows about this topic. Those opposite should take a leaf out of his book on how to deliver infrastructure. This Government is installing lifts at stations that were disregarded by Labor for 16 years.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield will refrain from taunting the member for Kiama about how long he is going to be here.

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to the delegation from Jeju Province, South Korea, led by the Education Governor, Mr Seok Mun Lee.

#### *Question Time*

#### **REGIONAL ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:12):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. How is the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government delivering better regional roads in southern New South Wales?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (15:13):** I thank the member for Kiama for his question. What an achiever he is for roads in the Kiama electorate. Since 2011, \$850 million has been spent on roads in his electorate.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Members would be aware that the member for Kiama recently opened the Berry bypass—a project that would not have gone ahead without his support. Recently the Deputy Premier and I held a freight and industry forum in Cootamundra, which included an expert group of industry members: President Lynley Miners from the Livestock, Bulk and Rural Carriers Association; the new deputy mayor of the Snowy Monaro Regional Council; Fiona Simson from the NRMA; and representatives from Pacific National and the NSW Farmers. It was a very good conference.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Farmers and small business representatives attended.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Did it have a happy ending?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** It would not have had a happy ending if the Leader of the Opposition was there. Liberal and Nationals members are not just sitting around tables and talking; they are getting on with the job of delivering. Since 2011 this Government has invested more than half a billion dollars on roads in Cootamundra, with more than 500 completed projects and 210 projects currently underway. Some of the key achievements in Cootamundra include: the \$70 million Gocup Road between Tumut and Gundagai—a project supported by the member for Wagga Wagga and the former member for Cootamundra, Katrina Hodgkinson. They fought hard for that project. On Monday the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads, Maritime and Transport, Kevin Anderson, inspected this road and announced the next stage of this vital upgrade.

This Government is delivering on the West Wyalong heavy vehicle bypass—something that the local community has been asking for to get trucks off the main street. On Monday \$15 million was allocated to the final stage of the project with work to start in November. The Burrangong Creek Bridge has just been opened. That new concrete bridge will eliminate the 20-kilometre detour used by B-doubles between Bribbaree silo to Young. The Liberal-Nationals Government invested \$535,000 for the construction of this bridge through the Fixing Country Roads program. The Liberal-Nationals Government is not just delivering in Cootamundra; it is delivering

in the Murray electorate also. Since 2011 Murray more than half a billion dollars have been invested in roads in the Murray electorate, with more than 1,700 projects completed and more than 200 projects currently underway.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Opposition benches will come to order, including the member for Strathfield.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Some of the key achievements in the Murray electorate include: the completion of the rollout of school flashing lights to all schools, which will ensure the safety of our kids; and a \$2.2 million upgrade to the Sturt Highway at Buronga, which is used as a major freight route linking Adelaide and Perth to eastern Australia. The Liberal-Nationals Government has delivered \$925,000 from the Fixing Country Roads program to the Griffith southern heavy vehicle bypass, which will help to move heavy vehicles out of the Griffith central business district and away from school zones, recreation, residential and commercial areas. In June the Premier was in Griffith where she opened the long-awaited Bagtown five-ways roundabout and added a further \$5 million in funding for the bypass.

**Ms Gladys Berejiklian:** A beautiful roundabout.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** It is a beautiful roundabout. In July we also announced the \$280 million Echuca-Moama Bridge project which was funded three ways by the Federal Government, the Victorian Government and this Government. Locals will be employed to build that bridge. I would like to send one message to the people of Cootamundra, Murray and to all of regional New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

We understand how critical a good road network is. We understand the long distances that regional people have to travel compared to the distances travelled by people in the city. Although we may have completed more than 500 projects with a further 210 projects currently underway in Cootamundra, and although we have completed more than 1,700 projects with a further 200 projects currently underway in Murray, we understand that much more still needs to be done. We understand that people are frustrated because this Government is playing catch-up as well as planning for today and for the future. As the Minister for Education so eloquently said, far be it for us to shoot the elephant in the room. We would not be able to continue this work or invest in these projects without the support of the people of Murray and Cootamundra.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Since this Government came to office it increased the roads budget in this State by 105 per cent. Sixty-five per cent of that investment is going into regional New South Wales to help communities and to get this State back to where it needs to be. It was the Liberal-Nationals Government that took New South Wales from last to first; it was the Liberal-Nationals Government that was responsible for the infrastructure boom across New South Wales; it was the Liberal-Nationals Government that made New South Wales number one for jobs; it was the Liberal-Nationals Government that made our economy number one; and only the Liberal-Nationals Government can keep New South Wales number one.

## RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:19):** I direct my question to the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Newtown will be heard in silence. The behaviour of the member for Rockdale is disrespectful.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** Given that one-third of people in New South Wales rent their home and that renters are three times more likely than homeowners to have moved in the past year, what is the New South Wales Government doing to address the significant insecurity and costs associated with the constant moves facing renters?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (15:20):** I thank the member for Newtown for her advocacy on behalf of renters not only in Newtown but also across New South Wales. I appreciate her efforts on this important issue. The Government knows that housing affordability is an issue affecting residents in not only Newtown but also across the State. Traditionally, Australia has been a nation of homeowners. However, as the member for Newtown knows, that great dream is increasingly becoming a nightmare.

According to the 2015 Australian Bureau of Statistics figures, 31 per cent of Australians now live in rented accommodation, which represents about 824,000 people in New South Wales. As the Minister responsible for administering the Residential Tenancies Act, I am one of the many Australians who rent a property and I want to ensure that renters get a fair go in this State. Historically, renting has been viewed as a short-term housing option and a steppingstone to home ownership, but people now rent for longer. According to figures from the

Rental Bond Board, in the past 10 years there has been a 7.2 per cent increase in the number of tenancies of more than three years and a corresponding decrease of about 5.2 per cent in tenancies of less than six months.

We know that renters in New South Wales, and particularly younger renters, are being locked into the rental market. That is why I am now examining options to provide greater protection for renters not only in Newtown but also across the State. Our legislation must keep up with the changes in this growing sector of our community. The Government already has made some changes in this space with regard to the Residential Tenancies Act to make life better for renters. Those measures include requiring agents and self-managing landlords to register on the Rental Bond Board's online system. That will make it easier for renters to pay a bond and to retrieve it at the end of their lease. The Government also has provided for email service of notices and other documents. It has made rental bond data available online, which will provide more transparency with regard to that data in the marketplace. I note the great work of the Minister for Finance in making that possible.

Despite those measures, there is much more to be done in this area. My focus in the coming months will be to examine ways to make life better and fairer for renters. For the benefit of the member for Newtown, I will detail some of the key reforms that I am examining. They include a fairer lease-break fee for tenants and improving tenants' rights to have repairs undertaken. That will enable the Commissioner for Fair Trading to issue guidelines regarding reasonable timeframes for repairs that the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal will be required to consider when deciding whether to order landlords to carry out repairs. In addition, the Government is looking to improve disclosure requirements prior to a tenant signing a lease. That will provide more transparency and will give tenants a better chance of understanding the contractual arrangements into which they are entering. The Government is looking to increase protections for tenants regarding photos and videos of the interior of rental properties that include the tenants' possessions.

Madam Speaker, I know that you will be interested to hear that one of my key tasks over the coming months will be examining how we can enhance protections for victims of domestic violence. This is a critically important issue that must be addressed, and I know that it concerns all members. The aim is to enable immediate termination of a victim's tenancy without compensation being paid to the landlord in cases involving domestic violence. The Government is looking at a range of measures that will make that possible. I make it clear to the member for Newtown that the Government is looking at how it can improve security of tenure for renters in New South Wales. Those are the key areas of reform that I am examining to improve life for the renters of this State. I know this is a big issue. As I said, the rental market is growing and more and more residents of New South Wales and Australia are spending longer periods renting. I am one example of the many young Australians caught in the rental trap. I may have a receding hairline, but I am still young. [*Extension of time*]

As I said, these are the key areas that the Government is examining to improve life for renters and to make the situation fairer. This Government not only is putting consumers first but also is giving renters a fair go. I commend the member for Newtown for her advocacy on this issue. Since I became the Minister responsible for NSW Fair Trading, she has been a constant advocate for these reforms. I look forward to working closely with her and other members who care about renters and who want to give them a fair go.

### REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (15:26):** I address my question to the Deputy Premier. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is delivering for the people of regional New South Wales, and on related matters?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (15:26):** When we are facing a by-election members opposite pretend to be interested in regional New South Wales. They will talk about country towns they have never visited, but if there is a question about regional New South Wales and what this Government is doing, they are not interested in the answer. I thank the member for Albury for his question. He is a fantastic local member and is a champion for the southern area of regional New South Wales. I thank him and the member for Wagga Wagga for assisting the Government in ensuring that we retain the seats of Cootamundra and Murray at this weekend's by-elections.

This Government is delivering on its commitments to regional New South Wales. Candidates will often say things at the beginning of a campaign, but we must judge them on their track record. I raised the preference deal agreed to by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and the Labor Party, but members of both parties misled this House when they said that no such deal had been negotiated. I have with me the how-to-vote card issued by the Labor Party candidate for the seat of Murray on which he preferences Helen Dalton, who is the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party candidate in that electorate. The Labor Party also has preferenced Mr Matthew Stadtmiller, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party candidate for the seat of Cootamundra. If the Labor Party

preferences candidates from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, it will be responsible for bringing another member of that party into this place. That is the last thing we want.

When I mentioned Jim Saleam, a Nazi sympathiser and a convicted criminal, standing for the seat of Cootamundra in next weekend's by-election, both the member for Orange and members of the Opposition said that they would not preference him. I have here a Labor Party corflute showing The Nationals in last position on the how-to-vote card for the Cootamundra by-election. The corflute was authorised by Mr Despotoski. When members opposite put The Nationals candidate last, they are preferencing Jim Saleam. As I said, people will judge them not on what they say but on what they do. At the start of the campaign, those opposite said that they would not put The Nationals last in Cootamundra. I hope the members representing the electorates of Londonderry, Maitland and Summer Hill have the courage to stand up and say to the Leader of the Opposition, "No more. No more deals. Stop selling out the Labor Party."

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Yesterday the leader of the Shooters party, Mr Borsak, went on the *Ray Hadley Morning Show* and confirmed that he wants to see guns in the hands of 10-year-olds. While on the show he hesitated and said, "We want to give kids permits to have tutelage in a supervised position on a shooting range," but when Mr Hadley asked whether Mr Borsak meant only on the shooting range he then said, "No, also on properties." The policy of the Shooters Party is to have 10-year-olds with guns on properties. I can inform the House that because of the comments of Mr Borsak, Ray Hadley said today that he cannot endorse the Shooters Party in the upcoming by-election.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 75. I ask the Deputy Premier to refer to the party by its correct title, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Once again we see the protection racket of the Labor Party—protecting the shooters in this place. Yesterday the member for Orange jumped up and said, "I am not a shooter. Do not call me a shooter." I think he signed up to the wrong party. [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease chewing gum and eating lollies in the Chamber. It is second-rate behaviour.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** We know that there is a real issue because former Prime Minister John Howard intervened today with an open letter to the people of Cootamundra and to the people of Murray, again reminding us what it was like pre-1996, before the national firearms laws in this country. We know that the position of members of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is to repeal the National Firearms Agreement [NFA]. They want to see semiautomatic guns back on the streets and Labor's preferences mean that Labor also supports them. Labor members walked out of the Chamber yesterday because they do not want to hear the truth: that they are supporting a party that is seen as extremist.

The member for Auburn and Leader of the Opposition said previously in this place that they are extremist. The Labor Party is preferencing the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. By putting The Nationals last, they are preferencing a Nazi sympathiser in the Cootamundra by-election. It is worrying that when Helen Dalton, the candidate for the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in Murray, came out and said, "I do not really like guns. I do not know what our education policy is. I do not know what our health policy is," Mr Borsak said, "Helen may not know what our policy is, but she signed up for the party so she is a part of the party."

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order. The member for Londonderry will settle down and stop screeching.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** What we are seeing again is that the people of Murray will not be voting for Helen Dalton; they will be voting for the elephant shooter Mr Borsak. They are voting for a party that wants to repeal the gun laws that have kept our communities, our families and our children safe. The people of Cootamundra and the people of Murray have an opportunity this weekend to say no more to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in New South Wales.

#### *Announcements*

#### **PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**The SPEAKER:** I remind staff and members of Parliament that photography is not permitted in the precincts around the gallery and in the Chamber. I also remind staff that it is a privilege to be in the Speaker's Square. I advise all staff and members that they are not permitted to take photographs of anyone in that area.



*Ministerial Statement***MEMBER FOR ORANGE**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the member for Orange that he has 75 seconds to respond and that he should respond only to what the Minister said. The House will come to order as the member has only a very short time to speak.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:34):** By leave: In response to the Minister's earlier statement, I advise the House that I had a telephone conversation with a senior police officer and executive member of the Police Association of NSW on 7 September 2017. Following that telephone conversation that person advised me that he would speak to Deputy Commissioner Worboys to see whether he wished to arrange a meeting with me.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Orange has the call.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** That police officer rang me back five minutes later and advised me that Mr Worboys did not want to speak with me. He was speaking to councillors but he did not wish to speak to the local member.

**Mr Troy Grant:** Name him! Who is the police officer?

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** I can prove it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Stop the clock. The member is entitled to his 75 seconds. Government members will cease demanding answers from the member for Orange. He is giving his response. The Minister for Police will come to order.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** I apologise for any embarrassment this may have caused Deputy Commissioner Worboys; however, I will not be withdrawing my comments as they are neither misleading nor offensive. When a fellow cop tells me something I believe what he says, as would the Minister for Police.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE****Membership**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I move:

That Glenn Edward Brookes be appointed to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure in place of Katrina Ann Hodgkinson, resigned.

**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**.

**Wentworth to Broken Hill Pipeline**

Petition opposing the construction of the Wentworth to Broken Hill pipeline, received from **Mr Luke Foley**.

**Fernhill Estate Cemetery, Mulgoa**

Petition opposing the development of a cemetery at Fernhill Estate, Mulgoa, received from **Ms Tanya Davies**.

**Inner West Bus Services**

Petition opposing the privatisation of inner west bus services, 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 THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

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

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

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (15:38):** As Chair of the committee I speak today on the third report of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption in the Fifty-sixth Parliament, tabled on 21 September 2017. The committee's role includes examining each annual report and other reports of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Inspector. The committee's report is the result of its review of the Inspector's 2014-15 and 2015-16 annual reports. The Hon. David Levine, AO, RFD, QC, was the inspector during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 reporting period. However, Mr Levine resigned from his position in November 2016. Mr John Nicholson, SC, then became Acting Inspector. The committee therefore heard from Mr Nicholson at its March public hearings to review the Inspector's reports. A new permanent Inspector has since been appointed, that is, Mr Bruce McClintock, SC.

The committee's review came at a time of significant change for the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] following the passage of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment Act 2016. The amendment Act made changes to ICAC's structure, management and procedure. Following its passage, three new commissioners were appointed to head the ICAC. A major theme that arose from our review was ensuring ICAC's public inquiries are conducted fairly. At the committee's hearings, the Acting Inspector stressed that the ICAC must give due consideration before deciding to proceed to a public inquiry, given the grave consequences that can follow for affected people. He also raised concerns about the methods used by some counsel assisting the ICAC to glean material upon which to base a corrupt conduct finding.

The committee found that changes made by the recent amendment Act will help to resolve these concerns. In particular, the amendment Act increases the weight that must be placed on the ICAC's decisions to proceed to public inquiries. A sole commissioner will no longer be able to decide to commence a public inquiry. Instead, such a decision will require the agreement of the chief commissioner and at least one other commissioner. In addition, the amendment Act requires the ICAC to issue procedural fairness guidelines for the conduct of its public inquiries. Given the importance of procedural fairness at public inquiries, the committee has recommended that the ICAC develop these guidelines as a matter of priority.

Another theme the Acting Inspector raised with the committee during its review was the fair treatment of people who are investigated by the ICAC and who are ultimately found to have done nothing wrong. To prevent sleepless nights, the committee found that the ICAC should advise such persons at the earliest possible point if no adverse findings are to be made against them. We also recommended that the ICAC develop a formal policy to achieve this. Another important issue considered as part of the review was liaison between the ICAC and its inspector. This is particularly important given that a new inspector and three new commissioners were appointed in July and August of this year. The inspector performs a vital function to ensure that the ICAC exercises its formidable powers appropriately.

The committee confirmed its view that a productive working relationship must exist between the ICAC and its inspector to foster proper oversight of the ICAC. Therefore, the committee recommended the new inspector and commissioners review the memorandum of understanding that existed between their predecessors as soon as possible to ensure it promotes a workable relationship between their respective offices. On the subject of effective oversight of the ICAC, the committee's review also confirmed the importance of the inspector's audit function and stated that it will continue to monitor the resourcing of the ICAC inspectorate to ensure that it is adequate. In closing, I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions at a time of significant change for ICAC. In addition, I thank Inspector Levine and Acting Inspector Nicholson for their work during a challenging period. Finally, I thank the committee staff for their professionalism and support during the review process. I commend the report to the House.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:43):** As deputy chair of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption, I too contribute to today's take-note debate on the committee's recent report, reviewing the inspector's annual reports. The Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] is in

a transitional period with the appointment of three new commissioners in August this year replacing the sole commissioner model that applied until now. A new inspector was appointed in June. It has been instructive to hear from the three new commissioners and the new inspector at recent committee hearings. The committee looks forward to a productive working relationship with each of them. In this context, the committee's report makes practical recommendations designed to make sure the ICAC's transition proceeds smoothly and that New South Wales has a strong corruption-fighting body into the future.

In particular, I note our recommendation for the ICAC to develop procedural fairness guidelines for the conduct of its public inquiries as a matter of priority. The requirement for procedural fairness guidelines is contained in the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment Act that recently came into force. The amendment Act requires: procedural fairness guidelines to cover the investigation of evidence that may exculpate affected persons; the disclosure of exculpatory and other relevant evidence to affected persons; the opportunity to cross-examine witnesses as to their credibility; providing affected persons and other witnesses with access to relevant documents and reasonable time to prepare before giving evidence; and any other matter the commission considers necessary to ensure procedural fairness.

These requirements are very important and are part and parcel of building and maintaining a strong and effective ICAC. That is why the guidelines are a priority for the committee. If the public is to have confidence in its corruption-fighting body, it is essential that the ICAC treat people fairly and be seen to be treating people fairly. I also commend the committee's other recommendations which cover liaison between the ICAC and its inspectorate, and policies around advising people at the earliest possible opportunity when they will not be subject to adverse ICAC findings. I too thank the committee members for their work during the committee's review. I particularly acknowledge the member for Epping, whose chairmanship of the committee was first class. At times it was difficult because, as a joint committee, the committee comprises members with different views. The parliamentary staff require a special mention. Once again they provided first-class advice and guidance and were highly professional. I thank former ICAC Inspector David Levine and former Acting Inspector John Nicholson for their contributions to the inquiry process. I commend the report to the House.

**Report noted.**

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

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

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

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (15:47):** As chair of the committee, I inform the House that the Staysafe committee tabled its report on driver education, training and road safety in New South Wales on 21 September 2017. The committee examined driver education and training before, but never in such a comprehensive way. New South Wales continues to be a stand-out road safety performer, but the recent spike in fatalities, particularly among some mature age groups, and claims of the benefits of certain driving training technologies and techniques led us to self refer this inquiry.

Our terms of reference were broad and gave us the scope to examine driver education and training from a whole-of-life perspective. We were keen to see how driver education and training is offered to all drivers, not just novice drivers, and what impact it has. We are all familiar with the driver training we undertake as learners, but many experienced drivers also are being trained and many more may need to receive further training. Some of those offenders incur a penalty that includes further training. For others, the changing environment will present challenges and opportunities.

New technology and the availability of support will allow many disabled people for the first time to become drivers. People are living longer and may need to have their driving skills updated to master new driving technologies and changing road rules. The way we use roads may change as more people cycle or adopt driverless vehicle technology. Drivers will need to be even more conscious that roads are shared spaces. Some people may simply volunteer for more training, whether they are returning to driving after time away from the road or because they hope to benefit from training and become better and more skilful drivers.

Driver education is a familiar concept. The New South Wales Government runs education campaigns through electronic, print and social media. These campaigns focus on changes to road rules or causes of accidents. The current campaigns on motorcycle safety, the safe bicycle passing distance, and mobile phone distraction are familiar to us all. Many people made suggestions about subjects on which future campaigns should focus, notably on the needs of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists, changing road rules, and changing vehicle technology. We recommended a range of issues on which future education campaigns could focus as well as the publication of campaign evaluations to better engage with stakeholders in designing future campaigns.

The committee also acknowledged the role of sanctions and incentives in educating drivers about safe driving. In this regard, we recommended that the Government examine a National Roads and Motorists Association proposal for replacing fines for low-range driving offenders with the option of attending, at their own cost, a road safety course. A major area of contention in the evidence we received was the value of periodic retesting for all drivers. Many people who wrote to us argued that driving is akin to other technical and intellectual skills and benefits from periodic updating and retesting. However, the expert evidence was compelling. It drew a clear distinction between skills training and driving experience. This evidence held that while people can be taught the mechanics of driving, being a safe driver comes with experience as drivers learn how to manage risk and develop safe driving attitudes.

This thinking is the foundation of the Graduated Licensing Scheme [GLS]. Under the GLS, novice drivers on their Ls or Ps are awarded restricted licences and are subject to higher penalties for infringements. The GLS is designed to recognise the principle that safe driving comes with experience. It imposes restrictions which minimise the risks to drivers, passengers and other road users while novice drivers are gaining this experience. The success of the GLS in managing risk is evidenced by the gains we have made in lowering the road toll since it was introduced. We heard that whatever the benefits of periodic retesting of all drivers, it would be very costly to administer to catch only a small percentage of drivers who actually infringe.

Many submissions proposed expanding the content of the current learner driver course or changing the teaching methods. We received several submissions promoting the use of driving simulators. It was argued that simulators could be a cost-effective way of driver training in areas where reliable vehicles and access to trainers was limited. Simulators were put forward as a way to expose learners to unfamiliar driving conditions, such as metropolitan learners being exposed to country driving. Expert evidence suggested simulators can supplement current driver training but are not a substitute for on-road training. We heard mixed views on the effectiveness of computer-based learning, both for learners and for retesting and training of experienced drivers. We recommended further studies into computer-based learning and the value of simulators as well as an examination of opportunities to expand the learner driver course content.

I thank the 78 stakeholders and citizens who made submissions and the 41 witnesses who appeared before us. I thank members of the Staysafe committee for their contributions to this inquiry, in particular, my deputy chair, the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC. Finally, I acknowledge the staff who supported the committee in this inquiry: David Hale, Jacqueline Isles, Chris Herbert, and Abigail Turingan. As I said, this was a very broad inquiry, ranging widely across driver training and education from preschool children through to older drivers approaching the end of their driving lives. I am confident we heard a wide range of views and have made constructive recommendations that will help build on this State's enviable safety record.

Road deaths in New South Wales are at historical lows. The number of deaths this year have been 10 fewer than at this time last year, and the number of serious injuries are 10 greater. Every fatality is not just a number but a personal tragedy. It is our ultimate goal to achieve zero deaths on our roads. This may seem a high bar to set, but in 1970, when we reached a peak of 28.9 deaths per 100,000 people, the notion that we could achieve 4.1 deaths per 100,000 people, as we did in 2014, would have seemed fanciful. My fellow committee members and I look forward to the Government's response to our report and recommendations and to continuing road safety improvements in New South Wales. I commend the report to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:53):** Today I contribute to the take-note debate on the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety's inquiry into driver education, training and road safety. I was pleased to have the opportunity to bring this topic to the Staysafe committee and that the chair and the committee were keen to move forward with it. Given the many thousands of learner and provisional drivers on our roads, there is no doubt that this is an important and very relevant issue to the communities that we represent, including the Central Coast community. It is very important to acknowledge that driver training and education is relevant to drivers of all ages. Indeed, the terms of reference for this inquiry specifically mentioned "whole-of-life driver education and training in supporting improved road safety outcomes in New South Wales".

I will spend some of my time speaking about the Graduated Licensing Scheme [GLS], which the chair has just mentioned and which was covered in chapter two of the committee's report. One of the witnesses we heard from explained that as a result of the introduction of the Graduated Licensing Scheme casualty rates in under 25-year-olds halved. This is a significant outcome, and it has come about because of the way in which conditions and restrictions are gradually lifted over the minimum four-year time period. Many witnesses to the inquiry spoke of the benefits of the GLS and, as I have mentioned, the statistics certainly show the effect that this scheme has had on achieving better safety outcomes for young drivers. Within the GLS framework, several of the inquiry's recommendations have been to further investigate the potential usefulness of mandating a minimum number of professional training hours for learner drivers, which is the first tier of the GLS. The purpose of this is

to ensure that every single learner driver undertakes high-quality training in preparation for moving up to the next licence level.

We know that having access to professional training is an important means of teaching skills to learner drivers. That is why the committee recommended that Transport for NSW review the three-for-one logbook discounts with a view, hopefully, to extending it beyond the current maximum of 10. Also, within the two provisional tiers of the Graduated Licensing Scheme, the inquiry recommended that drivers who commit low-range offences—offences where road safety is not compromised—be penalised with a good behaviour bond rather than the harsher penalties currently in place. This is in light of the inquiry's finding that good behaviour schemes do indeed have merit in improving the attitude and behaviour of our young drivers.

I remind the House of the significant impact this committee has had over the years upon the formation of public policy in New South Wales. Among the legislative changes that have been implemented thanks to the work of the Staysafe Committee are the introduction and continuation of random breath testing on our roads and immediate licence suspension for people driving with a high concentration of alcohol in their systems. In light of this history, I am sure that this inquiry's findings and recommendations will be taken very seriously indeed. The comprehensive nature of this inquiry is in large part thanks to the work of the chair, the member for Albury, and the deputy chair, the Hon. Scott Farlow in the other place. I acknowledge my fellow committee members: the member for Clarence, the member for Lismore, the member for Miranda, who is in the Chamber, the member for Cabramatta, and the Hon. Daniel Mookhey and Dr Mehreen Faruqi in the other place. I acknowledge the incredibly hard and diligent work of the committee staff in preparing this very detailed report, which covered hours of public hearings. I commend the report to the House.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (15:57):** I also speak in support of the Staysafe committee report on driver education, training and road safety in New South Wales. I endorse the Chair's comments. This was a comprehensive inquiry which examined every aspect of driver training and education for preschoolers through to older people looking for options to retain their mobility and to keep safe at the end of their driving lives. The committee looked at all road users, not just drivers but also passengers, pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, heavy vehicle drivers, and students and apprentices.

The committee received many submissions on the cost of driver training and difficulties that disadvantaged people face gaining and retaining a driver licence. Many people are discouraged or excluded from driver training because they do not have access to a reliable vehicle and a trainer or supervisor for the required 120 hours. I note that there are many government-funded and charitable programs that support disadvantaged people. These include Indigenous community-run programs, youth-oriented programs, and assistance for people with disabilities to access modified vehicles and specialised training. Importantly, many of these programs are delivered within education and trade training so that driver training is part of a broad personal and community skills program.

Many people argued for more funding for these programs and greater accessibility across the State. The committee has recommended that the Government review funding for disadvantaged driver programs. It recommended that the impact of the justice system on Indigenous drivers be examined, based on the evidence we heard about high incarceration rates for Indigenous driving offenders and the particular disadvantages experienced in remote communities. The committee examined the role of professional driver training. We must recognise that we rely on non-professional driver training for the bulk of the supervision during 120 logbook hours that learners are required to complete. In fact, most of the 120 hours of supervision that learners receive is provided by volunteers—mostly parents, family and friends. These volunteers receive little if any training for their role.

The committee heard about more structured volunteer and community mentoring programs provided by charitable organisations, notably the Police Citizens Youth Clubs and the Blue Datto Foundation. These programs assist young, disadvantaged learners to complete 120 hours of supervised driving with an emphasis on risk management and developing safe driving attitudes. The evidence we heard about the scope and success of these programs was impressive. As such, the committee recommended that the Government examine the training requirements for volunteer supervisors. Additionally, the committee recommended that there may be an opportunity to extend some logbook discounts to learners who are supervised by properly trained and accredited volunteer mentors.

The New South Wales older driver assessment regime proved to be controversial. The committee heard that it ranks among the toughest assessment regimes in the world. Some even claimed it discriminated against older drivers. Others argued it was simply an evidenced-based response to greater risk associated with age. On balance, the committee believed that the current arrangements are a reasonable balance between mobility and risk, especially given the availability of restricted licences for older drivers that allow them to adjust their driving and move towards retirement in a gradual and dignified way. Several submissions argued that the current rules for

reporting health conditions which affect driving ability, such as dementia and ill health, are confusing for both doctors and patients.

The committee heard evidence that in small communities, where doctors and their patients may have longstanding social relationships, doctors are reluctant to make diagnoses of conditions like dementia if an adverse driving report will result. Specialists in these areas argued that the solution is mandatory reporting. They advised us that in some States health practitioners do not have discretion but must report dementia diagnoses. The committee agreed and recommended this. In concluding, I thank the Chair and member for Albury, Greg Aplin, and my fellow committee members for working in such a collegiate, collaborative and productive manner. I also thank the hardworking committee secretariat for their efforts on committee members' behalf. I commend the report to the House.

**Report noted.**

**LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 44/56**

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

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (16:02):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak about the Legislation Review Committee's forty-fourth digest for the Fifty-sixth Parliament. The committee's most recent digest reviewed a number of bills that were introduced in the sitting week commencing 19 September 2017 as well as three regulations. The committee reserved its comment for only one of the bills, the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill. The assisted dying bill enables terminally ill people to request and receive assistance to end their lives. The bill was the product of a cross-party group of members, and some time ago a draft was released to the public for consultation. In his second reading speech, the Hon. Trevor Khan, MLC, noted that the bill follows the more conservative Oregon model of voluntary assisted dying. This may be why there are a number of safeguards built into the bill.

At the outset, I emphasise that the committee recognises that there may be wideranging views about this topic. One of those views may be that allowing some patients with a terminal illness to choose to end their lives trespasses on the right to life itself. The committee respects that some people hold that view but does not agree. We think that the bill does a good job of sensitively balancing the primacy of life with a person's right to make decisions about their body and their future. Two medical practitioners must agree in writing that a patient's illness is terminal and that they will die within 12 months. That patient then has to see a psychiatrist or psychologist to ensure they have the capacity to properly understand all their options and the gravity of the decision to end their life. After all this, a patient can still change their mind at any time for any reason.

There are many other safeguards in the bill that aim to ensure that patients can access assisted dying only in a limited set of circumstances. Only patients aged 25 and over are able to access assisted dying under the bill. The committee notes that 18 is the legal age of majority for most matters. We also noted in the digest that Victoria recently introduced a similar bill. In that bill, assisted dying is available to all adults, 18 years and above. While there may be good policy reasons for this, the committee is concerned that the age limit in the New South Wales bill unfairly discriminates against younger people. We have referred this matter to Parliament for its further consideration.

The last point I make on the assisted dying bill relates to the use of interpreters. The bill prohibits a doctor from providing assistance if that doctor is aware that a financial or other advantage will be gained by an interested person as a result of the death of the patient. An interested person may include an interpreter who is required to be present at the signing of the request certificate. An interested person may include certain doctors also. While the bill allows those doctors to receive reasonable payment for medical services, the relevant section does not seem to allow for interpreters also to be paid for their work. This may not have been intended. I say this because the bill contains a form on which the interpreter has to declare that they will not make a financial gain as a result of the patient's death other than a reasonable payment for interpreting services. It is important that the bill is internally consistent, so the committee would prefer that the relevant section makes clear that a doctor is not stopped from lawfully assisting a patient if an interpreter is paid for their services.

I now turn briefly to some of the regulations reported on in this digest. Two of the regulations made Henry VIII amendments, which is when a regulation amends an Act. The committee almost always prefers that Acts are amended by other Acts so that Parliament can properly examine changes to legislation. However, the committee noted that the amendments to the National Energy Retail Law (Adoption) Act came about only because of changes to the regulations. Other changes were administrative in nature and so the committee made no further comment. That concludes my remarks on this digest for this week. I thank the committee staff and members for their assistance. I commend the digest to the House.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I point out to the member for The Entrance that this debate will be interrupted in one minute.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:06):** My comments on the Legislation Review committee's forty-fourth digest for the Fifty-sixth Parliament will be brief. The committee considered three bills but it was considered appropriate to comment on only one, the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill. The comments by the chair of the committee have dealt with those matters appropriately. I ask members in their deliberations and during debate to refer to comments in the digest that relate to aspects of the bill that impinge upon rights and liberties of individuals in this State. The committee also commented upon three regulations. As time is short, I will conclude my comments on the digest. I thank my fellow committee members and the staff who support the committee. I commend the digest to the House.

**Report noted.**

*Matter of Public Importance*

**HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:07):** My colleagues on both sides of the House and in the other place would be well aware of this matter of public importance, which relates to the Higher School Certificate [HSC]. Next Monday 77,000 students will be sitting HSC examinations in some form, and of those 21,000 will be studying a vocational education and training [VET] course, which provides students with an opportunity to obtain a certificate I or certificate II. The vast majority of students are enrolled in metropolitan schools and there are 140 courses catering for all types of interests.

I commence my discussion with a fun fact—I do miss being in the classroom. When I was growing up I watched *Romper Room*. When Miss Helena looked into the mirror she would often see other people but she never saw me. I would be upset when she said, "We can see John", "We can see David", and "We can see Mary", because she never saw "Jihad", but I did not take it personally. The fun fact is that the top two first names this year are Joshua and Emily but the surnames are Smith and Nguyen, which reflects our multicultural Australia. If Miss Helena is listening, I am sure she would think it is terrific that there are now many more names. I note that the popular names for kids these days reflect our multicultural society. I wish the Joshuas, the Emilys, the Jihads, the Sophias and everyone else who is sitting the HSC this year all the very best. I note that 913 sets of twins are sitting the HSC this year. Earlier I said that the HSC starts on Monday, but actually the process has been going on since August for kids whose subjects include languages or performance, such as dance and drama.

I have said a lot about the HSC in this place, but I will not get political on this occasion because this is not the time for that debate. The HSC is the way that we measure 13 years of education. Kids who score a good Australian Tertiary Admission Rank [ATAR] will be accepted for a place at a university, although some universities will now accept kids who take a different route. The ATAR is not the be-all and the end-all; some students are doing Life Skills and some students are doing Pathways, which means they do not do the traditional six subjects over two years. Lately there has been a lot of discussion about the value of the HSC and whether it is time for a revamp because of the stress it places on kids.

We have to recognise that the HSC is the culmination of schooling and, like all things in life, one size does not fit all. There are 140 different courses that kids can take and there are many different ways for students to succeed in some way—that is really important. I will wish all students writing the HSC the very best on social media, but I stress for all who read this speech—and I am sure 70,000 HSC students will read the speech and refer to it in the supplementary material as part of their HSC English exam—that although the HSC is very important, it is not the be-all and end-all. Students taking the exams cannot just turn up and answer questions in a half-hearted manner; they have to take their exams seriously.

We know that we only get from life what we put into life, but the HSC is not a measure of the person. It is one step on the journey of life—a really important step. We know far too many students are under pressure, either from others or from themselves, during the exam period. This is because either they or others set impossible targets because they think the HSC will define them. I have said a number of times, both in this place and in other forums, that the measure of a person is who they are. Being a good person is more important than having a good HSC score. I am very pleased that universities are starting to give students routes to enrol that do not involve their HSC score. I always advised students at my school that it does not matter what they become in life; it is important that they do the best they can in any role they undertake. They must know that they are not defined by the badge they wear or the title they hold. Instead, they are defined by how good they are in their role.

I acknowledge the students who will write their HSC this year, many of whom are anxious about the exams. We do not know the stories of many of the students, including those who will be the first in the family to sit the HSC exams. In many cases they have gone through difficult times in order to sit their exams let alone

complete their education, and some of them will get excellent results. I acknowledge the parents and the caregivers of HSC students—the non-stop support system of the students. Of course, I acknowledge the teachers, about whom I will speak more in my reply to this discussion.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:13):** I thank the shadow Minister for Education for raising this matter of public importance, the Higher School Certificate [HSC]. Almost all members of this place have gone through the exercise themselves and last year many of us made contributions to the same debate at this time of the year, which reminds me of *Groundhog Day*. However, different students are sitting the HSC exams this year, some of them doing accelerated subjects. Over the last three years, two of my sons have sat the HSC, with two more to go. I wish the son of the member for Blue Mountains all the best in the exams, along with the sons, daughters and other relatives of members. The Government wishes all students the best in what is a stressful time that is more enjoyable for some students than it is for others.

Last year I gave advice to students doing the exams who are experiencing stress along the same lines as the advice given by the shadow Minister. They should keep in mind healthy eating, getting enough sleep, and continuing to engage in regular exercise and other activities to address stress. It is also important to speak to people who are feeling overwhelmed, a salient message in Mental Health Week. We must support people dealing with stressful events. Those who are under stress because of the exams can seek help for themselves, and those who love them should nurture those studying for the HSC.

I acknowledge the comments of the shadow Minister about keeping things in perspective. The HSC is just one step in the direction of our futures. Last year I reflected on my experience and noted that at the time I sat the HSC, I probably did not contemplate that I would be sitting in this place—indeed, we may not know what we will be contemplating at this time in 2019. I am sure that all those who will be writing the HSC have a bright future, although they may not know exactly where that future lies. We all came from different backgrounds, and we will head along different paths. Those sitting the HSC now have more paths open to them to explore than was the case when I sat the HSC. The good news is that more students are doing the HSC, partly because there are more options due to the vocational and career opportunities being offered. We recognise that the employment market is always challenging for new starters.

In concluding I thank all schoolteachers and parents supporting students doing the HSC. I wish all HSC students across New South Wales good luck. Commendations to all those who are facilitating a smooth and productive process. The Minister for Education appreciates the importance of this time of year for students doing the HSC and the importance of parents providing opportunities for students to enter the workforce. I congratulate all involved in facilitating the process and wish the students good luck.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:18):** I contribute to the debate on this matter of public importance, the Higher School Certificate [HSC]. The HSC begins next week and the term usually associated with exams is "Good luck". My contribution will be about what I hope for every one of the students entering this stressful time. It is an exciting time, and I hope they have clear thinking, good health and a calm approach so they can call upon their efforts and energy from their 13 years of schooling. Years 11 and 12 are highly stressful, especially during examination times. The examinations are supposedly a test of skills, knowledge and subject content, but there is another test inherent in the HSC: that of the ability of students to cope with stress, pressure and anxiety.

I acknowledge the students, some of whom I know personally, who have been struggling in the last year and who feel besieged with anxiety. As already has been mentioned, in the next week of study I hope students make good use of their time to exercise, sleep, eat well and relax. These things are more significant to the students' wellbeing than extra study hours. There are far more important issues that students will face than the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank, though it is hard for them to see that right now. As I said to my son two years ago, and as I will say to my second son next week, the HSC does not determine the rest of your life.

I wish all students well over the next month. Getting through the HSC and high school itself is a fantastic achievement. That needs to be acknowledged. Afterwards I hope everyone celebrates. It is great to mark this milestone. I thank all the families, parents, siblings and carers who have been looking after and offering support to the students. I thank all the HSC teachers, whose guidance, dedication, extra hours, meals and encouragement must be noted. To all the students across New South Wales and particularly to those throughout the Blue Mountains, I say: Go well. To my own son and his cohort from Winmalee High, I say: Give it your best, guys.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:21):** I have lived in many places, including Lane Cove, which has a lovely Liberal Party member representing it, but I am very glad to be the member for North Shore representing some wonderful North Shore schools. I contribute to the discussion of this matter of public importance and I acknowledge the shadow Minister for Education and member for Lakemba for moving this motion. When we look back on our own school years—mine not too long ago, as opposed to some sitting opposite



me—and on undertaking the Higher School Certificate [HSC] and the studies that ensured that we could invest in our futures in this society, it is important for us to reflect on the challenges we faced.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Did you do your HSC?

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** I know the member for Strathfield might have some challenges considering the young people in our community and the challenges they face when it comes to the HSC, but I really want to focus on our local schools and on supporting our students through the times when they need to focus.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Did you do your HSC?

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** It seems that the member for Strathfield cannot listen, but I have been a witness to her shenanigans in the elevators. I will choose not to push her buttons too much, even though she chooses to be rude to me during what should be a discussion on a matter of public importance regarding students in our community.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! The member for North Shore has the call.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** I appreciate that the member for Lakemba looks distressed by the behaviour of members on his side of the House because students in our communities are important. Obviously those opposite are not mature enough to speak about that. Schools in my electorate of North Shore make a significant contribution to our community. The students in our schools are incredible contributors to our community. They are facing significant challenges now.

I will talk about anxiety and the mental health challenges students face when it comes to exam times. This month is Mental Health Month. With the additional pressure on students, I say to them that no matter what happens during the HSC and after the HSC—whether they get into university or a trade, or they find that they do not know what they want to do with their lives—there are always options. There is always choice. There is always the opportunity to have a bright future. The HSC will never define them as an individual. I thank the schools, students, teachers and principals in North Shore schools for their contribution to our community. I wish the students of the North Shore the best of luck as they enter the HSC exam period.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (16:24):** By leave: In the interests of ensuring that my colleagues get to speak, I will keep my contribution brief. On behalf of The Greens as the education and schools spokesperson, I join all members of the House to wish our 77,000 Higher School Certificate [HSC] students the very best as they embark on their important exams next week. I congratulate them and their teachers on all the hard work that goes into the minimum two years of preparation for the HSC. I also thank the HSC markers, examiners and exam setters. The calibre of the HSC in New South Wales is outstanding and second to none. As we have heard from other members, I remind students that it is not the most important moment in their life. We hope that all of their efforts bring success but there are other ways of pursuing careers, such as through vocational education. I would like to give a shout-out to the schools, students and families in my electorate and wish them well in this year's HSC.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:26):** In reply: I acknowledge that the member for Canterbury wanted to make a contribution but due to the time constraints for the debate she was not able to do so. I thank the member for Davidson, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for North Shore and the member for Ballina for their contributions. Again, I wish all the students the very best. Members of this House have children who are sitting the Higher School Certificate [HSC] this year, and it is a difficult time. The daughter of the member for Charlestown is sitting the HSC, as is the son of the member for Blue Mountains. My kid will sit it next year. I am looking forward to it, I think.

In the last few weeks some of us have visited schools for their year 12 graduations where we saw the pride in the faces of parents and teachers. I thank the support crew that makes this happen. I acknowledge not just the kids, who are giving it their best shot, but also the teachers who give up their holidays to provide lessons for them. Whether in public or independent schools, every teacher tries to give the very best education to the kids. Teachers do a lot of work that goes unrecognised because it is unseen, such as marking practice papers, preparing extra study lessons, anything that will help the kids in their final year. I acknowledge the parents and carers who have to live with the difficulties that are posed by teenagers at this time. I say to the parents and to the kids that this is not the be-all and end-all. It is a very important part of life but it is not the defining moment in our lives. As the member for Davidson, with whom I have worked on education in the interfaith space, said, the HSC is not how we measure ourselves or our achievements. He said that we, as parliamentarians, when doing our HSC—and some remember it better than others—did not guess that we would be sitting in this place now.

I conclude with a comment on the value of education. The oldest person doing the HSC this year is 50 years old. He is a refugee from Syria who arrived in 2012 as part of an humanitarian intake. He is a physician

by trade and for 17 years had his own practice just outside Mosul. We know well enough from world history the sorts of things that were going on in Mosul. It is an inspirational story that this 50-year-old came to Australia and enrolled in an English course and now will sit the HSC. He hopes in sitting the HSC that he will achieve a mark of 96 or above so that he can study medicine in Australia. He said, "I only know medicine. That's what I want to do." That is an example of the value of education. I acknowledge Bankstown Senior College for providing him this opportunity. Good luck to all the HSC students and their parents and thank you to the teachers. I also thank every member who made a contribution to the debate today.

### *Petitions*

## **BUS SERVICES PRIVATISATION**

### **Discussion**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (16:31):** The issue this afternoon is very simple: that Sydney buses in region 6, the entire inner west fleet, remain in public hands and be publicly operated. I notice in the gallery the presence of many bus operators and other staff of the State Transit Authority and I welcome them to the Parliament. We are talking about the busiest of inner-urban metropolitan areas, an area that extends from the foot of the Anzac Bridge to Sydney Olympic Park and Newington in the west, and south to Bexley. Buses travel through the suburbs of Drummoyne, Chiswick, Summer Hill, Strathfield, Rookwood, Hurlstone Park, Ashfield, Burwood, Five Dock, Concord, Campsie, Ashbury, Belmore, Canterbury, Dobroyd Point, Enfield, Croydon and Haberfield, to name some. It is a significant area of metropolitan Sydney.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! Members of the public gallery may not display signs or they will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr LUKE FOLEY:** Those suburbs have had public buses on their streets since the 1930s when the Lang Labor Government passed the Transport Act. The State Government now will privatise the operation of 233 bus routes, without any community consultation. It is a broken promise. At the last election the now Premier when challenged on this denied that the Liberal-Nationals would move to privatise public buses. It is a clear broken promise. They have no mandate from the community to do this. We have a Minister for Transport and Infrastructure who is personally obsessed with denigrating hardworking bus drivers and bus operators. Now as result of his obsession and his vindictive pursuit of bus drivers we will see the elderly, young mothers with prams, schoolchildren and workers suffering.

Last year these workers had a written jobs guarantee. The Minister said that things change, Cabinets make decisions. We cannot trust what this Government says. The workers made reforms, as they were asked to do by their employer. They received written acknowledgement and thanks from their employer for making difficult decisions to change the way they work in order to improve productivity. They received a guarantee from their management that a new contract would be entered into—only for the Minister and Cabinet to intervene in one fell swoop to move to privatisation, without any consultation with the workforce or with the citizens of the inner west and all those suburbs of which I spoke. The argument the Government makes for this is weak. It says that in region 6 there are 3.21 complaints per thousand monthly trips. What it does not say is that in region 7, that is the Premier's own backyard, there are more complaints: 3.42 per thousand monthly trips.

In region 15, in south-west Sydney, where bus services are operated by a private operator, complaints are higher again. Of course, apples are compared with oranges by the Government in this debate. In south-west Sydney there are 237,000 monthly trips. In region 6, the inner west region, the focus of this petition, there are 3.5 million monthly trips. Yet the Minister has the barefaced cheek to say there are more complaints in the inner west region, where more than ten times as many passenger journeys are undertaken. The Government's argument is based on comparing apples with oranges, and it is misleading the public. The Government has no mandate for this. We are talking about the most heavily congested roads in New South Wales. Bus operators have changed their work practices and improved productivity, as has been acknowledged by their employer. Yet the Government, without consultation with the staff of the State Transit Authority or millions of citizens who rely on these buses, moves to privatise because it is ideologically obsessed with privatisation. I commend the petition to the House.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (16:34):** I am going to start with a quote from the *Inner West Courier* late last year:

Commuters are voicing their frustration in the thousands. They have a right to expect a bus to arrive on time and stop where it is supposed to.

That was not from a member of the Government; that was from the shadow Minister for Transport. We do not take a snapshot of complaints and then make comparisons. We looked at four years of complaints data which revealed more than 43,000 complaints in this one region alone. That is the fact when it comes to customer

complaints. Year in, year out there is a consistent level of complaints about the services—and the shadow Minister for Transport argues for something to be done. The Leader of the Opposition is here performing a stunt for the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU]. The Leader of the Opposition does not care about customers or drivers; all he cares about is making sure that the rivers of gold from the RTBU to Labor headquarters continue—\$206,000. That is the payment for him to come into this place and perform stunts like this. This is one of the most shameful campaigns that we have seen in a long time. The Government wants to invite the world's best operators to compete to run bus services in the inner west for two good reasons: to provide better, more reliable services to people who use inner west buses; and to ensure more jobs, better jobs and better conditions for bus drivers.

I say to the inner west customers, "The unions lied to you, and so too the Leader of the Opposition". I say to the drivers, "Again you have been misled". Let us get to the truth of the matter. Buses are going to stay in public hands, depots are going to stay in public hands, drivers will not lose their jobs, there will be more jobs, and services will not be cut. This Government is delivering more services today than when Labor was in office—in the order of 24,000 weekly services. Bus stops will not be removed and fares will stay part of the Opal system. It is important to note that we have kept fares at all-time record lows and we offer discounts and savings to customers, including the Gold Opal. What do the customers of the inner west want? They want a reliable bus service. This Government has been delivering. The member for Strathfield argues that something has to give. That is exactly where we are taking the action. We will fix inner west buses.

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

*[The member for Strathfield left the Chamber at 16:37 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** What is even more galling about the behaviour of those opposite is that they signed up private bus operators when they were in government. Eighty per cent of the services in the Sydney metropolitan area are delivered by private bus operators. Ask the member for Mt Druitt, the member for Liverpool and the member for Fairfield what they think of their local private operators. The other day I had the member for Swansea in my office telling me about the fantastic private operator Busways. We are about drivers and customers. We are not going to be held to ransom by the RTBU, unlike those opposite who are quite happy to receive \$206,000 and come into this place and ask every question that the union wants. We are not going to apologise for putting customers first. There are 43,000 complaints. I could start to read them out but, believe you me, from some of the actions I have seen and the union featherbedding that has gone on I can say that customers are being ripped off and those opposite do not care.

The Leader of the Opposition, a union boss—surprise, surprise—is looking after the union boss in the gallery, Chris Preston. He is looking after him in case he ever gets the chance to be the Premier of the State. Well, it is not going to happen because the people of the inner west can see straight through him. As for the wildcat strike that Mr Preston and the Leader of the Opposition caused when they left thousands of schoolkids at bus stops without services turning up, the Leader of the Opposition stands condemned by the people of the inner west. The reality is that we are going to put customers first—plainly the Labor Party will not.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! I understand that there are strongly held views on the matter being discussed today. I expect respect for both sides of the House. I warn the member for Swansea that if she speaks when the Chair is speaking, she will be removed from the Chamber. I am aware of the strongly held views on the matter being discussed today. Parliamentary debate allows those with opposing views to express themselves freely without interference. I therefore ask those in the gallery to refrain from clapping or distracting from the debate in any way, verbally or visually. That is my last warning. I expect respect for both sides of the debate. If respect is not given, I will clear the gallery and I will have members removed from the Chamber.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:41):** The discussion today was an opportunity for the transport Minister to admit his mistake and to restore faith for inner west residents and our local bus drivers. Above all, it was an opportunity for him to stop his sell-off of our inner west buses. Instead, this Minister has doubled down on a policy that will put our bus drivers' jobs at risk and will threaten our bus stops, our vital bus routes and critical bus maintenance. The Government has doubled down on its contempt for public transport workers in New South Wales and its contempt for public transport users in the inner west. It is a sham.

Since this Minister announced his plans to sell off Region 6 bus services, the opposition from my constituents has been overwhelming. Residents and commuters supported drivers when they chose to go on strike in May and tens of thousands of them signed petitions against the sell-off. Residents and commuters have made countless calls and written emails and letters to my office and to many of my inner west colleagues who are here today. In fact, if there is anything positive to come from the Minister's decision, it has been the outpouring of support for our drivers, such as those in the gallery today. It is clear that inner west residents love their public bus drivers and rely on those critical services. Bus drivers are the front line of providing quality services, particularly

for the elderly, parents, mums and dads with prams, kids travelling to school and teenagers getting to their part-time jobs. On this side of the House we will always fight for them to continue to deliver those critical services as public services.

Inner west residents have told me that they are appalled by the fact that the Minister has used his claim of higher customer complaints as his rationale for privatising our bus services. This has been exposed as a complete sham. When compared to the number of trips taken, region 6 is in line with other regions and, in fact, complaints are lower than for many privately run regions. For years bus drivers pleaded with Transport for NSW to fix the timetables and to invest money in improving on-time running, but they were ignored again and again. We know that the Minister has reserved his privatisation plans for Labor- and Greens-held electorates—but not, of course, for the Drummoyne electorate. We know that the member for Drummoyne is worried. In fact, he has been polling his constituents, ringing and asking them, because he knows it is not a popular policy. That is why blue ribbon Liberal areas in the north and the east have been spared for now. In fact, Cabinet Ministers such as the member for Pittwater and the member for Wakehurst have fought to keep their pet project, the B-line buses, in public hands. We know that this is not about improving services; it is all about pure ideology. Bus drivers and commuters across the inner west will never give up their fight to save our public buses.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (16:44):** I thank everyone who has signed the petition that is the subject of this discussion. Members know that it relates to a Government policy commitment made in 2011, and I support it 100 per cent. I have been hassling the Minister for Transport about bus services since I was elected in 2011 because of the number of complaints I have received. Members can rattle on about 43,000 complaints having been made, but the complaints I have received from my constituents are genuine. I talk to people and I know that they are concerned about the M41, the 504 and the 501 routes, and about buses that never turn up and/or turn up one after another at the wrong time. That has been happening in the inner west for a long time.

Members opposite can push poll in the inner west, they can call people and they can send brochures with their photographs on them to my constituents indicating that they support them and that I am the only person who does not. Car loads of people can scream outside my home at midnight, but I will install surveillance measures. If members opposite want to go down that path, they will need to do a little better than that. They can use every tactic in the book, but that should not be happening. They can protest outside my office whenever they want. In fact, what is happening makes me more determined not to back away. I will not back away because I stand for better services. If members opposite want to talk about better services—

**Ms Trish Doyle:** We should have a change of government.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Blue Mountains will remove herself from the Chamber until the conclusion of the discussion on the petition.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Blue Mountains left the Chamber at 16:47.]*

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** We should look at the situation not in Newcastle or Victoria but in Abbotsford, Drummoyne, Breakfast Point or Chiswick. We can look at franchised ferry services; in fact, the franchising of Sydney Ferries is a classic example of this Government's success. That franchising exercise has resulted in a 99.9 per cent reliability rate, a 99.2 per cent on-time running rate, and a 99.8 per cent customer satisfaction rate. The Auditor-General's report into that exercise indicates that it has resulted in cost savings. Members opposite should compare the per kilometre cost of today's services with the cost of privatised services. The savings being realised are not going into my pocket; they are being spent on more services in our electorates. I say to the good, hardworking bus drivers that they have nothing to worry about. They will get a better outcome under this Government.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:48):** By leave: I speak on behalf of The Greens to endorse this petition and to offer the party's full support to the campaign to ensure that our bus services are kept in public hands. The Government's message in pursuing this privatisation exercise is that it does not want to fix our bus services; it simply wants to flog them. My response to the Minister's allegation is that The Greens do not accept money from trade unions. However, we do support Rail, Tram and Bus Union members 100 per cent. We believe that what the union members are saying is correct, and we believe that they should be heard and supported.

The bus network is a lifeline in my electorate, which has no railway stations. We use buses to get our kids to school and to doctor's appointments, to get to work and to job interviews, and to meet up with friends. A swift and efficient bus service is critical. The people in our area, as with people across all of Sydney, should be able to choose how to move around. They should not be forced into cars for every journey. Those who cannot afford private modes of transport should not be forced to stay at home; they should have an effective and financially viable public transport system. That is why we need a bus service that is properly funded. We must invest in our bus services and we need smart, commonsense solutions to make them better.

We need proper strategic planning to make buses work better in a changing city that is becoming even more congested with traffic. We need priority lanes for buses, including giving them priority at traffic lights, smarter timetabling and better route planning. The people in charge of bus services must be working for the public and not for profit. These services have been set up to fail. I have heard from many drivers that there has been refusal after refusal to alter timetables and to respect their input about the problems being experienced in getting around Sydney due to bus congestion. We want a smart plan that provides new ways for buses to move around. We must also adjust bus timetables. Bus services, passengers and staff will suffer if we do not change bus timetables.

This privatisation plan is a huge obstacle to providing world-class public transport for Sydney. At present the service is not provided to work for the public but to make money from the public. The only people who will benefit from privatisation are the companies who make money off their cosy relationships with the Government. It is clear that claims around complaints are false when compared to other zones. We need proper investment and a genuine commitment to improve bus services to enable people in the inner west to travel where they need to go in the most efficient time frame. We do not want a government that wants to flog our bus services rather than fix them. We need a government that listens to the drivers and that does not have a vendetta against the union. We need a government that focuses on providing services and that listens to people who work in the sector. The Greens support the petition and urge the Government to change its course.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:51):** By leave: As someone who comes from a regional area I know firsthand how well private operators do in our region. One would think from the way in which some people are talking that these bus services will be terminated and that there will be no service. The services offered in Kiama on the South Coast are first rate. I am proud of the operators. This campaign is misleading the public. In May the New South Wales Government announced that the world's best private operators would be invited to compete to operate Sydney's inner west region 6 bus service.

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** The western and north-western Sydney private operators have been providing bus services for decades. I am interested in good government and good services for people across this State. Sydney Ferries is an example of the success of public transport franchises. The first misleading point is that the New South Wales Government is privatising part of the bus network. The assets will remain in public hands and buses will be publicly owned. The equipment on those buses will continue to be owned by the Government, including Opal ticketing equipment, public transport information and priority systems, real-time tracking of bus locations and status, traffic light priority for late running buses, bus timetable performance and reliability reports, and real-time bus arrival information for bus stops.

Region 6 bus depots including Burwood, Kingsgrove, Leichhardt and Tempe will remain in public ownership. It is misleading to say that with a private operator people will not be able to use their Opal cards and that concession holders will not be entitled to a concession fare. The members representing the electorates of Mount Druitt, Fairfield and Liverpool will tell people that the Opal card can be used on buses in their electorates. The Opal card can be used on Sydney Ferries and on Hillsbus public transport. It can be used on Interline buses in region 2 around Liverpool. The Opal card can also be used on Transit System buses operating in region 3—buses in the Fairfield area. There have been performance improvements in recent years but region 6, which has State Transit buses, still lags behind its industry competitors. Private operators provide quality services across the State and in Western Sydney. Inner west customers deserve the same quality.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! I warn the member for Summer Hill for the last time.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** It is misleading to say that private operators will increase fares to make a profit. Fares and timetables will continue to be set by this Government. The Government will continue to regulate bus routes and safety standards as is the case in all bus regions where private operators provide private services. The Opposition is quite happy for services to remain in government hands even if they do not provide a good service. It will not entertain the idea of outsourcing. Public transport is important in supporting our economy, especially as Sydney's population continues to grow. In excess of one million people are expected to live in Sydney in the next 10 years. We need more efficient, high-quality bus services that encourage people onto buses and not away from them.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:55):** By leave: This afternoon I speak on behalf of our hardworking and fantastic shadow Minister for Transport Jodi McKay, who has been silenced this afternoon. I welcome members of the mighty Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] and members of the public who are in the gallery. I thank them and the 25,000 people who have signed our petition because they are championing public transport in this State. This Government has got it wrong and this petition proves that more than 25,000 people in

the inner west and in St George have signed more than two petitions indicating their strong opposition to the sell-off of our public buses. I note the presence in the Chamber of the member for Drummoyne, who has been pushing this blatant sell-off of buses in his area. He knows that this is unpopular. He is so worried that he asked members of the Liberal Party to conduct a telephone poll gauging public opposition to the proposal. They could have saved their money.

This petition is proof that no-one in his area or the inner west supports this sell-off. The member for Drummoyne should look at the pages and pages of signatures from commuters in his area. The Minister boasted that only private companies can achieve world-class transport systems. That is wrong. Earlier this week the shadow Minister for Transport was in Newcastle. She wants to ask the Minister for Transport whether he still thinks it is a world-class transport system even though drivers have not been paid, routes have been cut, schoolchildren have been left behind, complaints have not been addressed and there is a sham consultation process to determine the new timetable. This is what the inner west has to look forward to.

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** A privatised service will not magically make congestion disappear. The Minister should come to Canterbury Road and to our area. There is congestion now and it will still be there. We know this decision is not driven by a desire to improve transport but by this Minister's ideological obsession with flogging off public transport. We know this because he has admitted that that is his end goal—to sell everything with no evidence. All members in this Parliament, even those on the North Shore and in the eastern suburbs, should take heed because they are next.

In bringing this petition to the House we acknowledge the work of the RTBU, Unions NSW, many volunteers and the thousands of people in our communities who have signed this petition and who are standing up for public transport. The shadow Minister for Transport acknowledges the Leader of the Opposition and the members representing the electorates of Summer Hill, Kogarah, Lakemba, Rockdale, Newtown, Balmain and Canterbury who will continue to fight for public transport in our local areas. This Minister continues to place hurdles in our way but we will continue to fight.

#### *Personal Explanation*

#### **MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMENTS**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:58):** By leave: During the debate, the Minister made a claim about the meeting I had with him yesterday. He claimed that I said that private providers in the Hunter—

**Mr Andrew Constance:** No, I said it was Busways. What did you say about Busways? Go and ask Zangari why I have done this.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** During the debate, the Minister made a claim that in a meeting I had with him yesterday I said that private providers in the Hunter were doing a good job. This statement is untrue. I would like the Minister to state now that he has told a lie.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **WINGHAM GOURMET MEAT AND CHICKENS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:00):** Wingham Gourmet Meat and Chicken's famous Texas jerky placed first at the recent Australian Meat Industry Council's [AMIC] annual smallgoods competition. Wingham is now officially home to the best beef jerky in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. The results of the competition were announced at the annual AMIC dinner held at West Tamworth Leagues Club on 23 September. I congratulate Wingham Gourmet Meat and Chicken's Scott Kelly, the principal butcher; long-serving butcher Bevan Brown, the man behind the award-winning jerky; Josh Short; and Bailey Saville on their contributions. The butchery has a shelf of awards with the team being a regular finalist in the annual Australian Meat Industry Council Sausage King and Smallgoods competition. They are current champions on the mid North Coast for their chicken, spinach and pine nut snags. The winners will compete in the national final in Melbourne in February 2018.

#### **GREEN VALLEY ISLAMIC COLLEGE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:02):** Green Valley Islamic College is located in my electorate and is a project of the Muslim League of New South Wales Inc. On Saturday 16 September the school held a function to celebrate its fifteenth anniversary, having commenced operation in early 2002. I particularly acknowledge the presence at the function of Mr Shamsher Ali, founding school principal who is once again school principal, and Mr Rizvi Khan, chairman of the school board. I thank them for their contributions. Also present were teachers, students and parents, and members of the Shura Council, the school board and the Muslim League. I have

memories of the school since it was merely a concept. It commenced in 2002 with a handful of students. It now has multiple buildings, hundreds of students and more than 80 teachers, plus many other staff. Contributions on the day were made by Mrs Saireen Hussein and students Faraaz Aboo, Salam Abu-Meccal, Zahirah Hussein and Jamal El-Sankarz. It was a pleasure to be invited to attend the event.

#### **GRAFTON HIGH SCHOOL NETBALL TEAM**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (17:03):** I offer my congratulations to the Grafton High School netball team, who were successful in winning the Daily Examiner Netball Challenge Opens Shield. In a closely fought final, Grafton High School defeated McAuley Catholic College by one goal. It was one of the most thrilling finals in challenge history. Grafton and McAuley went goal for goal until the final whistle with the girls in blue prevailing by a single point. The final score was 27 to 26 after four quarters. Both sides were bolstered by a strong defensive effort. Grafton's ability to cut off passes at mid-court—thanks to a double-digit haul of intercepts by Zahli Webb and captain Mikayla O'Mahony—made all the difference in the end. I congratulate both teams, especially Player of the Final Arielle Hackett and Player of the Series Sophie Osborne, both from McAuley Catholic College.

#### **WESTERN SYDNEY WET'N'WILD NIPPERS**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:03):** This Sunday Western Sydney Wet'n'Wild Nippers are back again for another exciting summer season in the electorate of Prospect. Nippers is about having fun while learning to play safe at the beach. Children aged between five and 13 years participate in a wide range of games, sports and educational activities that are designed to slowly build confidence in and around the water. The education component of the program includes beach safety, sun safety, and what a lifesaver is and does, while the physical activities include wading, board paddling and beach games. Older nippers are also introduced to some of the basic principles of surf safety such as general rescue techniques and first aid—vital skills they can take with them for life. I congratulate Surf Life Saving NSW and thank the many volunteers from surf clubs around the State for making this program such a success.

#### **REFUGEE WELCOME DAY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:04):** I recently had the great privilege of attending the refugee welcome day at Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney. On the day more than 300 newly arrived refugee family members were welcomed to Australia through prayer, celebration and thanks. I was humbled and honoured to be part of welcoming these hardworking, highly skilled and community-minded individuals who want to contribute in a positive way to our society. I had the great delight of talking, dancing and even skipping with these new Australians. I spoke with doctors, lawyers, dentists and engineers who are committed to giving back to this new community that is welcoming them with open arms.

Whether through learning English more fully or sitting equivalent Australian qualification tests to meet our required standards, these people are dedicated to having valuable roles in our State and nation. Great thanks must be extended to Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney for its warm welcome and the Josephite Justice Network for its work in championing such a valuable cause. More than 25 young ex-students and young people with a close connection to Mary MacKillop's work and the Sisters of Saint Joseph volunteered and organised the day. Their work is appreciated and valued, especially that of Andrew Fayad and Tylah Fragiadakis.

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

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:06):** Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia, based in Balmain, has been providing specialist counselling since it was established in the early 1970s. The organisation began its journey in 1971 with a volunteer roster in a rundown house in Redfern. By 2016 its dedicated staff members had provided support to 22,346 women, men and young people across 56,829 occasions of service. Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia is an evidence-based organisation committed to preventative programs as well as supporting those impacted by sexual assault and domestic violence.

The Hey Sis project was established in 2012. It works with Aboriginal women who are committed to supporting those who have experienced sexual assault and who want to reduce sexual assault of Aboriginal women and children in their communities. I congratulate all of the staff involved in Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia. They provide services and are also engaged in research and prevention programs that can address the cause of these issues. They deserve the greatest support and gratitude from not only this State Parliament but also Federal Parliament.

#### **GWANDALAN-SUMMERLAND POINT RURAL FIRE BRIGADE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:07):** Last month Gwandalan-Summerland Point Rural Fire Brigade celebrated 60 years of protecting the local community. Established in 1957, the Gwandalan-Summerland

Point Rural Fire Brigade has always upheld the core values of community service and volunteering. Prior to the opening of the initial Gwandalan-Summerland Point fire station in 1963, the local post office was the go-to point for volunteer firefighters whenever they heard the siren of the 1944 Chevrolet Blitz wagon. Throughout the 1970s the Gwandalan-Summerland Point Rural Fire Brigade continued to evolve, acquiring a Leyland tanker and radios. It also set up the ladies auxiliary to help raise funds to purchase new equipment. In 1991 it relocated to its new home. It continues to protect and serve our local community and to deploy additional resources to help others when necessary. Over the past 60 years the Rural Fire Service volunteers have become an integral part of the Gwandalan and Summerland Point communities. I thank them for their commitment to keeping us all safe.

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES SCHOOLS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION PARTICIPANT JAMES JACKSON**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:08):** I recognise Hastings Secondary College student James Jackson for his selection to attend the New South Wales constitutional convention to be held at Parliament House on 6 November 2017. Interested students were invited to submit an essay, with James penning a stirring piece reflecting on the changes in Australia and its Constitution from 1901 until the present day. Year 11 student James was one of 100 students selected statewide to attend the one-day convention, where these bright young minds will gather to consider issues relating to the Constitution of Australia. James also will be eligible for selection by his peers to attend the national convention to be held in Canberra in 2018. I congratulate James Jackson on his selection to attend the constitutional convention and wish him all the best for his future endeavours.

#### **DOLLS POINT WAR WIDOWS**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:08):** I pay tribute to the war widows of Dolls Point who are currently facing a great deal of difficulty. The War Widows' Guild of Australia NSW is currently seeking to sell off the homes of this group of women who have given so much to our nation and should have the right to enjoy their golden years in peace and comfort. These incredibly resilient women, the youngest of whom is in her late seventies and the oldest just shy of 100, should not have to put up with threats of eviction at this time in their lives. I recognise that the War Widows' Guild is a non-government organisation. However, I strongly believe that whatever the outcome, which may require government assistance, these women cannot be allowed to be treated like this. I acknowledge the member for Drummoyne and the fight he has taken up on behalf of the war widows in his electorate who are similarly facing eviction. We will be pursuing this issue together until we arrive at a fair outcome for these highly deserving women.

#### **TRIBUTE TO TERRY HOGAN**

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (17:09):** Terry Hogan of Jerilderie passed away on Wednesday 27 September. The former Jerilderie shire councillor and mayor served for an extensive period from 1971 up until the merger with Murrumbidgee Council, which was proclaimed in 2016. In a wider representative capacity he became inaugural chairperson of the Riverina and Murray Regional Organisation of Councils in 2008. He was also well known as a past chairperson of SunRice and a board member for 17 years. Over this time he was a valued and respected champion for the rice industry in Australia, particularly during the extensive drought early this century, fighting for water for food production and the modernisation of the rice industry. Terry Hogan was a true visionary and leader and he will be missed.

#### **TRIBUTE TO VIVI GERMANO-KOUTSOUNADOS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:10):** For over 40 years Vivi Germano-Koutsounados has been advocating for culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Australia. Vivi migrated to Australia from Greece in 1954 when she was only nine years old. Her experience of migration has driven her passion for multiculturalism, social justice and human rights for migrants and refugees. In 1979, Vivi founded Ethnic Community Services Co-operative in Marrickville, where she is soon to retire as executive director. The co-operative is a vital organisation that advocates for and delivers culturally and linguistically relevant services for our multicultural community.

By working to connect community members to relevant childcare, disability and aged care services, Vivi has helped give independence to many otherwise vulnerable and isolated people. Vivi was a recipient of the Order of Australia Medal and the Human Rights Medal. In 2002, she went to the United Nations where she lobbied the High Commissioner of Refugees about the need to tackle the problems experienced by children in detention. She is a compassionate, devoted and inspiring woman. I congratulate Vivi on her retirement from Ethnic Community Services Co-operative and acknowledge her incredible contributions to our community.



### DAVIDSON ELECTORATE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:11):** As it is Mental Health Month, I want to highlight the outstanding contributions towards better mental health made by individuals and community organisations in my electorate of Davidson. Way2Wellness is a new mental health assistance service established by Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury and the Sydney North Primary Health Network. Way2Wellness helps people know what to do by giving initial assessments, referrals to online support tools and follow-up call backs.

I commend Ross Mackay, a 14-year-old student who recently led his First Lindfield Scouts troop on a 250-kilometre expedition on the Great North Walk from Sydney to Newcastle. Despite challenges on the way, they exceeded their \$5,000 fundraising target for beyondblue, a non-profit organisation that aims to address issues of depression, anxiety disorders and related mental disorders. I recognise and thank all involved in these important efforts to improve mental health in our local community.

### NATIONAL POLICE REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:12):** Today I would like to commend the work of all police in New South Wales, especially the frontline police officers who put their lives on the line every day to keep our community safe and strong. I was honoured to be invited to join members of the Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Lakes local area commands at our National Police Remembrance Day service last month. It is always important to pause and honour those officers who have given their lives while performing their duties and to remember those who have lost their lives through illness or other circumstances.

On National Police Remembrance Day we join with friends and family of those members of the force who paid the ultimate sacrifice representing their community. We honour their service and we honour their memories. National Police Remembrance Day is a reminder to the community of the importance of the NSW Police Force and the dangers that hardworking and dedicated police officers face on a daily basis. I thank all the special constables here in Parliament and all the police of New South Wales.

### WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (17:13):** I wish to draw to the attention of the House the outstanding results being achieved by sporting groups within my electorate. Congratulations to the Bowral Junior Rugby League Kookaburras under 10 B side who won their grand final with a score of 30-26 over Warragamba. Well done to Brayden McGarry, George Prodromou, Tobias Nielsen, Aaron Prodromou, Zayne Ismail, Oscar Harris, Angus Mackay, Angus Crockford, Max Abela, Tobias Monk, Oliver Johns and coach Daniel Ismail.

Congratulations, too, to the Bowral Blacks second grade side, which won the Illawarra Rugby Union grand final for the first time ever against the Wollongong Vikings. Well done to Inoke Kaitabu, Joshua Dick, Mark Freund, John Dobson, Charles Hamilton-Fox, Harry Carlon, Stephen Strode, Brian Vasu, Angus Yuill, Lachlan Huntington, David Minter, Hunter Schrader-Wright, Matthew Gleeson, Charlie Lawson, Cameron Madden, Nicholas Waugh, JP Nel, Jacob Fairall, Max Jenkins, Robert Alves, Thomas Mulready, Lyle Chadwick, and Peter Burt. They are fantastic teams.

### SOUTH LAKE MACQUARIE AMATEUR SAILING CLUB

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:14):** I acknowledge South Lake Macquarie Amateur Sailing Club for the remarkable work it does in our local community. The club, which sails out of Sunshine on the southern shores of Lake Macquarie, is celebrating its seventieth anniversary this year. It is a modest club but one that achieves great things. Over the recent long weekend, it hosted the biggest sailing event held in Australia so far this year. Although the club is run entirely by volunteers, it was able to successfully stage the 2017 State Youth Championships, which attracted 288 boats and almost 400 young sailors aged between 7 and 19.

Lake Macquarie has produced some of the world's best sailors and is home to a string of Olympic gold medallists and world sailing champions. At the heart of that success are clubs like South Lake Macquarie which invest so much time and energy into providing young people with the skills and resources necessary to become champion sailors and champion members of the community. I am very pleased to acknowledge the club's efforts in the Parliament, and I congratulate President Phil Evans along with the executive committee, its members and volunteers.

### PENNANT HILLS DEMONS AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL CLUB

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (17:15):** I congratulate the Pennant Hills Demons Australian Rules Football Club's Premier division team on its recent triumph. Crowned Premiers of the Sydney Premier Division Australian Football League competition, this squad achieved a 10-game unbeaten run to win the grand final by one goal in the final minute of play. Remarkably, they did so with seven out of 22 players being under

the age of 19. This is testimony to the wealth of talent boasted by the residents of the Epping electorate. The continued success of this club is benefitted by the efforts of the local council and government aid. To this end, I thank the Minister for Sport for his continued endorsement of initiatives such as the Local Sport Grant Program. I also thank the club's Premier division coach and player Mr Chris Yard for the enormous workload he undertakes to maintain the clubs exceptionally high standards. What a truly great achievement for the Pennant Hills Demons.

#### **HINDU SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH CHILDREN AND YOUTH CAMP**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:16):** On 25 September I was thrilled to attend the closing ceremony of the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh [HSS] Children and Youth Camp. HSS is a voluntary, non-profit social and cultural organisation that aims to organise the Hindu community in order to preserve, practice and promote Hindu ideals and values. HSS conducts structured programs of regular athletic and academic activities to develop strong character and leadership skills in its members, known as swayamsevaks for men and sevikas for women, emphasising values such as self-discipline, self-confidence and a spirit of selfless service [SEVA] for humanity. HSS encourages maintaining Hindu cultural identity in harmony with the larger community. I joined 200 people at the closing ceremony of the camp, which included 100 children and their parents and volunteers. The uniqueness of Hindu Dharma and the culture as practised by the Hindu community has a significant contribution to make to the Australian community at large, and I congratulate HSS on promoting strong values and leadership skills.

#### **AUSMUMPRENEUR AWARDS FINALIST AMANDA DELALAT**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:17):** I want to recognise Bensville resident Amanda Delalat who has been selected as a finalist for the 2017 AusMumpreneur Awards in the Sustainability Award section. The AusMumpreneur Awards celebrate and recognise Australian mums in business who have achieved outstanding success in areas such as business excellence, product development, customer service and digital innovation. Amanda has successfully run an organic home delivery service for the past five years and recently opened a boutique organic wholefoods retail store. I congratulate Amanda on this well-earned recognition and wish her every success for the future.

#### **TRIBUTE TO KAREN HUNT**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (17:18):** I acknowledge the significant contribution of Karen Hunt to the Parliament of New South Wales and to the Campbelltown community. Karen has recently notched up 20 years of service to the New South Wales Parliament, initially as a Hansard reporter and most recently in the Campbelltown electorate office. However, Karen's dedication is not limited to this Parliament. In September last year, Karen was elected to represent her community on Campbelltown City Council, where she has been a strong voice on a number of issues, most significantly the protection of Campbelltown's koala population and other preservation matters that have arisen through the significant urban growth. Karen is proud to be Labor but she is even prouder to be representing Campbelltown. I congratulate her on her significant and ongoing service to the Parliament of New South Wales and to the people of Campbelltown. I look forward to many more years of considered, calm and caring representations from Karen.

#### **COMMUNITY NORTHERN BEACHES**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:19):** Today I recognise a significant moment in my electorate of Manly. The much-loved Manly Community Centre, which I have spoken about many times in this place, is tomorrow at its annual general meeting rebranding as Community Northern Beaches. The Manly Community Centre has a proud history of supporting victims of domestic violence, providing homelessness support services, and providing free legal and financial aid since it began in 1977. Next month it celebrates 40 years of service to the electorate of Manly. It is only fitting, as its breadth of services has grown and with its reach now stretching up and down the peninsula, that it be now known as Community Northern Beaches. I give my heartfelt thanks to all volunteers and staff, past and present, who have served our community for so many years and who I know will go on to do even greater things as they relaunch as Community Northern Beaches.

#### **MARRIAGE EQUALITY PLEBISCITE**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (17:20):** Over the past few weeks a team of volunteers in the Illawarra has been making phone calls on behalf of the yes campaign for marriage equality. Not content with just convincing their friends and relatives, this dedicated group has set about making sure that the "Yes" response to the survey is emphatic. In addition to thanking every one of the volunteers, I particularly thank Simon Zulian, Caitlin Roodenrys, Chase Murray and Alison Byrnes for their organisation of the events. My Federal, State and local Labor colleagues have joined them, hitting the phones and, importantly, providing dinner at the end of the sessions. It has been a non-partisan approach, with members of The Greens and the Liberals joining Labor and community members at events and rallies. I also thank the famous, fantastic and fabulous Roxee Horror, who

volunteered her time to entertain the volunteers with an amazing performance last Thursday night—she absolutely wowed the crowd. Sadly, this has not always been a respectful debate. People involved have suffered threats, abuse and intimidation, so it was great to share a few lighthearted moments during this serious effort to bring an end to marriage discrimination.

#### **GLEN INNES WRAPS WITH LOVE GROUP**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (17:21):** I recognise Glen Innes resident Joan Parker and the wonderful members of the Glen Innes Wraps with Love group. Every Wednesday this dedicated and selfless group of 18 Glen Innes ladies meet at the Glen Innes Library and crochet to benefit those in need, both in our local community and abroad. The Wraps with Love group has crocheted 364 blankets so far this year—the highest number produced since the group was founded in 1992. The knitted wraps, used as blankets, are given to people around the world who are exposed to severe cold or suffering loss and trauma. This year 31 wraps have been sent to East Timor, 48 wraps went to Glen Innes Hospital and 249 are awaiting wider distribution at the Wraps with Love headquarters in Sydney. I congratulate Joan and her ladies who continue to provide a service to their community and to others in need.

#### **SKYPEAK ADVENTURES FIRST ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (17:22):** I acknowledge Skypeak Adventures, a new aerial amusement park in my electorate, which celebrated its first anniversary and plaque unveiling at the end of September. Thrillseekers from across the State have been visiting Skypeak Adventures to participate in more than 100 ropes course challenges suspended around a giant river red gum at a height of over eight storeys. Needless to say, I have only been an eager observer so far. I acknowledge the hard work done by chief executive officer Amgad Botros as well as the St Marys Leagues Club board in making Skypeak Adventures a tourism icon in Western Sydney. Skypeak has been lobbying me for some time to apply for tourism signage on the M4 to attract westbound commuters. Unfortunately, this request has been denied by the State Government. However, I look forward to supporting Skypeak in its journey and wish it the best of luck for the future.

#### **JUSTICE OF THE PEACE ERIC WILLCOCK**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (17:23):** Today I specially thank an exceptional man, Eric Willcock, who has given 14 years of outstanding service to Hornsby Library as a justice of the peace [JP]. Every Tuesday Eric would volunteer his time to authenticate documents for residents of the local community. He was a dedicated volunteer, often staying longer hours to assist if another JP was unable to attend a session. Eric has been a JP for more than 50 years and has helped so many people with his kind and supportive service, establishing himself as a friendly face in the local community. In September Eric decided to retire, and I thank him for the invaluable role he has played in our community. Our community has been built on the back of volunteers like Mr Willcock. People like him have made the Hornsby shire so special. I thank him for his service and the work he has done to make Hornsby one of the best places in Australia.

#### **KARI FOSTER CARE SERVICE**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:24):** On Friday 22 September I had the pleasure of touring Kari's amazing facility in Liverpool. Kari, which is a non-government organisation, was established in 1999. Today it is the largest provider of Aboriginal foster care in Australia. It operates a range of community support, foster care, family support, education, capacity building and corporate engagement programs across three sites: Liverpool, Penrith and Roseberry. Shortly, Kari will be launching the Kari Foundation. This new program will further assist children and young people in its care, providing them with the skills they need to become leaders in the community. I thank Mr Paul Ralph, the outgoing chief executive officer and now director, and Ms Casey Ralph, the newly appointed chief executive officer, for enabling me to see firsthand the fantastic work being undertaken by the hardworking and caring staff at Kari.

#### **WINGHAM AKOOSTIK FESTIVAL TENTH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:25):** I invite members to the Wingham Akoostik Festival, which will be celebrating its tenth birthday with three days of music, at the Wingham Showground this weekend. The Manning Valley's favourite family-friendly music event boasts yet another huge line-up of world-class entertainers, including Kasey Chambers, Russel Morris, Eurogliders, Killing Heidi's Ella Hooper and many others. I congratulate Donna Ballard, Kevin Ballard and the committee members. The committee of eight volunteers is assisted by more 100 others over the festival weekend each October. The plans for the Wingham Akoostik Festival were first laid in 2006 and the first festival was held in 2007 at Central Park. The organisers have created a relaxed and friendly festival vibe, which attracts a growing following. They also receive State government funding.

### HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:26):** As we sit in this House today, students across New South Wales are preparing for the Higher School Certificate examinations, which commence next Monday. I wish all students in the Cabramatta electorate the best of luck for these final tests in their formal schooling life. They have been studying hard all year and I am sure that that hard work will pay off. I encourage students to get enough rest and exercise and try not to get too anxious. All anyone can ask is that they do their best. I congratulate the year 12 students of 2017 and their parents and, most importantly, their teachers for the monumental contribution they have made in preparing students for their final exams. I wish each and every student taking part in this year's Higher School Certificate examinations the best of luck.

### NEW SOUTH WALES LEGACY JUNIOR PUBLIC SPEAKING AWARD

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:26):** Today I recognise Hastings Secondary College student Patch Rudd for reaching the semifinals of the 2017 New South Wales Legacy Junior Public Speaking award. Patch was among 24 students aged 12 to 14 years from across the State who contested the speaking award. He spoke for five minutes on climate change in the topic of choice category and three minutes on a given topic. Patch is a talented student. In 2016 he took out the Write4Fun national short story competition, beating 9,000 other entrants. He also placed second in the Newcastle Permanent Primary School Mathematics Competition in the same year. I congratulate Patch on his impressive academic achievements and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

### GREEK FILM FESTIVAL

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:27):** Across Australia the twenty-fourth annual Greek Film Festival is taking place this month. The Greek Film Festival plays a crucial role in fostering and maintaining Greek culture in Australia and facilitates cross-cultural exchange and dialogue. This year that is particularly evident, with films that explore the experiences of Hellenic Jewry, Syrian refugees, and Turkish Cypriots. The Greek Film Festival is also a significant platform through which Australian filmmakers are promoted and Greek-Australian stories are celebrated in an international market. This year students from primary and secondary schools can submit short films in Greek to the festival. Initiatives and projects such as this ensure that our cultural heritage is passed on to the next generation. In that context, I celebrate that the number of students who did Modern Greek extension for the Higher School Certificate increased last year. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Greek Orthodox community of New South Wales, President Harry Danalis, the board and volunteers, and particularly Nia Karteris, chair of the Greek Film Festival.

### NATIONAL DRAGON BOAT RACING SQUAD

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (17:28):** Congratulations go to Nerida Millward of Brave Hearts and Lisa Smallbone, Graeme Nugent and Ray Olsson of the Warriors on their selection in the national dragon boat racing squad heading to China to represent Australia at the thirteenth World Nations Championships, which commences on 18 October in Dianchi Lake, Kunming. While the Brave Hearts Club has a strong association with supporting those living with cancer, dragon boat racing has become a local community success story, with border teams performing to the highest levels in competitions across Australia. I wish these representatives and the entire Auroras team every success over the six days of the championships festival.

### PACIFIC ISLAND FESTIVAL

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:29):** I recognise the inaugural Pacific Island Festival held at Liverpool on 7 and 8 October 2017. The two-day event aimed to provide the opportunity to all Pacific Islanders to showcase their culture, products, and way of life to the broader community. It was an exhibition of the vibrant multiculturalism that is a characteristic of the Liverpool region. I congratulate the Pacific Island Carnival, the group that organised the festival. I particularly acknowledge Sharmila Prakash for her ongoing efforts. I also note the presence at the event of a representative of the Tonga High Commissioner and supporters such as Harish Prasad and also Prakash Chandra from Navtarang Media. The festival also featured some spectacular performances from the Matavai Cultural Arts group. It was a pleasure to be invited and the event was a great success.

### BOWRAL HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS TEAM

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (17:29):** I recognise the outstanding achievements of the Bowral High School athletics team. Last month the team competed at the regional championships in typically cold and wet conditions in our nation's capital. The competition went ahead, with the rain holding off long enough for students to do both the school and themselves proud. From those regional championships, no less than 12 Bowral High School students qualified to compete for the South Coast regional team at the Combined High Schools State

Athletics Championship, which was held at Sydney Olympic Park. The 12 students were: Raiden Crowe, Boyd Roberts, Daniel Webb, Lachlan Moloney, Sebastian Hernandez, Alex Martin, Kaleb Bell, Alicia Todd, Taylor Jones, Kara Davis, Brooke Todd, and Baila Hernandez. I congratulate them all.

### HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:30):** I take this opportunity to wish all year 12 students across New South Wales, and particularly those in my electorate of Canterbury, who are starting the Higher School Certificate [HSC] on Monday the very best. Although the HSC exams can be a daunting and stressful time, I urge students to remember that although it is an important opportunity to challenge themselves and move on to the next phase of education, it is not the only opportunity. As a community and a country we celebrate so many people who did not let their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank define them or who left university when they realised it was not for them. I say to all students: do not stress, have a great time, and good luck.

### PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:31):** I recognise the Port Macquarie-Hastings Breast Cancer Support Group and its convener, Judith Hutchesson. On Friday 15 September, the group held its Mini Field of Women event at Port Macquarie Library. The Mini Field of Women event consisted of 100 pink silhouettes of women as a tribute to those who have lost their lives to breast cancer. The event also marked the group's fourteenth anniversary. The group meets once a month and anyone diagnosed with breast cancer is welcome for relaxed and face-to-face support. I pay tribute to convener Judith Hutchesson for her inspired efforts in leading the Port Macquarie-Hastings Breast Cancer Support group over the past 10 years.

### SPELLING BEE WINNER FREDERIK THAI

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:31):** I say my sincerest c-o-n-g-r-a-t-u-l-a-t-i-o-n-s to young Frederik Thai, a spelling genius from Harrington Street Public School in my electorate. Nine-year-old Frederik is in the running to be the State's best speller after winning the regional finals of the New South Wales Premier's Spelling Bee, beating more than 3,200 other students from 1,000 schools. It is not Frederik's first Spelling Bee success, as he has won competitions every year he has been at school. Frederik is working his way through the dictionary in preparation. He practices at home, reads a lot, and his mum tries to trick him to spell random words. I congratulate all students in the Cabramatta electorate who participated in the Spelling Bee competition. We wish Frederik well in the New South Wales finals, but he already is a c-h-a-m-p-i-o-n.

### *Private Members' Statements*

### CANTERBURY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:33):** The people of New South Wales have had to face the consequences of the poor decision-making of the O'Farrell, Baird, and Berejiklian governments for far too long—electricity privatisation, the greyhound racing ban, the botched council amalgamations, WestConnex, stadium funding, and the Fire and Emergency Services levy to name a few. The Opposition has stood up for ordinary Australians, for fairness, and for transparency. The potential infrastructure and planning disasters that will come with this Government's overdevelopment agenda will be the hardest of these fights but one of the most important that we will see in years.

The Government's plan to burden communities with hundreds and thousands of apartments over the next 20 years is seriously out of touch and has even divided the Berejiklian Government's Cabinet. This destruction of local communities and the unnecessary strain on infrastructure even has the members for Ryde and Drummoyne rejecting their party's policy. The reality for locals in my electorate of Canterbury is equally dire. In the 2016 financial year the figure for new development approvals was more than 1,700 in Canterbury, whereas the agreed target for approvals was about 800 new dwellings. Overall, in Canterbury there have been 2,500 approvals over target.

I am very concerned about the planning department approving the former Canterbury Council's local environment plan. The urban renewal strategy is packing in thousands more dwellings without infrastructure and green space. There are now "priority precincts"—a new term that describes taking planning powers away from local communities—that are controlled by the Minister for Planning and the Department of Planning and Environment. The council has a Canterbury Road corridor strategy. Not only have these plans been heavily criticised by the Opposition and many community and action groups but Liberal voters are also very concerned about them and there is even a revolt in the Government. These documents do not take into consideration the needs of Sydney residents in relation to schools, hospitals or open space. The member for Drummoyne said in the media a few weeks ago regarding priority precincts:

My personal belief is it should be totally abandoned, we've got it wrong.

Minister Dominello and the member for Epping have also criticised plans for overdevelopment. It was reported that Minister Elliott infamously used unparliamentary language when expressing his view on this policy. This unsustainable rate of approvals is the result of poor planning and consultation between local communities, local councils and the State Government. Residents in my area were assured that over-station development would not occur. However, the Government has broken its promises. Such examples are evidence of its miscommunication with local communities and the council. Along with constant backflips, this is causing massive concern in my community. I disapprove of high levels of overdevelopment in my local area, which are definitely a symptom of poor government planning, poor strategy, poor regulation and poor policy.

Having been the shadow Minister for Housing, I support affordable housing, new housing and innovative housing. There are some very good plans available, but the Government is doing a quick fix and burdening our communities with massive overdevelopment. The findings of the Canterbury Road review strategy, commissioned by the former administrator of the Canterbury-Bankstown Council, were damning. It made a series of recommendations that the Government has ignored. I am concerned that there is no interface between and a lack of communication around the Canterbury Road corridor, for which "junctures" are proposed, and the urban renewal strategy. I urge the Government to revisit this. I urge the new council—whose councillors were democratically elected on a platform of no overdevelopment—to communicate with its constituents. I am sure the Labor councillors who were elected, of whom I am very proud, will do so. I call on them to revisit Canterbury Road as an innovation centre, expand Canterbury Hospital, expand aged care and revisit the idea of community hubs.

### NICK TOOTH MEMORIAL RUGBY TENS TOURNAMENT

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (17:38):** On Saturday 7 October the third annual Nick Tooth Memorial Rugby Tens Tournament was held at the Quirindi Rugby Club. It was hosted by the Tooth family—Nick's parents, Grahame and Julie, and his sister, Alex, with whom I have the great privilege of working in this place and whom I consider a friend—in loving memory of Nick Tooth. Nick passed away, aged 25, from a head injury sustained in a tackle while playing for the Quirindi Lions in a Central North first grade match in April 2015. To quote the Nick Tooth Foundation website:

The Toothy Tens tournament is a weekend dedicated to a bloke that everyone felt close to as soon as they met him. The tournament is one way of making sure his memory and philosophy live on through the sport he loved. To quote some people who have spoken of Nick and to summarise the great calibre of man that Nick was, Sam Carter said:

He touched a lot of people's lives in so many ways. There was nothing bad anyone could say about Toothy.

Wallabies halfback Nick Phipps said:

He was a really good bloke and very popular in the Rugby community. He was a great man. A guy who you could have a good time with and a laugh.

Edward Nankivell said the tournament is to honour one of the finest sportsmen and gentlemen that he has ever met. The Nick Tooth Foundation was set up in 2016 to raise funds and awareness for sports-related brain injuries. Nick's family does not want anyone to have to go through losing a loved one through playing rugby union, which is why they have worked tirelessly through the Nick Tooth Foundation. Sixteen teams from New South Wales and Victoria compete in the event to celebrate Nick's life and to raise money for world-first research into concussion management in sport and for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. Hundreds of people attend the friendly tournament to remember Nick and to play the game that he loved. There is no doubt that a great time is had by all. People travel from far and wide to attend or play. I have read that the tournament is fast becoming a feature of country rugby's calendar.

I thank the teams that supported such a wonderful and worthy day: Pickled Porkers from Parkes; Team Ramrod, Quirindi; Quirindi Lions; Tamworth Magpies; Narrabri Blue Boars; Bland Bin Chickens, Bland; the Southern Highland Stags, Bowral; UHB from Scone in the Upper Hunter Valley; QGS Moits, Sydney; Green Bay Packers, Sydney; Albies Old Boys, Armidale; Walgett Woodies; Marcus Oldham College, Geelong, Victoria; Eastern Suburbs Rugby Club, Sydney; Colleagues Rugby Club, Woollahra; and Yarraman All Stars, Quirindi. This year a blue card was introduced into the tournament. The blue card allows referees to remove from the field players who are showing signs of concussion. Players at junior and senior levels will need to pass a set test based on medical guidelines before returning to the field. The blue card was trialled in the Hunter, Newcastle and Australian Capital Territory regions last year. As a result of this trial, the Australian Rugby Union [ARU] introduced a blue card for the Australian Schoolboys Championships in July, which was the first time the card had been used in a proper tournament.

The ARU has confirmed that the blue card will be used during the National Rugby Championship and the Women's University Sevens next year. The ARU is consulting with Sydney rugby union to implement the card in all competitions. Lachlan Clark from Australian rugby said that the ARU will also assist to educate

coaches, first aid personnel and match officials as well as provide a competition management system that will log all concussion cases. World Rugby is also keeping a close eye on this awareness tool. I make special mention that player wellbeing and safety have been greatly improved by the blue card and is a great initiative, although it is one we do not want to have to use. The Tooth Foundation, the Ian Tucker Foundation and the Australian Rugby Foundation joined forces to provide financial support to the Australian Rugby Union for the blue card. The aim is that it will be a national program. The Nick Tooth Foundation has been noted particularly for its research and education on the blue card. That is a commendable achievement. Well done, Graham, Julie and Alex on your efforts. We commend you.

### MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE EVENTS

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:43):** Tonight I speak about events in the Myall Lakes electorate. I often talk in this House about the wonderful natural attributes of Myall Lakes, but tonight I will go through just some of the events, among many, my electorate holds. The Akoostik Music Festival, a three-day festival, will be held this weekend. The State Government has supported that festival with events funding for the past three years, but that funding will cease next year. The Old Bar Beach Festival was held on the October long weekend down at the mighty Old Bar Beach. The festival was able to get itself on the calendar through three years of State government events funding.

The Old Bar Beach Festival attracts 35,000 people over the long weekend. The festival runs the kombi challenge, where participants try to break the world record for the largest number of kombis. In March each year at Tuncurry the Opera by the Lake is held. On 4 November at Tuncurry the Lakeside Festival, a celebration of music and fine food, is held. That is another opportunity for members to travel to the Great Lakes area. On 28 October the Myall Lakes Community Awards will be held, where volunteers and other people in the community are recognised. This year the Premier will be helping me present the awards. Of course, many towns commemorate Anzac Day each year. On Australia Day in Forster and Taree we conduct citizenship ceremonies.

On 29 October at the John Neal Oval in Taree the Manning Valley Rescue Squad Car Show, which is getting bigger and bigger every year, is held. All funds raised go to the volunteer rescue squad, which was set up in 1978. Before the Pacific Highway was upgraded in that area the squad would attend up to 28 fatalities every year. For every fatal accident there would be half a dozen serious accidents. The squad still attends accidents, but certainly not as many as it did in those days. Virtually every weekend in every village throughout the Mid North Coast area there are markets. Last weekend was the Taree Show. It was great to be there and to be a part of it. On 18 November the Bulahdelah Show will be held. In March each year the Wingham and Nambucca shows are held. Local shows provide an opportunity for people who live in urban areas to see what is happening in the country and see the produce displayed. It is a great chance for people to get together and enjoy each other's company.

The area hosts the Dragon Boat Regatta and in December it hosts the National Party North Coast conference. I am sure the member for Liverpool will be looking forward to that. In August the Regional Equestrian Festival, which is growing, is held. People come from all over Australia to attend and on the last occasion an Australian Olympic competitor was present. When it comes to sporting events the Myall Lakes electorate holds State and national championships in hockey, rugby, rugby league, equestrian events, sailing, shooting, soccer and rowing. These events are in one of the most beautiful places in Australia.

The Myall Lakes electorate is internationally renowned as Australia's water playground, with Bombah, Broadwater, Myall Lakes, Smiths Lake, Wallis Lake, the tributaries, all the islands, the Manning River, 156 kilometres of navigable waterways and the only delta formation entrance in the Southern Hemisphere. Inland is the Ellenborough Falls, one of the longest single-drop waterfalls in the Southern Hemisphere. There are almost 200 kilometres of pristine beaches in the area. Ellenborough Falls has award-winning accommodation, from camping to five star, and restaurants and cafes. In relation to produce, one-third of New South Wales fresh milk comes from the Manning Valley and approximately one-third of the Sydney rock oysters for the Australian market and 85 per cent of blue swimmer crabs come out of Wallis Lake. The Myall Lakes electorate has wonderful, natural food, great restaurants, great places to stay and pristine beaches. It is the place to go and there is always an event on.

### LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE RAILWAY STATIONS CAR PARKING

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:48):** I report to the House on a serious issue that is increasingly affecting more and more of the residents living in the electorate of Liverpool, and that is the lack of adequate parking facilities at railway stations on the South West Rail Link, particularly at Edmondson Park and Leppington stations. The Government has spent considerable time and effort telling us all how very clever it has been in developing the railway line to Leppington. It is a pity it could not get the parking right. I have spoken before about structural issues, speed restrictions and electrical problems at stabling yards affecting the South West Rail Link. Recently the Government claimed it has been increasing services to the station concerned, although that is

disputed. The immediate point I make is that for many people it is already quite difficult to access whatever railway services exist on this line because there is nowhere convenient for them to park when they drive to the station.

Two stations in particular that are a problem for my constituents are Leppington and Edmondson Park. Quite a significant number of residents who live in the electorate I represent travel to these stations to commute daily or at least regularly. There are parking areas at both stations. The problem is that there are no multistorey parking stations as there are at other stations such as Holsworthy or Warwick Farm. The logical time to have built such structures would have been when the stations were being constructed. That would have achieved some efficiencies and cost savings, but that was not done. The end result is that shortly after the train line started operation the parking areas reached capacity. The level of growth in the area made that entirely predictable. The areas surrounding the station are "no parking" areas. If one does not find a parking spot in the parking area, one faces a hike of a considerable distance to get to the station. This inevitably leads to commuters, who cannot get into the parking area, parking on footpaths or in "no parking" areas. That has been an ongoing problem for some time.

The local council and the police have conducted parking raids in these areas. The result has been a plethora of people coming to my office complaining and, in several instances, seeking for me to make representations about parking fines. I know a similar phenomenon has occurred in the office of the member for Macquarie Fields and in the office of our Federal colleague the member for Werriwa. What makes it worse is that in some cases infringement notices are not left on windscreens but posted to car owners. One of my constituents received multiple fines the week after he had parked in the area. However, the problem goes beyond just simple inconvenience. It is good public policy to encourage commuters to use trains rather than private vehicles to travel outside Liverpool. The lack of adequate parking at these stations flies in the face of that entirely sensible public policy priority.

There is another advantage in pursuing multistorey car parks at Leppington and Edmondson Park. Nearby there are no other large agglomerations of people needing parking. That means that if stations were constructed here they would not have the issues of, say, the station at Warwick Farm which is occupied very early by a large number of cars used by people who drive to the area daily to work at the nearby Liverpool Hospital. I am not at all critical of hospital staff for doing that. They are, after all, behaving quite rationally and sensibly, but it is not a problem one would encounter at Edmondson Park or Leppington.

This is a problem I have raised before. In February last year I made written representations to Minister Constance. In March last year I spoke in this place about the issue and I asked a question on notice. The Government's disinterest has been overwhelming. Government funding exists for such a purpose. The Government, however, has resolved to construct multistorey car parks at other sites rather than at Leppington or Edmondson Park. The North Shore is a much greater priority for the Government than is Liverpool. A number of things need to happen. Most obviously, the Government needs to fund the multistorey parking stations at Leppington and Edmondson Park. These areas and areas such as West Hoxton, Prestons, Carnes Hill and Hoxton Park are just as important as sites on the North Shore.

#### **CASTLE HILL ARTS SOCIETY REFLECTIONS EXHIBITION**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (17:51):** I have spoken in this place before of the community spirit that resonates throughout the Hills shire and this spirit was in prominent display yet again last Friday night when I was invited to open the Reflections exhibition by the Castle Hill Arts Society. Each year, since its foundation in 1967, at Christmas and on Mothers Day the Castle Hill Arts Society showcases the work of its members, with the contrasting textures on offer looking simply captivating. However, the most well-known exhibitions held in the Castle Hill Arts Society are in the warmer times of spring during the Orange Blossom Festival. And so it was that the Reflections exhibition took centre stage this year. The exhibition offered budding artists from The Hills an opportunity to showcase their talents. Many of the artists refined their talents through the many classes offered at the Castle Hill Arts Society, including mixed media basics, landscapes, botanical features and contemporary abstract works.

In excess of 100 locally produced artworks were exhibited, produced by local artists such as Julie Partridge, Sandra Yeo and Julie Bhatia. Those sold throughout the exhibition resulted in money raised for my favourite worthy cause, NSW Police Legacy. Just as art fills a void by expressing what words are unable to explain, NSW Police Legacy provides for families who experience their own void through the loss of a family member in the line of duty. It is appropriate that the Castle Hill Arts Society offers regular art classes for those with a passion for the canvas, given the largest financial commitment of NSW Police Legacy is the more than \$200,000 provided each year for educational grants for legatees. The society's fundraising efforts for NSW Police



Legacy stand proudly alongside iconic fundraising events such as Legacy's Kokoda Trek, the City to Surf and NSW Police Legacy's marquee annual event, the Blue Ribbon Ball.

I look forward to the day when the society's annual fundraiser grows to such an extent that it stands alongside these events in popularity and prominence on the NSW Police Legacy calendar. I congratulate Judy Adam, a 37-year veteran of the society, on organising this wonderful event. Our community is growing at a considerable pace, with more than 1,000 new residents moving into the Hills shire every few weeks, and our arts audience will continue to flourish. As our arts community continues to demonstrate great sensitivity and care in its vision for and support of our NSW Police Force, I know that the future of the Castle Hill Arts Society and its support of NSW Police Legacy is in good hands. I am looking forward to seeing the artwork of our next crop of young artists on display in 2018.

### COFFS HARBOUR SHOWGROUND

**Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (17:54):** I draw the attention of the House to an issue in my electorate that has been ongoing since long before 2014. The Labor Government placed the Coffs Harbour Showground in administration. I had no doubt at the time that it was looking to commercialise this 17.6 hectare site at the centre of Coffs Harbour. It was a cash grab. When the Coalition came to government, I approached the relevant Ministers and asked that the showground be taken from the administrator and placed in the hands of a trust, and that is what happened.

Unbeknownst to me, the then Minister for North Coast and Leader of The Nationals, Andrew Stoner, handed the caravan park attached to the showground to the North Coast Holiday Parks at Coffs Harbour. The caravan park was established in the 1970s as a fundraiser to ensure that we had the best showground on the North Coast, and at the time we did. We realised what had happened only when the operators fenced off a section of the showground, which was covered by a number of part dedications. That meant the large amenities block could not be used for functions held at the showground. I contacted the then chairman of the NSW Crown Holiday Parks Trust, who agreed that the fence should be pulled down so that the facilities could be used by showground event patrons as they had done in the past. However, in the process the caravan park operators knocked down another toilet and amenities block that was not in the gazetted area.

The original area was gazetted as part of the caravan park on 28 June 2013. I do not believe that the then Deputy Premier—the now disgraced Deputy Premier—had the right to do that without reference to the local community. He then submitted a further amendment to the part dedication because I had drawn to the Government's attention that the caravan park operator had knocked down a toilet block that was not in the dedicated area. The amendment is in *New South Wales Government Gazette No. 79*, and it includes the site of the other toilet block. That meant the NSW Crown Holiday Parks Trust, as agreed with the then chairman, could not reconstruct the facility, so we submitted alternative plans.

I have since written to the current chairman of the trust, Wendy Machin, asking her to visit the showground. She responded today saying that the board had visited and looked at a few issues and that she would meet with me in Sydney. However, I believe that board members should inspect the showground so that they understand that the caravan park provided the income we need to support and to upgrade the site. The showground needs about \$200,000 or \$300,000 worth of capital upgrades, including a new fence at the front and the replacement of dangerous light poles. However, the showground no longer has sufficient income to undertake that work. It cannot raise that money even though it is extremely well utilised by many groups. It needs the income that it previously raised by operating the caravan park.

A few months ago I spoke to the caravan park manager, who told me that the holiday parks had agreed to share the profits from the caravan park side of the showground with the trust to give it a steady income. It annoys me that that has not come to fruition. I am asking for the Minister to look at this issue and come to the realisation that the showground is a well utilised public facility that needs a steady income so that it does not have to beg the Crown Lands Reserve Trust for money each year. It can fund itself through the caravan park. I would dearly like control of the caravan park to revert to the trust so it can regulate it properly and ensure it is not overblown with staff wages. It can contract it out, receive a decent income and maintain the showground as the best showground on the North Coast.

### BOMADERRY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:00):** I am a proud product of public education. I am equally proud of the history of Bomaderry Primary School and Bomaderry High School, both of which recently celebrated important milestones. Indeed, I remember being at the 125-year celebrations for Bomaderry Primary School. I still have the memorial carafe from that important occasion. Tonight I place on record my congratulations to Bomaderry Primary School for 150 years and Bomaderry High School for 50 years of proud public education.

I had the honour of addressing the commemorative assemblies at both schools and I cannot express the pride I felt when talking to this generation of students, having once sat exactly where they do.

My message to students at both schools was simple: You can be whatever you want be, no matter your background or circumstance. You have great teachers who are passionate about education and with hard work you can reach your full potential. Not everyone will be able to own the best car, have the best house or work in the best job, but everyone deserves the best possible shot at achieving it. Attending school in Bomaderry gives you the opportunity to do anything, including coming back to school as a local teacher, serving your community as a local doctor or nurse, serving as the chief of navy, defending high-profile legal cases on the international stage or even becoming the local member of Parliament.

The development of Bomaderry township was accelerated in the early 1860s when the settlement became the focal point of the precarious packhorse and bridle track from Kangaroo Valley. In about 1867 its importance increased when the track was linked by ferry to Cambewarra across the river. That was an important year in the history of the development of public education in Bomaderry. In that year the small school, described in an inspector's report as "a small, dilapidated barn near the Bomaderry ferry", was officially recognised as a public school by the Council of Education. Bomaderry Public School was probably more fortunate than most as its first teacher, Mrs Maria Kennedy, the wife of a local tenant farmer, was incredibly well regarded.

The Bomaderry Public School assembly was overseen by the articulate vice-captain Harper Hancock and the welcome to country was generously delivered by Mrs Pat Lester. Students went back in time to 1867 and chronicled the school's development: school captain Violent Venn played the part of Bomaderry Primary's first teacher, Maria Kennedy, and year 3 student Keely Lewis played the part of a 1937 student. The education of the region's Aboriginal people is an important part of Bomaderry Public School and it was wonderful to hear from Alison Aldridge from the Aboriginal Education Office and year 6 student Ivan Walker. Current school vice-captain Peggy Chambers played the role of Mrs Morison, a teacher from 1967.

I was pleased to hear an address from my former year 6 teacher Mr Allan Donougher. Everyone who was fortunate enough to have Mr Donougher as their teacher remembers the wonderful learning environment he created. Mr Donougher is just one example of the outstanding teachers at Bomaderry. We heard from current year 6 student Eline Hoffmann about her perspective as a student of the school. To cap off the assembly, we heard from Ms Jennifer Arnott and Mr Benjamin Green who were former students and are now teachers at Bomaderry Primary School.

I thank current principal Dionne Hanbidge and my former principal, Bob Lavender, who were in attendance. Both are outstanding educators and Bomaderry Primary School is better and stronger for their distinguished and passionate service. I also commend Rosemary Sutherland for her hard work in compiling the Bomaderry Public School sesquicentennial publication, which records many of the events, memories and, most importantly, the people and characters at the heart of the school. I acknowledge the hardworking members of the 150 year organising committee: Dionne Hambridge, Leanne Speer, Rebecca Anderson, Trisha Booth, Allan Donougher, Kirsten Harford, Tracey Ison, Sharon Martin, Natalie Ward and Allison Aldridge.

Later on that day, Bomaderry High School celebrated its 150th anniversary. The school joined in for a special assembly that showed off a plethora of talent, with student performances and the Rock Eisteddfod showcase. The audience heard addresses from Jo Parsons, who is the deputy principal and my former year 7 year advisor. Jo is an impressive, caring and dedicated teacher, and I am pleased to see that she is still changing the lives of students for the better. I also enjoyed hearing from a legend of Bomaderry High School, Mr Ken Arthur. Ken is a former student and passionate PDHPE teacher who is much admired by all of his students.

As part of the celebrations, the school unveiled a time capsule that went back into the depths of its history. I also acknowledge Principal Mr Ian Morris, Parents and Citizens Association organiser Gina Wilson-Burns and open day organiser Stephen Flack. On Saturday 16 September I was pleased to attend a special fiftieth anniversary dinner at Bomaderry Bowling Club with Chief of Navy Tim Barrett and Gaynor Peters. I sincerely congratulate Gina Wilson-Burns on putting this event together. She is a great credit to our community and to Bomaderry High School.

#### **ROCKDALE RANGERS RUGBY UNION CLUB**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (18:05):** I pay tribute to the Rockdale Rangers Rugby Union Club, a fantastic juniors club in my electorate. The Rockdale Rugby Union Club has served Rockdale for more than 60 years. It has catered to a wide range of teams and served as a place for the rugby union community to come together in St George. This long and proud history includes one memorable season where I played under 10s at the age of eight. It was my first season of competition rugby union and I had signed up with my older brother

Bill and my cousin "Chicken" George. I can say that at that age an extra year makes a big difference in contact sport.

I wish I could tell the House that it was a good year for Rockdale rugby, but I am sad to say that it was terrible for the under 10s. We struggled to muster up an odd cocktail of 15 players every weekend and we lost every time to the fabulous sides of the eastern suburbs such as Matraville by 88, 66 or 55 to nil. The only way we could slow the scoring down was to walk slowly to the kick-off after a try. Even more shamefully, we had not scored a try for the whole year when, in the last game of the season, I got across the line and knocked the ball on. The crowd thought that we had scored our first try and was so jubilant that the referee awarded the points on the basis that he did not want to let the crowd down.

Thankfully, Rockdale Rugby Union is doing much better these days with a fantastic list of achievements by its teams in the 2017 season. That includes the under 6s coming runners-up in the Southern Districts Minis Gala Day and the under 6s winning the Southern Districts Minis Gala Day. The under 8s had an incredible season, winning the Southern Districts Minis Gala Day, the Harbord Harlequins Cup, the Oatley Gala Day, the Canberra Junior 7s and coming in runners-up in the King of the Hills. The under 9s won the Canberra Junior 7s in their age group and played up to the under 10s in the Sydney Juniors Rugby Union Friday night competition. The under 10s won the Sydney Juniors Rugby Friday night competition and the Canberra Junior 7s. The under 11s won the Sydney Juniors Rugby Union Friday night competition and the Sunday competition in the A-division. The under 12s won the Sydney Junior Rugby Union Friday night competition and made it to the semifinal in the Canberra Junior 7s. Furthermore, a large number of players were selected for the Southern Districts representative team this year and last year.

For a small, local club without the heavyweight sponsors that support many of the larger junior rugby union clubs, the Rockdale Rangers truly punch above their weight. This is only possible thanks to the dedicated contribution of a great team of volunteers. I acknowledge club President Neeraj Chand, Vice President Chris Mitchell, Treasurer Sheila Mitchell and Secretary Michelle Sullivan. The executive, the parents, the coaches and others have built a strong culture, held great social and rugby events and built a real sense of club spirit. Part of the recent success of the Rockdale Rugby Union Club is built on a strong sense of duty to our local community and supporting families from all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. As far as I am aware, Rockdale Rugby Union is the only juniors club in New South Wales that offers free registration.

The club places a strong emphasis on developing its players while maintaining a commitment, which is at the heart of the club, of ensuring its players are having fun and enjoying themselves in a safe environment. Sport is important to the development of our young people. While it is fantastic to see the growth of football, which is hugely popular in my community, it is nice to see other sports are available. It is particularly pleasing to see that the Rockdale Rugby Union Club is performing more than a little bit better than when I was a kid. Children gain many benefits from playing sport. It promotes their physical activity, teaches them about teamwork, and helps them to develop problem-solving skills which have strong flow-on effects in their education. I am proud to support the Rockdale Rugby Union Club. I look forward to its expansion and continuing strong performance.

#### *Visitors*

### **VISITORS**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I welcome Patrick Provost, the son of the member for Tweed, to the Chamber this afternoon. I hope he enjoys the proceedings.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### **MACQUARIE FIELDS LOCAL AREA COMMAND**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (18:10):** Every day people in my electorate and no doubt people in other electorates ask themselves this fundamental question: Is my community safe? The great work of our local police officers means the answer is a resounding yes. I can only hope that the answer remains yes once the Government implements its plan to merge the Macquarie Fields and Campbelltown local area commands into the new and larger Campbelltown City Local Area Command. It is potentially another cost-cutting exercise. I will follow the implementation of this merger plan with a keen eye to ensure that my community does not lose a single officer on the beat.

Macquarie Fields is a growing community, with thousands of new residents moving to the area every year. Our residents must have the confidence that their local police have the resources to do their jobs well without the pressure of cost cutting that this Government is inflicting on them. This merger decision makes me reflect on the DNA of this Government and its track record on service delivery in my local area, which is atrocious. The DNA of this Government is to slash and burn. We cannot trust that it will deliver basic services to my community.

Exhibit 1 is the closure of the local motor registry offices, including one in Ingleburn in my electorate. Residents were promised extended hours at the Service NSW office in Gregory Hills and a pop-up kiosk at a local shopping centre. Both of those promises have followed the same path of many other Government promises—they have been broken. It is a service delivery strategy that has already been marred by a budget blowout of \$104 million. A damning KPMG report revealed that taxpayers will be forced to pay for this bungled mess for more than 10 years.

Let us look at exhibit 2. Macquarie Fields train station has no lift, which means it is the only station in my area that does not meet basic accessibility requirements. I have observed parents with prams and elderly people struggle to get up the stairs. This Government has failed them. People with a disability or mobility difficulties are forced to travel to Ingleburn or Glenfield to access public transport. This Government has failed to deliver my local area with basic services. Not surprisingly, exhibit 3 is the Hurlstone Agricultural High School. The agricultural education of local students will suffer because the Government wants to move the school and sell off its 140 hectares of farmland to developers, which members of the Liberal-Nationals Government repeatedly stated in this Chamber they would not do. It is a greedy cash grab at my community's expense.

Time and again this Government pounces on any chance to fill its coffers at the expense of local services. That brings me back to the Government's plan to merge the Macquarie Fields and Campbelltown local area commands. The Government wants us to believe that the merger plans will deliver better outcomes, but from the examples I have highlighted it is clear we cannot trust it. Police numbers must not be reduced as a result of this merger plan. In fact, given our society's heightened need for security and the area's growing population, I call on the Liberal Government to increase the number of police officers on the local beat. The Government also needs to guarantee that the police station at Macquarie Fields will remain fully operational, with no reduction in staffing or opening hours.

I put on the record today that I will be fighting to make sure my electorate does not suffer because this Government has chosen to prioritise the bottom line over our community's safety. There is no doubt in my mind that the evidence is firmly stacked against this Government when it comes to its failure to deliver basic services to my local community. Indeed, there is no doubt in my mind that, based on the evidence, any jury would find this Government guilty of the charge of short-changing my community on the basic services they have paid for and indeed deserve.

### **WOLLONDILLY HEALTH ALLIANCE**

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (18:15):** I wish to speak of a fantastic community health initiative in the Wollondilly region which I think will prove impressive to anyone who has an interest in the provision of health services in a unique and innovative way. The Wollondilly Health Alliance was established three years ago and is a partnership between the New South Wales State Government, Wollondilly Shire Council, the South Western Sydney Primary Health Network and the South Western Sydney Local Health District. The Wollondilly Health Alliance was set up in 2014 with the expressed desire to bring these organisations together with a vision to create a healthier community through quicker and easier access to quality health services where the community has a say in the development and provision of those services.

It has been a personal pleasure of mine to watch the way those involved with the alliance have gone about the task of delivering on their vision within the overall framework of their charter. One of the greatest criticisms or sources of negative feedback we receive as a government, or opposition or within the health system, is that somehow the system is too large and individuals get lost in the "machine". It is true that the massive scale of any health system is occasionally its own worst enemy when the focus is reduced to the individual level. It can at times be a struggle to recognise and act individually within such a large and sometimes impersonal system.

This is where the Wollondilly Health Alliance shines. One of its key aims is to get the whole community to work together to improve health outcomes and services in Wollondilly. I note the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Health who has jurisdiction over my area is present in the Chamber, and I thank her for her support, particularly in recent days in relation to renal dialysis services in the Southern Highlands and Wollondilly shire. The alliance also aims to provide a way to join up the various health and allied services in the region to deliver very specific outcomes for our diverse local residents. One of the alliance's proudest achievements is the process of engaging and empowering individuals in their own care. It also aims to take a preventative approach to illness, whereby patients do not see their conditions worsen to the point where they require hospitalisation.

As I have said, one of the key aims of the alliance is to get the local council, service providers and entire community to work together to improve the health outcomes of the region. How this works is that the alliance brings together the member agencies of which I have already spoken and puts them in touch with service providers who connect and work together to deliver more specific outcomes for customers, consumers and carers. They have already racked up some very impressive achievements. By taking advantage of modern technology they have

trialled a tele-monitoring project which allows communities to self-manage chronic health conditions and their healthcare needs. When I was the Minister for Mental Health we trialled a number of telehealth initiatives in rural and regional areas. I am glad to say the Government took those up and they are across the State today.

Video conferencing has broken down the barriers and the tyranny of distance in accessing health specialists. The program is still being implemented but it is expected that it will eventually be rolled out to all general practitioners across Wollondilly. The alliance's other achievements are many and include real-time cancer patient data capture program, an "at risk" model to identify people likely to suffer a deterioration in their health, a patient information sharing model, and an expansion of the existing mobile community engagement and information service offered by the local organisation. Without doubt, one of the key programs of the alliance is Wollondilly Wellbeing. This program makes use of five pathways to wellbeing to promote mental health: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give.

Through a variety of networking opportunities the alliance has been able to create a wellbeing community which has heightened the awareness and concept of wellbeing and developed a volunteering project as an offshoot. The future looks very bright for Wollondilly Wellbeing, which is planning to branch out through schools and workplaces throughout the region and make use of the area's natural spaces and locations to enhance people's lives. Then there is the Healthy Towns project and the Wollondilly diabetes project. I think it is clear to see that in three very short years the Wollondilly Health Alliance has achieved some quite remarkable outcomes. It was a pleasure to attend the official launch in August this year and to speak on behalf of the State Government in recommitting our support for what it is doing.

In the short time I have remaining I put on record that Wollondilly is the first of the regions within the State; it connects Sydney to the rest of rural and regional New South Wales. Wollondilly has an area of 3,500 square kilometres and does not have the number of doctors that might be located in other suburbs such as Macquarie Fields or Campbelltown. Wollondilly constituents have to travel large distances to access health care. But the Government, together with the Wollondilly Health Alliance, is putting health care back into the regions, where people need it, particularly when they are most vulnerable. This is a fantastic project and I am happy to have a chat with anybody who wants to see this model rolled out across the State.

#### **KENDALL COMMUNITY OF THE YEAR AWARD TENTH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:20):** I pay tribute to the community of Kendall in the Camden Haven as the town celebrates the 10-year anniversary of being named Community of the Year. The town of Kendall was originally named Camden Heads as it is located on the Camden Haven River. It was renamed Kendall in 1891, after the Australian poet Henry Kendall. Henry Kendall lived in the area from 1875 to 1881, when he was the first forest inspector for New South Wales. The original residents of the Kendall area were the Birpai people. I take this opportunity to acknowledge their elders past and present and thank them for their custodianship.

Kendall is located three kilometres from Kew and 36 kilometres south-west of Port Macquarie via the Pacific Highway. It is one of seven villages that make up the Camden Haven region of the Port Macquarie-Hastings local government area. In 2007 the town had seen significant improvements to local infrastructure, amenities and activities, including a new op shop, the installation of a statue of Henry Kendall, public barbecue facilities, a Riding for the Disabled Association stable, the restored Kendall public wharf, Kendall Future Directions activities, improvements to the preschool gardens, a successful International Women's Day event, Bookends@Kendall and activities at the community centre.

The award in 2007 was won from more than 70 entrants in the category for communities with a population of fewer than 15,000. On 7 October 2017, my husband, Don, and I were honoured to attend a dinner at Kendall Services and Citizens Club to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the award. The guest of honour was Alison Haylett, who, at the time of the award in 2007, was coordinator of the Kendall Community Centre. Alison was instrumental in the creation of the Kendall Community Preschool, the Camden Haven Dragon Boat Club, and the local newspaper, the *Kendall Chronicle*. She contributed many hours preparing the nomination.

Not resting on their laurels after winning the award, representatives from various community groups in Kendall agreed to hold regular meetings to continue planning advancement for the benefit of their community. From this agreement they created the Kendall community networking nights, which have been held regularly ever since. The community continues to go from strength to strength. This includes improvements to the tennis club. Kendall Tennis Club is one of Australia's most awarded tennis clubs, winning New South Wales Country Club of the Year and Australia's Best Tennis Community. In recent years the club has seen the opening of three newly built hard courts, and a new clubhouse and kitchen opened this year.

Another prominent feature that has continued to expand, and which is seen as the hub of the town, is the Kendall Community Op Shop. The op shop was established in 1995 in rented premises to raise money for the construction of the Kendall pool and its surrounding facilities. The shop also paid for the construction of its current premises and will continue to be the perfect vehicle for raising funds in the small, self-sufficient community of Kendall and beyond. Congratulations to Alison Haylett and all the hardworking members of the Kendall community as they celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Community of the Year award.

### TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN CLARENCE SMITH JEFFRIES, VC

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:24):** One hundred years ago today, quite literally almost to the hour at which I speak, the early morning silence on the battlefield of Passchendaele was interrupted by the sound of machine gunfire, artillery explosions and the sad sound of young men charging to their untimely death. This was the morning of 12 October 1917, a morning that will forever be etched in Australian military history as the day one of our nation's most heroic and courageous 22-year-olds was killed. Today marks the 100th anniversary of the passing of Captain Clarence Jeffries, VC, who was gunned down as he led his company towards the German lines during the Battle of Passchendaele.

Born in Wallsend in 1894, Captain Jeffries was a young man of high standards and ideals. Upon finishing school, he apprenticed as a mining surveyor at the Abermain Collieries—Abermain being one of the villages of Cessnock—where his father was a general manager. He quickly integrated himself into the Abermain community and, despite his tender age, was widely respected and admired by his peers. He was clearly a natural leader. These leadership skills were quite beneficial when in 1908, at just 14 years of age, Captain Jeffries joined the 14th (Hunter River) Infantry Regiment as a private. Within 12 months, at the age of just 15, he was promoted to sergeant, charged with offering support and leadership to his fellow servicemen.

Following the outbreak of war in 1914, Captain Jeffries, who was now 20 years old, was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Citizens Military Force, where he was mobilised for home defence duties and instructed volunteers for the Australian Imperial Force at Newcastle and Liverpool. By 1916 he was a second lieutenant in the Australian Imperial Force and placed in command of C Company of the 34th Battalion. He was shipped to the Western Front. As the then second lieutenant, Jeffries did not experience his first major conflict until the Battle of Messines in June 1917, when he was injured and sent to London for recovery.

Upon his return to the front, Jeffries was promoted to company commander. Within weeks, his company was engaged at the Battle of Passchendaele, tasked with breaking through the fortified German lines. Under his leadership, the company advanced towards its first objective under heavy artillery fire. Captain Jeffries organised and led a bombing party that was successful in clearing the path to the German lines, and therefore allowing the company to capture 35 prisoners and four machine guns. He continued the charge, under extremely heavy artillery fire, in the hope of overcoming the German lines. He did so with great tenacity and courage, filling other members of his company with similar courage. However, during the battle Captain Jeffries was mortally wounded in the stomach—almost to this hour to this day 100 years ago. As he lay dying, his company continued their efforts to overcome the enemy lines. They had been inspired by their leader. They felt it was only right to continue the objectives set out by their leader, their mate. To recognise his heroic actions on the day of his death, Captain Jeffries was posthumously awarded a Victoria Cross [VC], on 18 December 1917. As published in the *London Gazette*, the citation read:

For most conspicuous bravery in attack when his company was held up by enemy machine-gun fire from concrete emplacements. Organising a party, he rushed one emplacement, capturing four machine-guns and thirty-five prisoners. He then led his company forward under extremely heavy enemy artillery barrage and machine-gun fire to the objective.

Later, he again organised a successful attack on a machine-gun emplacement, capturing two machine-guns and thirty more prisoners.

This gallant officer was killed during the attack, but it was entirely due to his bravery and initiative that the centre of the attack was not held up for a lengthy period. His example had a most inspiring influence.

Captain Jeffries is the only Victoria Cross recipient from the Cessnock electorate. In fact, he is only one of 18 men from New South Wales to be awarded a VC during World War I. He holds a special place in our local, national and international military history. In the face of extreme danger, he demonstrated valour and leadership. He was a hero in life and in death. Today, 100 years on, we honour his service to Australia, his dedication to duty and his self-sacrifice. From a coalminer in the electorate of Cessnock to a Victoria Cross recipient, Clarence Jeffries was an incredible Australian whose legacy will live on forever. Nestled in the village of Abermain there is the Captain Clarence Smith Jeffries Memorial Park. It includes the Abermain War Memorial, public toilets and a playground for children—which is only fitting because, frankly, Captain Jeffries was not much more than a child when he began his military service. Lest we forget.

### MOUNT KU-RING-GAI PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (18:28):** I am delighted to acknowledge and congratulate Mount Ku-ring-gai Public School on reaching its sixtieth anniversary. With its distinctive red uniform, Mount Ku-ring-gai is a small but mighty school in the Hornsby community. I recently attended the celebrations held at the school, and it was wonderful to see so many ex-students and teachers able to reminisce about their time at the school. It was a community-led campaign that resulted in the school opening its doors on 29 January 1957. The Progress Association had lobbied the Department of Education for six years to open a school at Mount Ku-ring-gai. The community spirit evident in the campaign for the establishment of the school has been the backbone of the school for the last 60 years. I have met many ex-students and parents with a great love for Mount Ku-ring-gai Public School, and it is this community spirit that makes the school the wonderful place that it is.

The school started with 49 students, two classrooms, an office and a storeroom. Mr Greig was the first headmaster and Mrs Wood was the first teacher. The parenting community was active from the first day, with many attending the first Parents and Citizens [P and C] meeting. It was decided during this meeting they would apply for a loan so the school could install a phone. It was Mr Greig who chose the school colours of red and gold, which continue to be the school colours today. Over the years, student numbers have continued to grow and by 1965 the school received word that new classrooms would be built. By this stage the teaching staff had grown to five full-time teachers. By the late 1980s the school had grown to 168 students and was moving towards putting computers in classrooms. To celebrate the bicentenary in 1988, a mural was painted on the external wall of the kindergarten room, which is still there today. In 1993 the school was shaken when a deliberately lit fire caused damage to one of the school's timber buildings. The quick thinking actions of the school cleaner contained the fire and saved the school from extensive damage.

Teachers are an integral part of any school, and there have been many special teachers at Mount Ku-ring-gai. I note three teachers who were at the sixtieth anniversary celebrations and who have taught at the school for many years: Gwen Johnston's favourite book to read to the kids was the *Muddle-Headed Wombat*; Alan Reynolds introduced "Bike Ed" to the school; and Maureen Disney seems to be everyone's favourite teacher and has taught at the school for 17 years. Mrs Disney is still a local. Her granddaughter Julia Disney is a school leader at another local school and has attended my school leaders morning at Parliament House. Most Mount Ku-ring-gai students count themselves lucky to have been taught by these and other amazing teachers. Mrs Joffe was also a teacher at Mount Ku-ring-gai. Members may recognise that name; she is the wife of famous Hornsby cartoonist Mick Joffe. John Clegg was the principal from 1994 to 1996 and he wrote about his fond memories of the school in *Memories of Mount Ku-ring-gai*, which was published in 1998. Currently, the school is led by Matt Pinchbeck, who is the relieving principal, assistant principal Nicole Tudor, and relieving assistant principal Luke Byrne. The school is in great hands with these three at the helm.

I come across many ex-students and recently I met Rohan Bright, who competed in the World Dwarf Games in Canada. Rohan is a shining star and I am sure he is destined to continue to achieve greatness in his sporting endeavours. I can also say with pride that I employ two ex-students from Mount Ku-ring-gai Public School in my office. Heidi Cameron, who was Heidi Hill, has worked with me for four years. She was school captain in 1987, as were two of her brothers, Aaron Hill and Luke Hill. Mika Mitsui also went to Mount Ku-ring-gai. As well as studying and working for me one day a week, Mika also still works at the Mount Ku-ring-gai Out of School Hours. I was very impressed by the current student leaders, Ella Gibbons, Zachary Williams, Macy Andersen and Samuel Ireland, who recently attended my school leaders morning tea at Parliament House. I have no doubt these students will go on to great things. Macy's younger brother, Thor Andersen, was a finalist in my Christmas card competition not long ago.

From the very first P and C meeting the parents were willing to roll up their sleeves to attend working bees, donate resources and organise events. For the last 60 years, the school has held a fete or major fundraiser almost every year. It was at the second fete, held on 8 November 1958, that the school was officially opened by the then Minister for Education, Mr Heffron. In 2017, as in 1958, parents spend months planning and preparing for the annual event that brings the community together to celebrate their school. I acknowledge Linda Artist and Rhonda Hutchinson who spent many hours organising and putting together the anniversary celebrations this year. Bec Gregory and Sally Loughnan have also been running the "I Grew up in Mount Ku-ring-gai" Facebook group, which has enabled many students to reconnect.

Throughout the school's history the parents of Mount Ku-ring-gai have shown an amazing sense of community spirit towards their school. Whether holding spellathons, movie nights, bush dances, quiz nights or raffles, the parents of Mount Ku-ring-gai have been dedicated to giving back to the school. Some of the notable volunteers and families from the past include Margaret and John Mitchell, the Ayres family, the Fowlers, the Prescotts, the Mantles, the Favaloros, the Sullivans, the McPhersons, the Spencers, the Cooks and my friend

Catriona Reeves, who sent her six children to Mount Ku-ring-gai. Many Mount Ku-ring-gai residents give a lot back to the community through the P and C, the Rural Fire Service or other local community groups. I congratulate Mount Ku-ring-gai Public School on 60 years of educational excellence. I know all students past and present have been enriched from their time at the school, whose motto is "Grow in Knowledge". I look forward to watching students grow over the next 60 years.

### HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (18:34):** On Monday the Higher School Certificate will commence for thousands of year 12 students across New South Wales. My daughter Lucy counts among them. I am aware that the son of the member for Blue Mountains will also be sitting for his Higher School Certificate. Other members may have children who are preparing hard to achieve their desired outcomes. I extend my best wishes to all those students in their endeavours. The electorate of Epping is blessed with some of the finest schools in New South Wales, including Cherrybrook Technology High School, the largest school in the State with more than 2,000 students; Carlingford High School; Cheltenham Girls High School; and, though not physically located within my electorate boundaries but its catchment area is, Epping Boys High School.

All of these schools are wonderfully supported by their staff and principals, and are fine examples of the very best in public education. Also located in Epping are many outstanding private schools, including Arden Anglican School, Oakhill College, Mount St Benedict College and Tangara School for Girls. The constituents in my electorate are spoiled for choice when it comes to schooling options for their children. The commencement of the Higher School Certificate represents a time of particular focus on education and the school system generally. For those who are completing this exam, it marks the end of a season in their lives and the opening of the door to exciting new opportunities. We ought to keep in mind, however, that this period is also a time of significant stress and sometimes anxiety. I know this from personal experience.

This is the ninth Higher School Certificate student I have had in my home. Some of my children, in particular, the boys, were very relaxed—perhaps too relaxed—but for the others, who placed very high expectations on themselves, the stress levels were incredibly high. I recall finding one child overdosed on energy drinks sitting in the gutter at 3.00 a.m. convinced that the world was about to fall in. For the record, she now works in this building. October is Mental Health Month in New South Wales and a great number of activities have occurred that demonstrate the very serious attention paid by this Government to highlight the existence of mental health problems within the community. More importantly, there are responses that we as a community can make that offer benefits to those with mental health problems. The message to all of us is that we should be aware of the problem, look out for those who are in distress and be prepared to talk about it.

For the families who are celebrating the end of their child's schooling, it is also a time of excitement and worry. For the past 12 months, we have been beset by the whole spectrum of concerns that accompany the end-of-school experience. My wife, Diane, and I are celebrating the end of 32 years of engagement with the education system. We are about to be liberated, though I must say that we have enjoyed each of those years and are enormously grateful to all those in whom we have entrusted the education of our children. With the end of exams come school formals, schoolies and all those other activities engaged in by newly emancipated 18-year-olds. To all those students, I say enjoy those times, stay safe, and look after each other. It is my hope that you receive the Christmas gift of results of which you may be proud. For those who might not achieve their expectations this time round, the Higher School Certificate is not the end of the road; rather, it is the beginning. Some of the best stories are told by those whose results belied their true ability. Good luck, Lucy.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:38):** I commend the member for Epping for his private member's statement. The Higher School Certificate was the subject of the matter of public importance earlier today. In that debate I provided some advice—perhaps not as illuminating or as wise as that of the member for Epping—to students on how to handle the Higher School Certificate examinations and similar stresses in their lives. I note that after 32 years of engagement with the education system the member for Epping and his wife are about to be liberated. On behalf of the Government I wish the member for Epping's daughter Lucy and all students sitting the Higher School Certificate examination the very best.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I also pass on my best wishes to all year 12 students undertaking their Higher School Certificate [HSC]. I congratulate the member for Epping and his wife on the 32 years of continuous supply and demand for the education system in New South Wales. I wish Lucy all the best for her exams.

### PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:39):** In 1901, the Centennial Light bulb in California was switched on for the first time. One hundred and fifteen years on, it continues to burn brightly. Today, though, the



products and technologies we rely on are designed to last for only an increasingly short product cycle, a phenomenon known as "planned obsolescence". Some of my constituents in Davidson have raised this issue with me. Anecdotally, many of us would attest to phones and computers that do not last as long as they could, often operating with inadequate software support as they reach the end of their life cycle. Planned obsolescence satisfies the voracious appetite of our consumer culture, offering up waves of new product announcements in our endless pursuit of the latest vogue item. Is this constant churn of goods appropriate in an age where companies have the capacity to create high-quality goods with relatively efficient methods? The trend of planned obsolescence has significant negative repercussions for consumers, society, and the environment. It warrants careful scrutiny.

It is worth exploring some nuances of planned obsolescence. American social critic Vance Packard observed the rise of planned obsolescence as early as 1960 in his book *The Waste Makers*. He described three types of planned obsolescence, the first being that of function, where a superior product replaces the old one. This is the proper purpose of planned obsolescence, as the existing product is genuinely obsolete. The second type concerns product quality, where a good product is intentionally designed to break within a certain timeframe. This disturbing lack of durability diminishes the consumer's value for money and subsequent satisfaction with the product brand. Not only does it reduce consumer trust in industry but quality obsolescence exhausts vast quantities of scarce resources, needlessly adding to landfill.

A notable historic example of quality obsolescence is the Phoebus cartel in the 1920s. Comprising of companies such as General Electric, Osram, and Philips, the cartel colluded to successfully reduce the standard life span of the incandescent light bulb from the average 1,500 to 2,000 hours to a mere 1,000 hours. The practice continued with the popularisation of nylon stockings. Though nylon stockings were originally made of strong synthetic fabric, DuPont re-engineered the stockings to be more fragile and prone to run than previous incarnations, requiring women to buy their product more frequently. One of my constituents recently lent me a book called *The Sixth Wave* by Moody and Nogrady, which underscores that a significant portion of waste production derives from "a mismatch between the goals of producers and consumers." It is obvious from the Phoebus cartel and DuPont stockings cases that a producer's desire to sell more products in the future often comes at the expense of consumers.

Moody and Nogrady argue that a service-based model where consumers rent from producers who retain ownership of goods could ameliorate these misaligned goals, as both producer and consumer desire for the service relationship to continue in the long term. I note that a number of New South Wales departments have moved to such a service-based model. Today we see companies continuing the trend of planned obsolescence, particularly in the technology sector. Apple actively discourages consumers from repairing their devices by installing proprietary screws and voiding warranties if repairs are not performed by Apple authorised service providers. For example, iFixit found that the very construction of the Apple watch severely restricts repair. At the current rate of technological progress, the inbuilt processor, which is securely attached and encased in resin, will soon be made redundant, forcing consumers to buy new watches, rather than upgrading parts of their old ones.

I understand even battery replacement cannot be performed by third parties. Likewise, Toshiba apparently does not make its repair manuals available to the public or third party repairers, limiting the consumer's ability to repair their devices economically. The problem does not stop at the physical limitations of technological devices. Many companies regularly release software updates that improve the current model but are not backwards compatible with older models. If updates are compatible, they often significantly compromise the operating systems of old devices, slowing them to the point of consumer frustration. The technology industry has adopted these strategies to maximise profit at the expense of consumer choice and positive environmental outcomes, and it is disturbing.

The third type of planned obsolescence is particularly pernicious: obsolescence of desirability. The latest iteration of a product is marketed as the most desirable option, thereby rendering previous editions as unfashionable and outdated, despite remaining perfectly functional. There are incremental or cosmetic changes that can offer little new value to the consumer. Some countries, particularly France and elsewhere in Europe, have realised that the trend of planned obsolescence is ultimately unsustainable and have begun to take steps towards solutions. The European Union has discussed planned obsolescence since 2013 through the European Economic and Social Committee, and there are movements around the world to address this issue. I suggest that Australia might look at some of these as well. It is reasonable that economic markets will attempt to satisfy human desire for novelty; however, we need to look at the negative impact of these practices and consider how we might better influence this market trend for the sake of future generations.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:45 until  
Tuesday 17 October 2017 at 12:00.**