



New South Wales

Legislative Council

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 20 June 2019

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 20 June 2019

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT and CHAIR OF COMMITTEES (The Hon. Trevor Khan), in the absence of the President, took the chair at 10:00.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE read the prayers.

Bills

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2019

Messages

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly agreeing to the Legislative Council's amendments to the bill.

Motions

RATION CHALLENGE

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (10:03): I move:

1. That this House notes that:
 - (a) since 2014, the Ration Challenge has built empathy for and supported the plight of Syrian refugees living in Camp Jordan;
 - (b) the Ration Challenge allows people to stand in solidarity with refugees in Syria as well as provide them with food, medicine and support in order to help rebuild their lives;
 - (c) people around the world undertake the challenge every June by surviving for a week on the rations of Syrian refugees, which consist of small amounts of rice, lentils, chickpeas, beans, fish and oil; and
 - (d) the Ration Challenge has raised approximately \$6.5 million in funding, providing vital support for Syrian refugees.
2. That this House commends all participants in the Ration Challenge and the generous donors who support them.

Motion agreed to.

AUSTRALIA KOREA BUSINESS COUNCIL

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (10:04): I move:

1. That this House notes that:
 - (a) on 29 and 30 May 2019, the Symposium on Enhancing and Enriching the Australian Korea Business and Cultural Relationship was hosted by the Australia Korea Business Council in Sydney; and
 - (b) a number of dignitaries and special guests were present at the event, including Mr Sang-woo Hong, Consul General of the Republic of Korea in Sydney; Mr Bill Patterson, PSM, former Ambassador to the United Nations Command for Korea; Professor Ruth Rentschler, OAM, Head, School of Management; Professor Gordon Flake, Chief Executive Officer, USAsia Centre, University of Western Australia; Mr Eryk Bagshaw; Ms Kylie Bell, Executive Director of Industry, NSW Treasury; Mr Tim Beresford, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Austrade; Mr Daniel Burrows, Director, Macquarie Bank; Ms Georgina Carnegie, Managing Director, Carnegie Enterprises; Mr Peter Cleary; Mr Xavier Ekkel; Mr Allan Hansell, Director, Financial Services Council; Dr Alex Joiner, Chief Economist, IFM Investors; Ms Suah Kim, Korean Cultural Centre Australia; Associate Professor You-il Lee, University of South Australia; Ms Edea Lu; Mr Shaun Moody, Tennis Australia; Mr Adam O'Neil; Mr Peter Park; Ms Sojeong Park, Director, Korean Cultural Centre Australia; Dr Gi-Hyun Shin, University of New South Wales; Mr Ian Williams; and the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP, Premier of New South Wales, represented by the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer.
2. That this House notes that:
 - (a) the Republic of Korea is the third largest trading partner and fourth largest exporting partner to New South Wales, conducting \$6.2 billion worth of bilateral merchandise trade in 2016-17. South Korea is also a large source for international visitors, with 211,800 visitors from South Korea visiting New South Wales in 2016-17;
 - (b) the Australia Korea Business Council [AKBC] was established in 1978 and has been committed to promoting two-way trade and investment with the Republic of Korea as well as fostering economic cooperation and partnerships between Australia and Korean business communities; and

- (c) according to the 2016 census nearly 70,000 residents in New South Wales claimed Korean ancestry, of which over 51,000 were born in Korea.
3. That this House acknowledges the tireless efforts and work conducted by members of the Australia Korea Business Council including the Hon. Simon Crean, Chairman; John Walker, AM, Deputy Chairman; Ian Williams, Deputy Chairman; Rod Dring, Honorary Treasurer; Mark Vaile, AO, Director; Georgina Carnegie, Director; Peter Cleary, Director; Anthony Fasso, Director; Daniel Kim, Director; Professor You-il Lee, Director; Bill Paterson, PSM, Director; Marie Piccone, Director; Simon Yoo, Director; Liz Griffin, Executive Director; as well as Ms Sojeong Park, Director of Korean Cultural Centre.

Motion agreed to.

MR SANG-SOO YOON

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (10:04): I move:

That this House:

- (a) notes Mr Sang-soo Yoon's retirement as Consul General of the Republic of Korea, Sydney, in April 2019;
- (b) congratulates Consul General Sang-soo Yoon and his family for their service to the Korean Community of Sydney and New South Wales;
- (c) recognises the dedication of Consul General Sang-soo Yoon towards maintaining, strengthening and furthering Korea's ties with New South Wales;
- (d) notes the importance of the role of Consul General of the Republic of Korea, as Australia has the sixth largest Korean community outside of Korea, numbering nearly 90,000 people according to the 2016 census;
- (e) recognises the importance of Australia and Korea's relationship with Korea being Australia's fourth largest trading partner and third largest export market, with two-way trade totalling \$34.5 billion;
- (f) notes the Government is dedicated to ensuring continued investment between our two nations, whether through bilateral trade, industry ventures or tourism;
- (g) thanks Consul General Sang-soo Yoon and his wife for their service and friendship with the people of New South Wales and wishes them all the best in their return to Seoul and for the future; and
- (h) notes the appointment of Mr Sang-woo Hong as the Consul General of the Republic of Korea, Sydney and welcomes him to New South Wales.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

OLD-GROWTH FORESTS

Production of Documents: Order

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (10:06): I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 116 outside the order of precedence for today of which I have given notice by omitting paragraph (a).

Leave granted.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Accordingly, I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 35 days of the date of the passing of this resolution the following documents in the possession, custody or control of the Natural Resources Commission, Office of Environment and Heritage, or the Department of Premier and Cabinet:

- (a) the stage one and stage two review reports by URS Australia Pty Ltd into timber resources on the North Coast referenced in the document "Project 2023 - North Coast Resources Review";
- (b) any documents received by the Natural Resources Commission from government agencies, State-owned corporations or third parties regarding the Natural Resources Commission's 2018 "Supplementary Advice on Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval Remake", and
- (c) any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committees

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL

Establishment and Membership

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (10:07): I move:

- 1. That a select committee be established to inquire into and report on the New South Wales Government's proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall, and in particular:

- (a) conflicting reports on the planning height for the dam wall raising and the potential use of the raising for additional storage capacity as well as flood mitigation;
 - (b) plans for future property development on flood-prone land on the Hawkesbury Nepean floodplain;
 - (c) engagement between the New South Wales Government and the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] in relation to the project;
 - (d) the adequacy of the environmental impact assessment process to date, including the assessment of impacts on:
 - (i) World heritage;
 - (ii) Aboriginal cultural heritage;
 - (iii) ecological values of the Greater Blue Mountains National Park;
 - (iv) the Warragamba community; and
 - (v) communities on the Hawkesbury Nepean floodplain.
 - (e) the nature and extent of the examination of alternative options for flood management that formed the basis of the cost-benefit analysis of the project and the Resilient Valley, Resilient Communities strategy;
 - (f) the flood risk assessment and proposed flood management of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley and whether this meets international best practice standards;
 - (g) the estimated cost of the project and identified funding sources;
 - (h) the implementation of recommendations in the inquiry into the Water NSW Amendment (Warragamba Dam) Bill 2018 by the Standing Committee on State Development in October 2018, and
 - (i) any other related matter.
2. That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders, the committee consist of seven members comprising:
- (a) three Government members;
 - (b) two Opposition members, and
 - (c) two crossbench members, being Mr Field and Mr Roberts.
3. That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders, at any meeting of the committee, any four members of the committee will constitute a quorum.
4. That, unless the committee decides otherwise:
- (a) submissions to inquiries are to be published, subject to the committee clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration;
 - (b) the Chair's proposed witness list is to be circulated to provide members with an opportunity to amend the list, with the witness list agreed to by email, unless a member requests the Chair to convene a meeting to resolve any disagreement;
 - (c) the sequence of questions to be asked at hearings is to alternate between Government, Opposition and crossbench members, in order determined by the committee, with equal time allocated to each;
 - (d) transcripts of evidence taken at public hearings are to be published;
 - (e) supplementary questions are to be lodged with the committee clerk within two days, excluding Saturday and Sunday, following the receipt of the hearing transcript, with witnesses requested to return answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions within 21 calendar days of the date on which questions are forwarded to the witness; and
 - (f) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, subject to the committee clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

TABLING OF PAPERS

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I table the following papers:

1. Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001—Report of Environment Protection Authority entitled *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy Progress Report 2017-18*.
2. Paper entitled *Corporations Act 2001: A Company Limited by Guarantee: Constitution of Australian Technology Park Sydney Limited*, dated 20 May 2019.

I move:

That the documents be printed.

Motion agreed to.

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: According to the Local Government Act 1993, I announce receipt of a Performance Audit Report entitled *Development assessment: pre-lodgement and lodgement in Camden City Council and Randwick City Council*, dated 20 June 2019, received out of session and authorised to be printed this day.

Petitions

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: According to sessional order, I announce receipt of the following responses to petitions signed by 500 or more persons:

1. Response from the Hon. Shelley Hancock, MP, Minister for Local Government, to a petition presented by the Hon. Taylor Martin on 30 May 2019 concerning The Entrance channel, received out of session and authorised to be printed this day.

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I welcome members of the student representative council from Hunters Hill Public School to the gallery.

Special Adjournment

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I move:

That this House at its rising today do adjourn until Tuesday 6 August 2019 at 2.30 p.m. unless the President, or, if the President is unable to act on account of illness or other cause, the Deputy President, prior to that date, by communication addressed to each member of the House, fixes an alternative day or hour of meeting.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow the moving of a motion forthwith relating to the conduct of the business of the House this day.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (10:26:4): I move:

That the order of private members' business for today be as follows:

1. Private members' business item No. 108 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Peter Primrose relating to an order for papers regarding the document entitled "Election Commitments – The NSW Budget 2019-2020".
2. Private members' business item No. 110 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Peter Primrose relating to an order for papers regarding government departmental employment numbers.
3. Private members' business item No. 6 in the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Natalie Ward relating to women in sport.
4. Private members' business item No. 109 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of Mr David Shoebridge relating to an order for papers regarding energy funding initiatives included in the 2019-20 budget.
5. Private members' business item No. 101 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. John Graham relating to an order for papers regarding the lease of the Campbell's Stores located in The Rocks.
6. Private members' business item No. 70 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Taylor Martin relating to Surf Life Saving Sydney Branch.
7. Private members' business item No. 102 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Mark Latham relating to highly contentious private members' bills.

8. Private members' business item No. 96 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Adam Searle relating to an order for papers regarding the Transport Asset Holding Entity.
9. Private members' business item No. 106 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Adam Searle relating to an order for papers regarding Landcom.
10. Private members' business item No. 113 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of Ms Cate Faehrmann relating to emergency department responses to mental health emergencies.
11. Private members' business item No. 89 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Rose Jackson relating to press freedom.
12. Private members' business item No. 105 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Mark Latham relating to Gaye Cameron.
13. Private members' business item No. 112 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. John Graham relating to an order for papers regarding funding for Restart NSW projects.
14. Private members' business item No. 1 in the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Adam Searle relating to the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2019.

I also indicate that, by agreement, the motions at paragraphs Nos 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7 to 13 will be moved by the member in the new short form format.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

STATE BUDGET

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I move:

That private members' business item No. 108 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (10:32): I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 21 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents in the possession, custody or control of the Premier, Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Treasurer, the Treasury, the Minister for Customer Service, the Minister for Finance and Small Business, and the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation:

- (a) all advice, correspondence, briefing papers and documents provided by New South Wales government departments, agencies and public trading enterprises to the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Treasury or the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation relating to the preparation of the document entitled *Election Commitments – The NSW Budget 2019-2020*;
- (b) all advice, correspondence, briefing papers and documents prepared by the Department Premier and Cabinet, Treasury or the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation relating to the preparation of the document entitled *Election Commitments – The NSW Budget 2019-2020*; and
- (c) any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

The motion before us today is a very simple one: that the Government be truly accountable to this House, and through this House to the public, about its budget commitments. I will go through this very clearly. The document I am holding, entitled *Election Commitments - Getting it Done*, is one of the budget papers that was presented for consideration. The first page of the document states:

NSW Budget 2019-20 publications include:

...

Budget paper no. 4 Appropriation Bills

Election Commitments

We are talking about one of the budget papers that was presented. The document lists a number of commitments that the Government made during the election. They are not secret items. We are yet to go through them in any detail to see if one or two have been missed, but that is something for the future.

This motion proposes that the details behind this document should be made available to the public. We want to know, as per all the other items that this House has already resolved relating to the budget papers, what advice, correspondence, briefing papers and documents have led to the formulation of this document. This document purports to list and give costings for most of the commitments that were made at the 2019 election.

I am interested in what appears on page 15. It simply makes the statement under "Regional & Local Roads" that the Government will:

Establish a process to transfer up to 15,000 kilometres of council-owned regional roads back to the state.

No problems with that. But a lot of words in there are equivalent to "may", "shall" and "up to". I would like to know—and I am sure members of the public would like to know, because they have already asked me about it—what the thinking is behind how long this will take. When the Government gave this undertaking, what were the expected costings, what will be the effect on existing council revenues and the money that councils receive from the State for the maintenance of regional roads? At the moment they are council-administered roads. There will be background papers and notes from briefings about this and so much more. It is now incumbent upon the Government to say why this House and members of the public should not obtain more details about its election commitments that appear in a budget paper, some of which are as small as one sentence.

It is absolutely absurd that I have to argue the case for the Government to detail its own election commitments and to provide the papers and the thinking behind them when they are part of the budget that was presented only two days ago in New South Wales. I find it astounding that I am arguing this. It is even more astounding that the Government has indicated it will oppose making available to the House and members of the public the detailed briefings and costings behind its own election commitments.

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox: Massive fishing expedition.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I heard the interjection "a massive fishing expedition". This document is one of the budget papers. What is the Government hiding? If it is a fishing expedition then so be it. If the Government is proud of what it has promised it would be prepared and willing to produce those documents. In fact, a Government member should have moved this motion. Some of those proposals are small and some do not provide any detail. Let us find out what is behind that information.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (10:38): The Government opposes this motion. I wonder if the Hon. Peter Primrose will attend budget estimates hearings because a process is already in place for him to ask questions about the matters that appear in this motion.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: We don't want to wait.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Clearly they do not want to wait. Labor went through an exhaustive process to extend the budget estimates hearings. For what reason? We anticipated they want to explore a lot of the issues which the Hon. Peter Primrose raised today. There are some fundamental issues relating to the abuse of Standing Order 52 requests, which the Opposition and members of the crossbench are engaging in. They are using this House to become a receptacle for Government papers. I do not hide behind the fact that I call it an abuse. There should be a process to set conditions precedent for the purpose of Standing Order 52 motions being moved by members in this House. The first point that needs to be established is the necessity for the papers; in other words, a process has been undertaken seeking the papers and the request has not been complied with in circumstances that demonstrate the request is not a fishing expedition. The test that must be satisfied is: Does the member who moved the motion demonstrate that he or she has sought those papers already from the responsible Minister before moving the motion? If not, the condition precedent has not been met and the request for the Standing Order 52 motion on its face should be rejected.

The second component is that there must be a legitimate forensic purpose for the papers being produced. The member who moves the motion has an obligation to demonstrate that legitimate forensic purpose. In my view, the member who moved the motion has not established that legitimate forensic purpose, especially since there is an opportunity at budget estimates hearings, which will take place in no less than four weeks, to ask questions and demonstrate the legitimate forensic purpose. At that point, if the member demonstrates that legitimate forensic purpose, in those circumstances legitimacy of the request would be established. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (10:41): This motion is a complete farce. The Hon. Peter Primrose failed to notice that this wonderful document entitled *Election Commitments* lays down a blueprint of the Government's plans over the next four years. Those plans are wideranging from roads in local communities to public hospitals across New South Wales, from education facilities at the back of Bourke right through to funding research grants in parts of New South Wales. It is a massive program. It is unprecedented that the Opposition would seek to bring the whole of documentation from Treasury and all government departments. Big containers full of documents will be delivered for Opposition members to search.

Opposition members will not even go through those documents. The production of so many documents will be completely unmanageable. The reality is that Opposition members will rub their hands together and say, "What a wonderful show we have put on." By agreeing to the motion, we will end up with container loads of documents in the Clerk's office, who will have to vacate his office. There will be no room left for him to do his

work. Half of Level 8 will be covered in boxes. Will Opposition members really thumbnail through each of the documents, do an assessment, and then say something intelligible? For heaven's sake, why not select a few relevant areas in which the Opposition takes an interest? As the Minister has said, why not define forensically the issues the Opposition wishes to pursue? The Opposition want to have carte blanche. It is worse than a fishing expedition. The Opposition seeks to cast a net so widely it will bring in the world's deadliest catch.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: It's a super trawler expedition.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: The crabs, the deep-sea fishes, the Patagonian fishes and all manner of things will be caught in this fishing expedition. The Opposition will not know what documents are of interest and will not be able to go through all the documents. This motion represents a complete abuse of process. The Opposition should start again. It should pause and think about the documentation being sought and think about using the production of documents process in a manner that holds a government to account. This motion is ridiculous. It is unprecedented. It simply is not a worthwhile use of government resources.

If the motion is agreed to, it will result in a massive waste of money and time spent by bureaucrats compiling the documentation, particularly as the forthcoming budget estimates process provides an opportunity that the Opposition should use to focus on matters of interest. As a member of this House I look forward to seeing how the Opposition will use the expanded budget estimates process. This motion might have been a way to focus attention on certain matters, but the reality is that it would be a complete waste of time and resources as well as abuse of a discovery process that should not be disrespected.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (10:44): I take this opportunity to respond to some of the comments made by the Minister for Finance and Small Business. Although I appreciate some of the points he made, his comments do not reflect the history of this House. First, I do not regard it as unusual that an Opposition on either side of politics would seek to gain some information before the estimates process unfolds. This motion is designed to allow the estimates committee process to work effectively. The Opposition needs the documentation to work effectively and to ask the best questions while Ministers and bureaucrats are assembled. This motion should be regarded as facilitating preparation. The production of documents sought by the motion will make the estimates committees work well.

I appreciate that the Minister has attempted to set out some principles governing when an order for the production of documents might be a suitable request. As the House approaches the vote on this motion, the House should take notice of those suggestions. It would be a mistake for this House to overreach by seeking to use Standing Order 52 powers too broadly. However, it must be said that in the previous term of Parliament the Government consistently rejected a range of requests for information through the Government Information (Public Access) Act process and through other public processes. There is catch-up involved in a range of applications for information. The House must pay regard to that history.

I reject the contention that the motion represents an abuse of process. The information sought by the Hon. Peter Primrose is fundamental to the Opposition doing its job, and the Opposition intends to do its job. The Opposition will press forward with the motion. However, I indicate to the Government that when the Opposition and other members receive cooperation, the Government will receive cooperation in return. I am involved in exactly that discussion with the Government in relation to an order for production of documents under Standing Order 52. If I receive certain assurances about the information I seek being provided, I intend to not proceed with the call for papers through Parliament. If the Government will speak directly to me and provide the information the Opposition needs to do its job, the Government may avoid the creation of a bureaucratic dragnet, but the Opposition will not be deterred from doing its job.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (10:47): I oppose the motion moved by the Hon. Peter Primrose. The *Election Commitments* document is an example of the Government's transparency. The Government is not hiding its election commitments from anyone but rather has outlined them in a document to keep itself accountable and to ensure that the Government continues to deliver for the people of New South Wales. Let me examine the process by which the document was produced. During the election campaign the process was costed by the Parliamentary Budget Office. The Opposition's proposals were also costed by the Parliamentary Budget Office. Substantial data already exists as a result of investigation by the Parliamentary Budget Office.

As the Minister for Finance and Small Business said, there is a process for criticising, scrutinising and investigating items of expenditure. That process is the budget estimates hearings. By the will of this House, the budget estimates hearings will be a more extensive process this year than it has been in the past. By virtue of that process, Opposition members will have the opportunity to scrutinise the information contained in *Election Commitments*. Several opportunities are available to Opposition members for asking questions about that document, such as questions on notice and questions without notice. It is right and proper for Opposition members

to have those opportunities. But for the Opposition to undertake a fishing expedition using a mega-trawler, as referred to by the Hon. Greg Donnelly, is a different proposition.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: The super trawler.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I stand corrected. The super-trawler exercise referred to by the Hon. Greg Donnelly will result in an enormous impost on the Government and the bureaucracy. As mentioned earlier, the Clerk will have so many documents in his office that we will need to redevelop The Domain for it to contain the volume of documents the Opposition is seeking under its Standing Order 52 request. Opposition, crossbench and Government members will have several opportunities over the coming months to investigate this document as well as many of the other budget papers. This document indicates that we are approaching a golden century of infrastructure delivery. No doubt there have been a few lunches at Golden Century by the member for Kogarah and the member for Strathfield recently with a couple of unions, which would excite a little bit of interest.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

I thought I would leave that reference to the end. I do not see any reason for the Standing Order 52 motion to be successful in this House because many other opportunities exist for members opposite to investigate those documents. [Time expired.]

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (10:50): The budget presented this week is not so much a harbinger of the golden century but more like fool's gold. The contribution by the Hon. Scott Farlow really illustrates that point. The necessity for this Standing Order 52 motion arises from the fact that each year less and less information is provided in the budget papers. The next motion for a Standing Order 52 to be moved the Hon. Peter Primrose goes directly to that point. Information previously provided is carefully culled and winnowed out each year to make the official budget estimates less and less relevant to what Government is actually doing. That is one of the key reasons for the impairment of the efficacy of the budget estimates process. Yes, we have made that process longer this year to afford the Parliament more time to scrutinise documents and get into the detail. However, to make that process effective the Opposition will need some of the information that ought to have been made available by the Government.

This is the first time the Government has produced such a document as *Election Commitments*. This is a key example of the Government using public money to engage in party-political advertising. The slogan on the cover of the document is almost exactly the same as the slogan that the Liberal-Nationals Coalition took to the 2019 election. They are using public monies to promote a political brand. The Opposition is entitled—and, indeed, obligated—to know what documentation lies behind it to see what are real commitments and what is just smoke and mirrors.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (10:52): I will start by discussing Standing Order 52 applications. In the last term of Parliament members engaged in some very significant, substantial and intellectually rigorous debate about Standing Order 52 motions. In fact, a Government member crossed the floor to vote on one issue because it required a knife-edge decision on what was important, what was relevant and what specific issue needed to be addressed. That is what Standing Order 52 motions should be used for. Today we heard from the Hon. John Graham that it is not unusual to gain some information as a result of a Standing Order 52 application, which is appropriate. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition also used the "some". The Hon. John Graham also agreed with the potential concern about possible overreach. That is the issue we are facing today.

This is the path that we are going down. Procedurally, a Standing Order 52 motion seeking "all advice, correspondence, briefing papers and documents" on every election commitment, every piece of paper that is referred to in the document entitled *Election Commitments* will be impossible, or at least extremely difficult to fulfil, and it will take up the time of Treasury and other agencies that would be better spent serving the people of this State. The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox called this motion "a complete abuse of process" and I agree with him.

When the Hon. Peter Primrose questions the thinking behind how long it will take, I refer him to this process. We have budget estimates—in fact, we now have a substantially longer budget estimates process. I agree with the Hon. John Graham that it is appropriate so the Opposition can prepare for budget estimates. If there is an issue of concern or something specific that they want to look into then they should be entitled to see that information. But let us think about what is happening in this Parliament. We in this Chamber are now going down a slippery slope. We are setting up select committees when portfolio committees have been established for the same reason.

We now have Standing Order 52 applications that are so broad in scope that they are fishing expeditions. Those applications will take up the time and energy of Government bureaucrats who should be spending their time doing other jobs like the members of this Parliament. This is my concern about where we are heading. We have to draw the line in the sand today and say, "You know what? The Opposition makes up a really important

part of the Westminster system, but it needs to be more focused." The Opposition should be more concerned about specific issues and what it is trying to achieve. That is not apparent here today.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (10:55): Without wishing to repeat many of the arguments that have been mentioned, I want to rebut some of the statements made by Opposition members. First, the Hon. Adam Searle has stated that this budget is giving less information than previous budgets did. I find it ironic because, for the first time ever, additional information has been provided by way of the *Election Commitments* document. It sets out for the public, the media and the Opposition the list of Government commitments so that it can be held to account. I find it ironic that despite providing this additional information the argument for moving the Standing Order 52 motion is that there is not enough information.

I describe this document as a report. It is not a policy statement. It is not the outcome of an inquiry. It is not triggered by some crisis where more information is needed. It is simply the gathering of information and is factually stated as a report. As the Hon. Ben Franklin commented, what does this motion mean? The wording states:

- (a) all advice, correspondence, briefing papers and documents provided by New South Wales government departments, agencies and public trading enterprises ...

How do you apply that to the double Active Kids rebate? The commitment was \$291 million and the document mentions the vouchers. Does that mean that the entire rebate and the documentation upon which that commitment was made is applicable to this motion? That by itself will produce a truckload of documents. Does the Opposition want all the documentation pertaining to the commitment to upgrade the Margaret Donoghue Oval? Does it want all the documentation prepared in explaining the costing for it, the correspondence with the councils, the discussions with the community and the media clippings that were released by the Government? This document outlines hundreds of programs and thousands, if not tens of thousands, of projects. The motion questions the credibility of the power to simply say "all advice, correspondence, briefing papers". The Opposition basically wants the contents of all government department filing cabinets copied and sent here. I can tell you for a fact that they will not fit.

If there was some purpose stated in the motion it may have some credibility. If there was a particular document the Opposition was looking for it may have some credibility. If there is an unanswered question and only this information can provide an answer, then the motion would surely have credibility. All those factors counted when the upper House went to court and fought the Labor Party to establish its right to make Standing Order 52 requests. I support the comments of the Hon. John Graham that it is appropriate for oppositions to negotiate with government and to try to refine it. Nine years ago when Labor was in power, that was how this was done. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (10:58): This Standing Order 52 motion is yet another tactic from the Opposition to create another roadblock and more inefficiency in the workings of government. It seems that every week in this place Labor and The Greens use this Chamber as a glorified Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 agency. They do not have a vision for New South Wales. They do not have a strategy for jobs or infrastructure. They do not have a strategy to build more hospitals or schools or to employ more teachers, nurses or frontline service delivery employees. Plenty of this is needed after 16 years of Labor's neglect and chaos. These are just political tactics that have no real substance. Every week it is just more games that do not seek to improve the lives of workers and families in New South Wales. Labor is rudderless, with no leader at the moment. So what might this shipping container's worth of documents on election commitments show? It would show that we are delivering in transport, with more than \$500 million over five years for a local roads program to assist regional councils with repairing, maintaining and sealing council roads.

The program will establish a process to transfer up to 15,000 kilometres of council-owned regional roads back into State Government ownership—new urban road projects not only across Sydney but also further out into the bush and regions surrounding Sydney, including \$450 million to reduce traffic congestion at 12 pinch points across Sydney alone, including Pennant Hills Road at Carlingford; Forest Road and Stoney Creek Road at Beverly Hills; Forest Road, Boundary Road and Bonds Road at Peakhurst; Henry Lawson Drive at Georges Hill; and Linden Street between The River Road and The Grand Parade at Sutherland. I could go on and on because all those projects would be delivered in that shipping container's worth of documents that the Labor Party is trying to have imported into the Clerk's office.

We have made many regional and local road commitments, including \$17.6 million towards sealing and re-sealing roads in the Snowy-Monaro region; \$17 million for Kempsey Shire Council and Port Macquarie Hastings Council; \$12.5 million from the Regional Growth Fund to seal Pooncarie Road, Menindee; \$10 million for Kempsey Shire Council to upgrade Armidale Road; and \$10 million for Richmond Valley. I could go on and on because they are all the commitments that would come out under that Standing Order 52.

The Hon. Adam Searle: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. The member is not speaking to the terms of the Standing Order 52 motion.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: To the point of order: Those are exactly the kinds of the commitments that will be outlined in the documents to be provided under Standing Order 52.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Courtney Houssos): Order! The member's time has expired.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (11:01): I will call this out for what it is: Labor is embarrassed that we have produced this document. Opposition members are sore losers. They have not produced a winning election document in three elections and they are sore losers. They want the document and they want the background to it because they want to take it to Sussex Street and say, "Hey, this is how to win an election."

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Courtney Houssos): Order! I remind members about the rules pertaining to props. The Hon. Shayne Mallard has the call.

The Hon. Adam Searle: Point of order: The member is not speaking to the Standing Order 52 motion; he is engaging in party political abuse across the Chamber. He is using a prop, which he is still waving around. He is not talking to the terms of Standing Order 52. He is not engaging in debate. He is not responding to what any person has said in debate and he is not being relevant to the motion.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: To the point of order: The Hon. Adam Searle has taken up my speaking time. I am being very relevant to the debate. Those opposite want the background to this document. They are calling for papers because they are jealous.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Courtney Houssos): Order! The member's time has expired.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (11:03): In reply: I make a couple points in the very brief time available to me. First, I thank the Hon. Catherine Cusack, who pointed to—as those who were in this place recall—the debates, the fights and the legal arguments that established this House's right to call for papers, which included the removal of the Leader of the Government from the House. It was a long, difficult fight and it established our right. The Minister said that there should be a process. There is a process: The process is called deliberation in this House. Proposals are put up in this House, they are justified with arguments, members consider them and this House makes a decision. But today the Minister very clearly let the cat out of the bag. Clearly, Executive Government in this State is again considering ways and means to further limit the provisions of Standing Order 52.

As the Minister said, let us put a few bits of process around it. Let us try to start looking for bits and pieces and things we can do to again limit the rights of this House, as determined—as the Hon. Catherine Cusack said—over a long period. We went to the courts. We have a process in place. Executive Government of any persuasion does not like to be called out and forced to produce documents that show how it reached a particular decision or arrived at a particular proposal. The Government put out this document as part of its budget process. It is one of the budget papers. I assume that the Government, in producing this document, would have considered all of the information available to it—briefing notes, papers, et cetera. Presumably the Treasury official who put this together would have had access to that information and would have considered it. Why is it outside the remit of this House to say, "We would like to look at the information too, certainly in terms of our preparation for more detailed questioning in estimates." Members should try to get the information through a Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPAA] application.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: Did you try?

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: You cannot get information through a GIPAA application. We will be asking many questions on notice; it is the determined right of this House, and it was a hard-won right. We went through legal processes and intense disputes, and we came out with the Standing Order 52 process. I commend the decision of this House.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Which you are now abusing.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: The Minister says it is an abuse. Minister, if you, as part of the Executive Government, wish to go back to the bad old days and impugn the rights of this House, bring it on. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Courtney Houssos): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes23

Noes16

Majority.....7

AYES

Banasiak, Mr M
 Buttigieg, Mr M (teller)
 Faehrmann, Ms C
 Houssos, Mrs C
 Latham, Mr M
 Pearson, Mr M
 Searle, Mr A
 Shoebridge, Mr D

Borsak, Mr R
 D'Adam, Mr A
 Field, Mr J
 Hurst, Ms E
 Mookhey, Mr D
 Primrose, Mr P
 Secord, Mr W
 Veitch, Mr M

Boyd, Ms A
 Donnelly, Mr G (teller)
 Graham, Mr J
 Jackson, Ms R
 Moriarty, Ms T
 Roberts, Mr R
 Sharpe, Ms P

NOES

Amato, Mr L
 Fang, Mr W (teller)
 Harwin, Mr D

Blair, Mr
 Farlow, Mr S
 Maclaren-Jones, Mrs
 (teller)
 Mason-Cox, Mr M
 Taylor, Mrs

Cusack, Ms C
 Franklin, Mr B
 Mallard, Mr S
 Mitchell, Mrs
 Tudehope, Mr D

PAIRS

Moselmane, Mr S

Ajaka, Mr

Motion agreed to.**TABLING OF PAPERS****The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I table the following paper:

1. Sydney Water Act 1994—notice of proposed amendments to the Sydney Water Corporation operating licence, together with a copy of the proposed amendments entitled "Sydney Water Operating Licence 2019-2023: Operation Licence: 2019" and "Sydney Water Operating Licence: Customer Contract".

I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.**DEPARTMENTAL STAFF****Production of Documents: Order****The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I move:

That private members' business No. 110 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (11:16):** I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 21 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents in the possession, custody or control of the Premier, Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Treasurer, the Treasury, the Minister for Customer Service, the Minister for Finance and Small Business, and the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation:

- (a) all advice, correspondence, briefing papers and documents provided by New South Wales Government departments, agencies and public trading enterprises to the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Treasury or the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation relating to:
 - (i) the full-time equivalent number of employees within each government departmental cluster, agency, State outcome and/or program group for 2018-19, 2019-20 and the years of the forward estimates, 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23;

- (ii) the full-time equivalent number of employees within each of the 10 government departmental clusters, agency, State outcome and/or program group prior to the Machinery of Government Changes, which will reduce the number of clusters from 10 to eight on 1 July 2019; and
 - (iii) the forward estimates of each program or infrastructure project.
- (b) all advice, correspondence, briefing papers and documents prepared by the Department Premier and Cabinet, Treasury or the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation relating to:
 - (i) the full-time equivalent number of employees within each government departmental cluster, agency, State outcome and/or program group for 2018-19, 2019-20 and the years of the forward estimates, 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23;
 - (ii) the full-time equivalent number of employees within each of the 10 government departmental clusters, including by agency, state outcome and/or program group prior to the Machinery of Government Changes, which will reduce the number of clusters from 10 to eight on 1 July 2019; and
 - (iii) the forward estimates of each program or infrastructure project.
- (c) any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

If I was ever asked to describe the current New South Wales Government in one word I would use the word "secretive"—and I would add an adjective to make "increasingly secretive". Whether it is the secretive \$400,000 KPMG report that trumped all other local government sector consultations and spurred the Government's disastrous forced council merger policy or the decreasing amount of information contained in its budget papers, this Government does not want to provide information that is required and necessary for the public scrutiny of its budget processes. The reason for this Standing Order 52 call for papers is that the number of full-time equivalent staff employed in the New South Wales public sector is not stated anywhere in the current budget papers, nor is information about where there will be changes over time. We do not know; nor does the Government.

The Government has announced numerous cuts, but beyond those figures the budget documents do not provide the details that were provided in earlier budgets of this Government and of previous governments. As part of preparing to speak on this motion, I went back through the previous budget papers, including the No. 3 budget papers from 2015-2016 to 2018-2019. What I found was quite perverse. In Budget Paper No. 3 2015-2016 the number of staff expressed as full-time equivalents for each service in the clusters and agencies was there—it was readily available. This information even went back to the 2012-13 financial year, not just the previous financial year, and the forecast staff numbers for the coming financial year. Given that this call for papers is focused on full-time equivalent staff numbers, I will not discuss how the service measures have also disappeared from this year's budget. We are not talking about something that was unavailable in all previous budgets. The number of full-time equivalent staff and the service measures—how that was actually measured—was in previous budgets, but it has mysteriously disappeared from the current budget papers.

In the 2016-17 Budget Paper No. 3 the information is again provided, as well as the service measures. Then from the 2017-18 Budget Paper No. 3 something happens: The way the information is presented changes and becomes more convoluted and less transparent. In particular, the number of full-time equivalent employees appears by cluster group highlights, and service measures are superseded by something called "performance information". Treasury officials and the Government chose to change their terminology and change how they presented information; that is fine. It makes it almost impossible for the Opposition or any community member to look at how the Government is performing over time, but that is a trick of the Government. It wishes to do it and that is the Government's call.

In the 2018-19 Budget Paper No. 3 the lack of employee information is replicated again and the performance information becomes "outcome indicators"—another change of terminology that is not explained. More bizarrely, in the 2019-20 budget papers there is no information at all on full-time equivalent staff numbers, whether by service program or cluster group highlights, and there is no mention of performance information or even outcome indicators. Clearly the Government does not have either the capacity or the will to provide necessary information that had been provided previously. It has shown through its previous budget papers that it can present the information in a number of ways, so I am led to believe it is not incompetence on display here; it is simply a decision of the Government not to provide information that it has always provided in previous budget documents.

I ask why the Government has chosen to keep this information secret and why the Government opposes making it public through Standing Order 52. This standing order process would not have been necessary if the Government had simply done what it has done in previous years and previous budgets. It has simply made a decision not to make this information available through its budget papers. I believe it should, and I ask honourable members to support the motion.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (11:22): The Government opposes this motion, which again demonstrates the necessity of avoiding the stench of the Opposition's abuse of process relating to the use of Standing Order 52. Again, I say this: First, the member moving this motion has not demonstrated that he has, in fact, written to the relevant Minister—the Treasurer, in this case—asking for those details. A simple letter to that effect, if not replied to, may provide the foundation for a Standing Order 52 motion. Alternatively, has an application been made under the Government Information (Public Access) Act for the same material? Further, this is exactly the sort of question that would be asked at a budget estimates hearing. All those things should occur before this Chamber embarks upon involving bureaucrats in the process of pursuing documents to satisfy the order that the Hon. Peter Primrose is seeking.

The second point—I will repeat this in relation to every Standing Order 52 motion—is that the mover must demonstrate that there is a genuine forensic purpose. In respect of the subject matter of this motion, there may well be a legitimate forensic purpose. But the first condition precedent has not been met. The third thing that must be established is that the Minister has been approached to say what is a reasonable time frame to comply with the request. The Treasury currently has four of these orders on foot, one of which involves eight full-time employees working to produce the documents. They are trawling through 2,500 electronic documents to comply with the orders when they could be doing other stuff in relation to drought relief or whatever. The amount of time bureaucrats are now required to spend complying with these orders adds to the abuse that the Opposition is engaging in. I urge those opposite to demonstrate compliance with those conditions before they embark on the standing order process.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (11:25): I add a couple of comments to this debate. I do not object to the Minister encouraging members to take steps. But there is a practical issue here as we prepare for budget estimates hearings: The time it takes to get this documentation means that we must deal with the issue now. We would feel more comfortable about the case made by the Minister if the Government came some of the way towards us on this issue. The Government has to loosen the strings on some of this information if it wants to take the sort of position that the Minister has proposed. Nowhere is that more true than in the Government's use of the Government Information (Public Access) Act. When that Act was drafted it was not the then Government's intention that it be used in the way this Government used it in the previous term of Parliament. The Government is copping a reaction to that by the House asserting its power. That is part of what is going on here. I encourage the Government to move towards what is clearly the view of the majority of the House concerning the issues that the Hon. Peter Primrose raised.

Looking back at the history of these motions, I can provide some reassurance to the Government on a point that I did not get to make in my previous contribution. This process happened repeatedly to the former Labor Government in the period 2007 to 2011. It was heavily objected to by the then Government; most executives would object to it. But the Government rolled on. It was a strain on government resources. Members of the parties opposite repeatedly bowled up those arguments and requests, and the House voted for them. That is the history of the issue, as the Hon. Catherine Cusack and the Hon. Peter Primrose outlined. It is important. Of course the Executive hated it, but the Government rolled on. I expect that will be the case here. In relation to the second of my Standing Order 52 motions that appears on today's *Notice Paper*, I have reached a satisfactory resolution with Ministers and the Government. It is my intention to withdraw the motion, and I will take steps to do so. I thank the Government for taking a cooperative approach to that particular matter, and I hope we see more of it from the Government.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (11:28): I was here in the period 2007 to 2011. While no doubt the Hon. John Graham means well in what he put to this Chamber a few moments ago, the process did not happen then in the same way as this Opposition is putting these motions to the Government. When you have a political position to exploit as an Opposition, naturally you are going to exploit it. Naturally you are going to ensure that you take every opportunity to hold the Government to account. That is the role of the Opposition, and we respect that. But Standing Order 52 confers a very wide power. If it is used in a way that is essentially an abuse of process by claiming every possible document in a massive super trawler fishing expedition, it ends up sending the wheels of government into reverse.

This motion asks for information relating to all the employees of all the clusters of this Government. That is a significant imposition on information flows, but it can be provided. I draw the attention of members to the information provided in the budget papers in that regard, particularly in Budget Paper No. 1, at page 5-8 in relation to employee expenses; in Budget Paper No. 3 in relation to the financial statement and each of the departmental listings, including expenses—the budget papers provide comparisons over time, as well—and Budget Paper No. 2, which goes through a whole range of infrastructure projects. Buried in this notice of motion is a request for all the papers from Treasury, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation et cetera for the forward estimates of each program or infrastructure project. That is everything in the budget in relation to infrastructure or program delivery. The motion is a complete abuse of process. It relates to

every project in Budget Paper No. 2, from an upgrade of a local school, which might have been on the books for years, right through to the building of a new hospital in Byron Bay or the spending of a grant out in the bush for drought relief.

This is ridiculous. It is a complete abuse of process. I ask the Opposition to use some restraint. Many of us have been members in this place for some time. New members of the crossbench may not understand the pervasiveness of what is being requested. Opposition members should exercise some restraint in the spirit of the powers that exist under Standing Order 52.

[*Business interrupted.*]

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Courtney Houssos): On behalf of members I welcome to the Legislative Council student leaders from high schools in New South Wales, who are attending today the secondary schools leadership program conducted by our fantastic Parliamentary Education unit.

Documents

DEPARTMENTAL STAFF

Production of Documents: Order

[*Business resumed.*]

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (11:32): I oppose the motion. The Opposition is interested in jobs. Bill Belichick, the general manager of the New England Patriots, who won six National Football League championships—in a similar way, the Liberal-Nationals have won the last six elections: three New South Wales elections and three Federal elections—has a saying, "Do your job. Focus on the fundamentals and do your job." What are the fundamentals for the Opposition? The fundamentals for those in Opposition are to hold the Government to account. Those on the other side of the Chamber should do that. I spent some time in this place working for an Opposition member and I know those processes well.

The job of the Opposition is to serve the people of New South Wales. There are myriad options available for members to do that without abusing the process, which is what is happening through this mechanism. The mechanisms available include Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPAA] requests, the estimates process, questions on notice and questions without notice, House committees, joint committees, select committees and standing committees. There are a number of options by which this Government should and can be held to account. This motion includes a request which is so wideranging that it is indecipherable. It is unclear what the Opposition is trying to get at.

The budget papers are two days old but I have not seen a GIPAA request or a letter to the Minister. Ministers are available to meet with Opposition members to answer questions. I do not doubt that Opposition members will have many questions once they have had the opportunity to utilise those resources. To use this mechanism in this way is a waste of resources—resources that belong to the people of New South Wales. The people of New South Wales expect that the Government will get on with the job of delivering for them, and not waste time on a fishing expedition.

The Government does not just make promises; the Government delivers on its promises. The Government does not make promises and then cancel them; the Government promises once and then delivers on those promises, on time and under budget. That is our job. When the Coalition was in Opposition for 16 years it utilised the estimates process. I commend that process to those on the other side of the Chamber, now that they have expanded it. The Opposition did not use that process particularly well. The former member Greg Pearce used it. He recognised the process and decided to enliven it. He recognised a lot of things in this place. In his maiden speech Greg Pearce called out Eddie Obeid, who was a Minister at that time, and Opposition members walked out of the Chamber.

Government members are all for scrutiny and for open and transparent Government, but there are proper processes in place that should be utilised. Those on the other side of the Chamber are demonstrating breathtaking hypocrisy; they could not stand any form of scrutiny when they were in government. They need to focus on doing their job—holding us to account using the proper processes. I oppose the motion.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (11:35): I first wish to address the suggestion by those opposite that somehow the Liberal-Nationals Government is not interested in fiscal transparency, by reminding them which Government introduced freedom of information laws in this State in the first place. The Hon. Tim Moore sought

to introduce private members' bills on freedom of information, which Labor voted against. It was only when the Coalition was elected that freedom of information laws were put in place.

Which Government introduced budget estimates hearings? That occurred under the same Liberal-Nationals Government. This year the Government has provided more information in the budget papers by listing the election commitments, saving Opposition staff all that time trawling through media releases and documenting them. This Government has provided that information for everybody to see. In terms of transparency, it was the Hon. Virginia Chadwick who asserted the powers of this House to allow the production of documents.

As a member of this House, I am concerned about the credible use of this power. The Opposition has not said why it wants these documents. The budget is only two days old. Opposition members have not read the budget; nobody has had time to do that. Instead of asking questions or using the Government Information (Public Access) Act the Opposition has chosen the nuclear option, which is to call for papers for everything, despite not knowing what it wants, nor being able to articulate what it wants and why it wants it.

The use of this power in this way reflects poorly on this House. It makes this House a hindrance and a problem for good government. It brings the power itself into disrepute. No effort has been made to consult or to go through the normal steps of contacting a Minister in the way that the Hon. John Graham has done. He took a great approach. He got the information he wanted—precisely what he needed—while sparing the House these problems. I urge the Opposition to think carefully before it asks for every document to do with every aspect of this budget paper. It is a ludicrous request that shows no sense of responsibility as to the practicality and the cost of that request. If this is implemented everybody will look stupid. Compliance issues need to be factored in as this House deliberates on this matter.

I have no objection to the Opposition's calling for documents when those on the other side of the Chamber know what they want and why they want it. That has not been articulated in this debate. It ought to be a condition of this House taking this dramatic step—*[Time expired.]*

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (11:38): I support the Government in opposing this motion. It is, yet again, a request under Standing Order 52—a trawling, dragnet effort or fishing expedition. I cannot think of a better analogy than fishing. It is a fishing expedition to try to find some policies for the Opposition to have a debate about. The other members on this side have quite clearly articulated the case that this is compounded abuse of process and that the upper House is being ridiculed in the State and in the Government because of this obstructionist behaviour by the Opposition and The Greens. I strongly support the words of Minister Tudehope in regards to the criteria that you should tick off before you make a Standing Order 52 request. Clearly, that has not been done, as the Hon. Catherine Cusack pointed out. The budget papers have only been out for two days and we are all still digesting them. It was interesting to hear that there were eight full-time employees in Treasury—they would not be junior staff—trawling through all of the documents so far requested. That is eight Treasury employees who could be advising the Government or working on relief projects that could be helping the Government design better programs for the bush to help with the drought. This is a huge diversion of resources.

The Opposition is asking for information about frontline public servants. I might give it some to help with its Standing Order 52. I will talk about frontline police—this is within the Standing Order 52 debate. We are investing more in our frontline police than ever before. Members will know from our election commitments that there will be 1,500 more police to deliver on the Government's commitment to invest in increasing the State's crime-fighting capability and keeping the community safe. That is \$583.6 million over four years. You do not need a Standing Order 52 for that. I am just giving out that information. It is in the budget papers. That is the highest level of police in this State's history, delivered by our Government. We want to make our streets safer and our communities safer. But more police means we need better infrastructure for them to use. That is why this Government has committed to build new police stations in Bega, Goulburn and the Jindabyne areas, including Perisher and Thredbo, and major upgrades to police stations at Bourke and Bathurst.

We are upgrading police stations. These are upgrades to stations that will deliver better and safer communities. These upgrades support the Government in maintaining a safe New South Wales with more police on the streets through the boosting of frontline staff. This will mean less crime. The Opposition will find out if it gets this Standing Order 52 motion.

The Hon. WES FANG (11:41): Well, look what we have here: A trawling motion from those opposite who have absolutely no plan or idea about how they are going to counter the fantastic budget that was released two days ago. What do you do? You come into this House with a Standing Order 52 motion where you have not asked for this stuff correctly and have not articulated a reason why you need to use Standing Order 52.

The Hon. Adam Searle: Point of order: The honourable member is not being relevant to the terms of the Standing Order 52. He is engaging in a wideranging critique of the Opposition. While that may be acceptable

to some degree in addressing the terms of the motion before the House, he is straying well beyond that general indulgence given by Presiding Officers. I would invite you to call him back to the specific terms of reference of Standing Order 52. He should address his comments not to us but through you, Deputy President Houssos, and address the terms of Standing Order 52.

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: To the point of order: I would like to make two points. First, the member is canvassing Standing Order 52 and the purpose of Standing Order 52. Secondly, you should call the Hon. Adam Searle to order because he has deliberately chewed up the honourable member's time.

The Hon. Peter Primrose: What do you think you're doing?

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: I think it needs to be called—

The Hon. Peter Primrose: You're taking up his time.

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: I seek the protection of the Chair. I am making a point of order and I am being interjected on. The point I am making is that the Hon. Adam Searle is using this as a tactic in the debate.

The Hon. Adam Searle: To the point of order: The honourable member is reflecting on a member of this House. He is impugning my motivations. I ask you to call him to order or ask him to withdraw. There is a procedure in this House for doing such matters and it is by way of a substantive and direct motion.

The Hon. Natalie Ward: To the point of order: The member is merely trying to articulate his argument. He is merely seconds into that. Time is of the essence. I suggest that we allow him to continue.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Courtney Houssos): I remind all members of the standing orders and the provisions that direct them to speak through the Chair and to direct the comments to the subject matter that is being debated at the time. The member had only commenced his remarks. I will give him some latitude in order to establish his case. But, given the limited time, I will give him the 15 remaining seconds.

The Hon. WES FANG: Through you, Deputy President Houssos, I just want to say that this is a terrible abuse of power by those opposite. This Standing Order 52 motion is a disgrace and this House should not support it. Use the correct methods or get a plan for New South Wales. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (11:44): In reply: A term that was repeatedly used by those opposite was "abuse of process". A member moving a motion in here for consideration by other members of this Chamber in line with the acknowledged power of this House is somehow an abuse of process. What should I be doing? What we should be doing now is put in Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPAA] requests. But at no point has this Government explained—

[*A Government member interjected.*]

I cannot quite pick up what the chatter is but the Minister could have stood up here and said, "We no longer put these figures in the budget. We have stopped doing it this year for this reason." He has failed to explain on behalf of the Executive. This is a Minister who was given carriage of this in here. This is a Minister who failed to say why his Government, after so many years, has failed to put the information in that has been there in budget after budget. I have asked for that same information and somehow that is an abuse of privilege. I have to go and ask for it under GIPAA.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Ask for it in budget estimates.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I mean, why? Why have you failed? I have to ask that in estimates? That is the suggestion. It is your responsibility.

The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones: Point of order: I was going to remind members that interjections are disorderly and the Chair was trying—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Courtney Houssos): I appreciate the assistance of the Government Whip. I remind all members, especially the Minister at the table, that interjections at all times are disorderly. There is one minute 20 seconds remaining. We will allow the mover to make his speech in reply. I will not hesitate to call members to order—members will take their seats—if they do not allow the member to continue in silence.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: The Minister could have stood up, explained or, indeed, apologised for failing to have this information.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Point of order: What the mover of the motion is currently doing is entirely outside the ambit of the motion. He should address himself to the specifics of the motion and why it is necessary for him to move the motion. What this goes to is identifying—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Courtney Houssos): Order! The member's time has expired. The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes23
Noes16
Majority.....7

AYES

Banasiak, Mr M
Buttigieg, Mr M
Faehrmann, Ms C
Houssos, Mrs C
Latham, Mr M
Pearson, Mr M
Searle, Mr A
Shoebridge, Mr D

Borsak, Mr R
D'Adam, Mr A
Field, Mr J
Hurst, Ms E
Mookhey, Mr D
Primrose, Mr P
Secord, Mr W
Veitch, Mr M

Boyd, Ms A
Donnelly, Mr G (teller)
Graham, Mr J
Jackson, Ms R
Moriarty, Ms T (teller)
Roberts, Mr R
Sharpe, Ms P

NOES

Amato, Mr L
Fang, Mr W (teller)
Harwin, Mr D

Martin, Mr T
Nile, Revd Mr
Ward, Mrs N

Blair, Mr
Farlow, Mr S
Maclaren-Jones, Mrs
(teller)
Mason-Cox, Mr M
Taylor, Mrs

Cusack, Ms C
Franklin, Mr B
Mallard, Mr S

Mitchell, Mrs
Tudehope, Mr D

PAIRS

Moselmane, Mr S

Ajaka, Mr

Motion agreed to.

Committees

STAYSAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)

Meeting

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Assembly:

The Legislative Assembly requests that the first meeting of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety currently set for Tuesday 6 August 2019 at 9.00 a.m. in room 1043 be set for an alternative time and place.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: By leave: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow the consideration of the Legislative Assembly's message relating to the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety forthwith.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: By leave: I move:

That the time and place for the first meeting of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety be Thursday 20 June 2019 at 2.00 p.m. in room 814-815.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I move:

That a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly conveying the terms of the resolution agreed to by the House.

Motion agreed to.

*Motions***WOMEN IN SPORT**

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (11:59): I move:

1. That this House notes that:
 - (a) Easts Rugby Club is the oldest district rugby club in Australia;
 - (b) the Easts Rugby Club will build female change rooms with the \$1.8 million funding pledged by the New South Wales Government; and
 - (c) the new female change rooms will facilitate more women in sports.
2. That this House congratulates:
 - (a) the Government on this initiative which promotes equality in sporting facilities and encourages women in sports; and
 - (b) East Rugby Club's commitment to equality for women in sports.

Easts Rugby has been an integral part of New South Wales since its establishment in 1900. It has led the way for many pathways forward in sport and has achieved much success on and off the field.

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. John Ajaka) took the chair at 12 midday.

The PRESIDENT: Order! According to sessional order, proceedings are now interrupted for questions.

*Questions Without Notice***LAND CLEARING**

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (12:00): My question is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women representing the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Given that environment and farming groups expressed increased concerns about land-clearing laws and have said that the laws are failing to protect critically endangered native species and are being applied unequally, does the Minister stand by the Government's current legislative framework?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:00): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Because his question relates to the portfolio responsibilities of a Minister in another House, I will be pleased to take the question on notice.

STATE BUDGET AND JOB CREATION

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (12:01): My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Finance and Small Business. How is the New South Wales budget demonstrating the Government's commitment to job creation in New South Wales?

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (12:01): I thank the member for his question and interest in jobs creation in this State. The budget handed down this week confirms that this Government is the party of the workers—miners, sheep shearers, shoppies, teachers and nurses. Workers turn to this Government because we deliver for them. Over 670,000 jobs have been added in New South Wales since 2011 and this State continues to be the powerhouse of the nation. It has an unemployment rate of 4.6 per cent. Regional New South Wales is getting in on the action with our four-year jobs target of 30,000 for the regions smashed by 95,600 jobs added since 2015.

The Government's \$93 billion infrastructure program is driving strong jobs growth. Each project—whether a new rail line, a stadium in Parramatta, a new or upgraded road, a school or hospital—brings with it more jobs, more investment and more businesses to support communities in surrounding areas. This Government is also investing in the jobs of the future. New employment precincts will drive innovation and jobs growth, such as the western Sydney aerotropolis, which will be home to a range of industries that include aerospace, defence and agribusinesses. This Government is continuing to grow a start-up ecosystem with the Sydney innovation and technology precinct between central Sydney and Eveleigh and our investment of \$35 million in the Sydney Startup Hub. The Government's payroll tax cuts will mean 5,000 businesses over the next few years will be able to hire more staff and invest more in their businesses.

The Government is supporting young jobseekers and mature-age jobseekers with free TAFE and vocational education and training courses to increase their skills to get into the workforce. This Government is transforming the public service so that it is fit for purpose. In the process thousands of jobs will be created. The Government is investing record amounts in frontline government jobs—4,600 new teachers, 5,000 new nurses, 3,300 new health professionals and 1,500 new police officers. Back office middle managers do not improve the

lives of our communities but teaching, nursing and policing jobs change lives and improve our communities. But there is only one group of jobs that the Opposition is interested in. Before Parliament resumes in August, there will be members in new jobs—perhaps in place of the current Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The PRESIDENT: I remind honourable members that I have taken the chair, although the Deputy President, the Hon. Trevor Khan, and Deputy President Houssos did a fabulous job. I thank both for allowing me to have time to attend a funeral. I also remind members that I am happy to have a robust question time. I really do not wish to suffocate a robust question time, but when I cannot hear a Minister's answer or a question that is being asked because of massive and continuous interjections from all parts of the Chamber, question time becomes a little bit more than robust. Listening becomes quite difficult not only for the Chair but also, more importantly, for Hansard.

MONARO GRASSLAND

The Hon. WALT SECORD (12:05): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women representing the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. What is the Government's response to community concerns about the Federal Department of the Environment and Energy meeting with New South Wales Local Land Services about the listing of native Monaro grassland as critically endangered immediately after a formal meeting with the Federal member for Hume, Mr Angus Taylor, MP?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:06): I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in this House for his question. As the question refers to the portfolio of a Minister in the other place, I will take the question on notice.

MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (12:06): In directing my question to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, I refer to the Mental Health Infrastructure Program that was allocated \$700 million over an undefined period, to only \$14.68 million being spent in 2018-19 and only \$22.33 million being allocated in this week's budget. I ask: In the middle of a mental health crisis that includes an alarming increase in suicide, why is the Government spending only 3 per cent of \$700 million allocated to mental health infrastructure over the next 12 months?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:07): I thank Ms Cate Faehrmann for her question. As the mental health Minister, I am proud to say that \$700 million was allocated for mental health capital expenditure over a period of 10 years. The Government is examining matters very carefully and is planning that infrastructure build in terms of capital investment to which the member referred. I am pleased that work is underway to deliver capital works to support the future needs of mental health services. I am particularly pleased to state that much of the Government's focus will be on planning new mothers and babies units at the Royal Prince Alfred and Westmead hospitals, which will provide a really important service that will allow mothers to stay with their babies.

The \$20 million that was allocated in the 2018-19 budget commenced the statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program, which is estimated to cost a total of \$700 million. I emphasise that the \$700 million will be capital expenditure over 10 years so that the Government can get its planning right. We know where facilities and services have to be built and we know what has to be done. What this Government does very well is think about the planning for services. The Government has allocated a record infrastructure spend for mental health services. As I said earlier, the Government is considering new mothers and babies units, an older persons unit at Campbelltown Hospital, units for forensic patients and 260 step-up, step-down community beds that are a fantastic and much-needed initiative. That is a lot of beds. The Government will carefully consider where they need to be to provide the most effective care so that people can transition from an acute state in the mental health service to primary health care and also provide for the possibility they will have to come back.

It was a really interesting concept and someone spoke to me about this. After my having been a cancer nurse for 20 years, this person told me a lot of people are starting to think about mental health in respect of cancer services. Twenty years ago when I first started as a nurse if you had a diagnosis that it was a metastatic disease you did not have a long-term prospect; now you do, and in mental health you do. However, we need to make sure that those acute services transfer into community services so that they can all work together. That is what those 260 step-up, step-down beds are about. It is a fantastic initiative.

Local health services will continue to prioritise their capital work investments, including for mental health. Also being considered is further investment enhancing the therapeutic environment for some acute mental health services. We are seeing this in the sensory rooms that are starting to be built. I visited one such room at

Hornsby hospital only a couple of weeks ago, which is fantastic. I know the honourable member is interested in seclusion and restraint measures. The infrastructure that is being changed to build these rooms means that we can look at effective de-escalation measures, avoiding people having to be restrained in a physical or chemical manner. This is really exciting. The Gosford Hospital redevelopment includes a six-bed psychiatric emergency— [*Time expired.*]

PUBLIC SCHOOLS FREE BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The Hon. WES FANG (12:10): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. What is the New South Wales Government doing to ensure that more children have access to a healthy breakfast?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:11): I thank the honourable member for his question. Everyone knows that access to a nutritious diet has a significant impact on a child's mental and physical health. Eating well will mean better performance in the classroom. That is why thousands of vulnerable children in New South Wales public schools will now have the chance to get a wholesome, nutritious start to their day, with the Liberal-Nationals Coalition rolling out free breakfasts in 500 more public schools across the State.

This initiative will be rolled out in partnership with Foodbank, Australia's largest food relief organisation, which aims to both reduce food insecurity for vulnerable Australians and, in turn, address the nation's food waste problem. The sad reality is more than four million Australians have experienced food insecurity over the past year, with children representing 22 per cent of this figure. As a Government we are partnering with Foodbank to help take the pressure off parents and carers who are struggling to put food on the table for their children, and provide relief to the communities who need it the most.

Research shows that a nutritious breakfast has a hugely positive impact on a child's mental and physical health. It enhances engagement and productivity in the classroom, improves cognitive functions and educational outcomes, and helps children develop social and leadership skills. I have been made aware of a number of schools across the State already participating in the Foodbank program. Campbellfield Public School is one of the hundred schools in New South Wales already providing their students with free breakfast, which I am told is having a huge impact on the school community. Campbellfield Public School said its free breakfast was so well received that parents said their children were jumping out of bed to get to breakfast club. Staff observed a spike in engagement in the classroom and saw that children were more focused and motivated. They were also forming stronger leadership skills and better relationships with peers and parents.

Sadly, for some it is not always easy to put nutritious, hearty meals in front of their children. This initiative will both ease some of the financial burden on parents and carers and also make children more excited to go to school and have a healthy start to the day. This is just one initiative outlined in the Government's budget to see New South Wales students benefit. It aligns with our commitment to continue to deliver on our promise to provide a quality education to every child no matter where they live or what their circumstances may be. We know this is an important way we can help those students coming from those tougher backgrounds and communities of which all of us in this House are aware. Some of our children find themselves in very unfortunate circumstances. To make this investment in our children to ensure they have access to a healthy breakfast, in partnership with Foodbank, really is an investment in their future. I look forward to watching thousands of children right across New South Wales benefit from our biggest ever education budget. I look forward to working closely with Foodbank to deliver on this initiative, which I know will have a positive impact for so many children and their families.

The PRESIDENT: I remind all members that questions are asked in the following order: firstly, the Leader of the Opposition, then a Government member, then the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, then a crossbench member, then a Government member, then a crossbench member. Then I alternate between Opposition first, Government second, crossbench third. It would assist the Chair if those seeking the call know it is their turn to seek the call.

SHOALHAVEN WATER CONTAMINATION

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (12:14): My question is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women representing the Minister for Energy and Environment. It has been more than a month since the Shoalhaven community learned that 100,000 litres of PFAS-contaminated water had been dumped into the council sewerage system, ultimately flowing into the Shoalhaven River. It is alleged that Sikorsky Aircraft Australia, a maintenance provider at HMAS *Albatross*, discharged this PFAS-contaminated water. This report follows previous warnings related to PFAS contamination in the Shoalhaven River, creeks running into Jervis Bay and in creeks and land around the Aboriginal community at Wreck Bay. Why is Shoalhaven City Council and not the

Environmental Protection Authority [EPA] conducting the investigation? What role does the EPA have in its current investigation? What information can the Minister provide about the Government's response to the broader PFAS contamination issues in the Shoalhaven?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:15): I thank the member for his question. As that question relates to the portfolio of a Minister in the other House I will take the question on notice and get a response.

MONARO GRASSLAND

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (12:15): My question is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women. Did the Minister involve herself in any representations or meetings about the New South Wales Government's submission on the Commonwealth Government's listing of natural temperate grassland in the Monaro as critically endangered?

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: Could I please have a copy of the question. I call the Minister on a point of order.

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: My point of order is that I believe that question falls outside the responsibilities of the Minister.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: To the point of order: The subject of the question is within the actions of the Minister. It is about representations that she has made in relation to this matter.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: To the point of order: The public affairs to which the Minister is connected relate to the time at which the Minister is a Minister and the purview of her portfolio. As such the question should be ruled out of order.

The PRESIDENT: I have examined the question. It is seeking details of representations made on a personal basis. These representations do not fall within the Minister's administrative or ministerial responsibility. The question is out of order. I call the Hon. Wes Fang to order for the first time. I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order for the first time.

STATE BUDGET AND HEALTH

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (12:18): My question is addressed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women representing the Minister for Health and Medical Research. How is the 2019-20 New South Wales health budget building on the Government's record investments in healthcare over the past eight years?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:18): I thank the member for his question. I am proud to speak on behalf of Minister Brad Hazzard to this Government's strong record and our new announcements in the Health portfolio. The Government has committed to commencing 29 new hospital and health facility upgrades over the next four years. This is in addition to 200 new and upgraded hospitals already delivered or underway under the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government.

The New South Wales Government has announced \$2.8 billion to recruit 8,300 frontline health staff over four years, including 5,000 nurses and midwives, including mental health and palliative care nurses; 1,060 medical staff, including doctors, psychiatrists and specialists; and 880 allied health, including social workers and physiotherapists. Importantly, 45 per cent of these staff will be in regional New South Wales. We are also delivering \$45 million over four years for palliative care. Having been a clinical nurse specialist in palliative care, this makes me very happy. The Hon. Greg Donnelly will be pleased that this package delivers 100 additional palliative care nurses, Aboriginal health workers and digital health solutions. This complements the \$100 million package for palliative care that was announced in 2017-18. What a great story that is.

In addition, \$76 million will be rolled out over four years to boost elective surgery. This funding provides for an additional 8,000 paediatric operations at a cost of around \$45 million, which means more doctors and nurses, three months less waiting time for non-elective surgeries and half the wait time for semi-urgent elective surgeries. The package also provides for an additional 10,000 cataract surgeries, which I know will be greatly valued in our communities. They make a huge difference. People cannot believe the difference in the clarity of their vision when they have cataract surgery. In addition, \$70 million over four years will facilitate 35 new free mobile dental clinics for primary school children, with western Sydney, mid North Coast and Central Coast areas being the first to benefit. Rollout begins next month—how fantastic.

There has been a \$9.6 million funding boost to support people suffering from eating disorders, particularly teenagers. Some \$63.9 million over four years will provide new parents with essential items to assist

in their child's early health and development. I draw particular attention to a couple of the great initiatives that will have a significant impact on those in more isolated areas of New South Wales in the area of telehealth. [*Time expired.*]

NON-COMMERCIAL KANGAROO KILLING

The Hon. EMMA HURST (12:21): My question is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women representing the Minister for Energy and Environment. The kangaroo has significance to Aboriginal people, as a clan totem, as an art subject and as an indicator of particular habitat associations and seasonal and climatic changes, both annually and in the dreaming cycle. Given the kangaroo's importance in culture and country, will the Minister give figures on the number of kangaroos killed in non-commercial slaughter from June 2018 to June 2019?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:22): I thank the honourable member for her question. I acknowledge the spiritual significance of kangaroos to Aboriginal people. All native animals, including kangaroos, are protected under Commonwealth and New South Wales law. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is responsible for regulating activities that harm kangaroos and other native animals in New South Wales. The department manages two kangaroo licensing frameworks—one for commercial harvesting and one for non-commercial culling. It is an offence to harm a kangaroo or attempt to harm a kangaroo without a licence.

Non-commercial licences to harm kangaroos can be issued only by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to landholders for the purposes of damage mitigation and public safety. With much of regional New South Wales in drought, kangaroos have been impacting on feed for farm animals and on crops, which is causing hardship and safety issues. In August 2018 the Government recognised the impact of kangaroos in drought-stricken areas and amended non-commercial licensing to help landholders better manage kangaroos on their property. The changes are intended to assist landholders manage the impact of kangaroos during the drought while maintaining animal welfare standards and ecologically sustainable kangaroo populations.

Annual aerial surveys are used to determine populations using widely accepted and scientifically robust methods. These surveys are used to inform property allocations for non-commercial licensing, with maximum limits in place. A record of licences issued is publicly available on the Environment website. The department conducts monthly reviews of licences issued to landholders and commercial harvesters to ensure the total number of kangaroos culled is within ecologically sustainable limits.

The Hon. EMMA HURST (12:24): I ask a supplementary question. I thank the Minister for her answer. In her answer she mentioned robust methods to decide on the number of kangaroos. Can she please elucidate what those robust methods are and how she can ensure that they are robust?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:24): I thank the honourable for her question. If she requires more detail on the robustness of the measures, I will take that on notice. As it refers to a Minister in the other place, I will get him to provide that answer.

BULLYING

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (12:25): My question is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women. On 29 May the Minister told this House, "The New South Wales Government does not tolerate bullying", and, "No person should ever feel isolated or harassed." What steps has the Minister taken to ensure that no ministerial staff are the subject of bullying by her colleagues?

The Hon. Scott Farlow: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: I will look at the question.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: My point of order is in respect of public affairs to which the Minister is connected. The Minister is not connected with employment and ministerial staff. Therefore, the question does not fall within the realm of the Minister's public affairs.

The Hon. Walt Secord: To the point of order: I put that this is squarely within public affairs. In fact, the Minister in response to a Dorothy Dixier from her own side introduced this material into the Chamber on 29 May. The Hon. Peter Primrose quoted from *Hansard* and from her speech. It cannot be any more inside the arena.

The Hon. Peter Primrose: To the point of order: The Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women is responsible for this issue with regards to employers throughout New South Wales. It is not a matter of who employs them. It refers to people who are employed in private enterprise or State agencies—all aspects are covered. However, in this case I have suggested that one particular area of responsibility and I have asked the

Minister for her comment. Because she does not have particular responsibility for employing those people should be irrelevant.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: To the point of order: To assist the Opposition, there is a process known as the allocation of Acts, which the Premier advises the Governor on and is proclaimed. It is crystal clear which areas of legislative and regulatory responsibility each Minister is responsible for. There is no connection between the allocation of Acts as proclaimed by the Premier and the question that has been asked. To take a comment that the Minister has made and generalise that she is now responsible for all bullying in all workplaces is a ludicrous instruction and there is no legislative or regulatory basis to it. I refer Opposition members to the allocation of Acts so they can find the correct Minister to ask the question of.

The Hon. Adam Searle: To the point of point: The required connection between a question and the Minister responding to it is that it must be relevant to public affairs with which the Minister is officially connected to. It is not limited by the allocation of Acts. In this case the question was based squarely on an address made on 29 May in this House by the Minister, according to *Hansard*, in her official capacity as the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women. It is directed to her ministerial responsibilities and it is directly based on an address she made in this place. For Government members to claim it is not connected with the official affairs of the Minister beggars belief.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I have given extra time on this point of order because it is a important issue. All of the comments made by members were helpful. Standing Order 64 (1) states:

Questions may be put to Ministers relating to public affairs with which the Minister is officially connected, to proceedings pending in the House, or to any matter of administration for which the Minister is responsible.

A ruling by then President Burgmann, confirmed at different times by then President Primrose, then President Fazio and then President Harwin, states:

Questions may be put to Ministers relating to public affairs with which the Minister is officially connected, to proceedings pending in the House or to any matter of administration for which the Minister is responsible.

The then Presidents repeated the wording of Standing Order 64 (1). The question asked by the Hon. Peter Primrose should have been directed to the Minister responsible for the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Premier. In this House the question should have been asked of the Leader of the Government, who represents the Premier. The question is out of order.

The Hon. Walt Secord: She introduced the material into the Chamber!

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Point of order: Both yesterday and today, after the President has given a ruling, an editorial comment, clearly dissenting from the President's ruling, has been made by the Opposition member at the table. Whether that comment is directed at the President or the Chamber more generally does not change the nature of the inappropriate and disorderly conduct.

The Hon. Walt Secord: To the point of order: I apologise to the Chamber. Circumstances such as this require a private discussion with the President at a later time. I will pursue that.

The PRESIDENT: I uphold the point of order. I thank the Hon. Walt Secord for his apology. On a number of occasions I have noticed comments being made by members who disagree with my rulings. The standing orders are very clear. If members do not agree with my ruling there is a set procedure for them to follow. I remind members that I am both the master and the servant of this House. On a one-to-one basis I am the master. When the House as a whole or the majority of the House wants to deal with an issue I am the servant. That is why the procedures are there. It is inappropriate for commentary to be made or signs to be given that members are unhappy with my rulings. I am independent and impartial. I do my very best. I am grateful that I have had the support of all members. I will be more than happy to discuss any of my rulings at the Procedure Committee meeting at 2.00 p.m. today, if members wish. Alternatively, I am more than happy to speak with members on a one-to-one basis.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (12:34): My question is addressed to the Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's investment in the Australian Museum?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (12:34): I thank the Hon. Shayne Mallard for his excellent question. In 2018 the New South Wales Government announced a \$50.5 million contribution to the Australian Museum for "Project Discover"—the museum's first stage of redevelopment to create an expanded state-of-the-art, 1,500 square metres, flexible, touring exhibition hall. The

Australian Museum is also raising \$7 million, through fundraising, to contribute to the cost of the project. In the budget the New South Wales Government reaffirmed its commitment to deliver this fantastic project, which is now underway. Construction is due to commence in August 2019 and completion is due by the end of 2020.

As this House is well aware, the first exhibition in the new space will be the exclusive blockbuster Tutankhamun: Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh exhibition. It is the largest and most impressive Tutankhamun exhibition to ever leave Egypt and it will open in early 2021. But that is not all. In the future the museum will be able to attract many more blockbusters. The new flexible exhibition spaces will provide opportunities for the Australian Museum to attract a broader range of exhibitions. The New South Wales Government's funding will enable the Australian Museum to repurpose existing storage space to significantly expand the touring exhibition hall to 1,500 square metres across two levels. That will allow the Australian Museum to host either one major exhibition or two exhibitions simultaneously.

Importantly, the new facilities and visitor amenities will allow the Australian Museum to remain competitive and relevant for generations of Australian and international visitors. As well as the transformed exhibition spaces, the refurbishment will also create new education facilities, which will enable school student visitors to double to 100,000 a year. In addition, there will be space for a new museum shop, a second cafe, an expanded member's lounge, cloakroom and much-needed new and accessible amenities. The project has a benefit-cost ratio of 1.5. The expanded touring exhibition halls will be able to accommodate up to 800,000 visitors during a blockbuster the size and scale of the Tutankhamun exhibition. It is an fantastic project. I am shocked that yesterday—*[Time expired.]*

WESTERN SYDNEY HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (12:37): My question is directed to the Parliamentary Secretary for Health. Given that the Government is building a city the size of Adelaide—1.3 million people—in the districts west of the M7 in western Sydney, why has it failed to undertake any planning, site allocation or funding provision for a new public hospital as part of its aerotropolis residential area? Given that Adelaide has four public hospitals, why, according to the 2019 budget papers, will the new growth areas of outer western Sydney, with the same number of people—1.3 million—have none? This will place even greater pressure on Nepean, Liverpool and Campbelltown hospitals 30 kilometres away.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (12:38): I thank the honourable member for his question and his interest in health infrastructure in western and south-western Sydney. The New South Wales Government is planning for the impact of population growth associated with the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. The design and delivery of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis is the responsibility of the Western City & Aerotropolis Authority. Its CEO, Mr Sam Sangster—the former CEO of Health Infrastructure NSW—would be aware of issues concerning the provision of health services. I understand that the Hon. Mark Latham has personally raised these issues with the Minister for Health and Medical Research. I suggest that the member also meet with the Western City & Aerotropolis Authority.

Current and anticipated growth in demand for health services is continuously assessed and acted upon by the New South Wales Government so that we can ensure that health services continue to meet demand. The Government already has a number of health infrastructure projects underway in western and south-western Sydney. They include stage two of the Campbelltown Hospital redevelopment at an estimated total cost of \$632 million. This second stage will expand and integrate key clinical and support services to meet the growing needs of communities in south-west Sydney. It will include a new clinical services building with modern wards and patient facilities, an expanded emergency department, state-of-the-art operating theatres, an intensive care unit, enhanced paediatric services and increased access to outpatient and ambulatory care services.

We have the Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct, at an estimated total cost of \$740 million. This significant project will provide substantial health infrastructure to south-western Sydney's growing population and complement other integrated precinct projects underway at Westmead and Randwick. Those projects will deliver world-class research and health services, as well as create new opportunities for education and economic growth. We also have stage one of the Nepean Hospital redevelopment, at an estimated total cost of \$550 million. This is the first stage of a \$1 billion redevelopment, which will significantly increase health services and facilities for local communities. The expansion and upgrade will occur in two stages. Stage one will deliver \$550 million for contemporary, integrated clinical and community-based health services. Furthermore, we have the \$1.3 billion redevelopment of Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. The New South Wales Government is aware of, and responding to, increasing demand in western and south-western Sydney for health infrastructure. When we came to government in 2011 we inherited a significant health infrastructure backlog. Not only have we addressed that backlog but we are also investing significantly to deliver the services that the people of New South Wales and western Sydney deserve.

VACCINE STORAGE

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE (12:41): My question is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women representing the Minister for Health. What administrative steps has the New South Wales Government taken to ensure that vaccines for patients, including infants and young children, are being properly stored in New South Wales?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:42): I thank the honourable member for his question about the storage of vaccines in New South Wales. As the member would be aware, there are very strict conditions and regulations for the storage of vaccines in New South Wales. Temperatures need to be regularly checked and temperature guidelines need to be adhered to. That is the responsibility of the health service and the people who deliver the vaccines. Those guidelines are strict and need to be adhered to. The New South Wales Government takes them very seriously to ensure the efficacy of the vaccine. If the vaccine is kept in temperatures that do not meet those requirements, then the vaccine potentially will not be effective.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (12:43): My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance and Small Business. How is the New South Wales budget supporting and stimulating regional economies impacted by drought?

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (12:43): I thank the honourable member for his question.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: How are your efficiency dividends going?

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Are you measuring up the seat over here—the one you were going to sit in?

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: I'm very happy where I am.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Have you decided which one? I thank the honourable member for his interest in New South Wales farmers and local communities. As a Government we know that our farmers and our local economies are doing it tough. There might be a few days of rain this week, but we all know that our regions need rain and more support from the Government—from all of us—to get through this drought. That is why we are delivering additional funding for our regional communities as part of this budget. We are investing a further \$355 million to extend drought support for farmers and funding to fast-track investment in regional infrastructure to stimulate local economies. This brings the Government's investment in drought support to more than \$1.8 billion.

This stimulus package will fund many critical town water projects, as well as other shovel-ready infrastructure projects that will support local economies. It is not just farmers who have been impacted by this drought; a flow-on effect is felt throughout local businesses such as cafes and local stores. The Government recognises that in order to keep businesses open and jobs in town, the Government needs to fast-track its investment in local infrastructure. This funding package will support those rural communities in their time of need. As part of the package, up to—

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: Point of order: My point of order relates to the interjections and the dulcet tones of the Hon. John Graham coming across the Chamber. I ask that the member be called to order.

The PRESIDENT: Firstly, although no point of order was taken, I remind Ministers that when commencing their answers they must be directly relevant. As I have indicated, members can set up a little bit of foundation leading to a directly relevant answer. The Minister's first 45 seconds were spent having what appeared to be a discussion across the table and was in no way directly relevant to the question that was asked of him. Secondly, Ministers should not encourage interjections. Although there was no encouragement by the Minister when the interjections were occurring, there may have been a flow-on effect from his first 45 seconds. I uphold the point of order. I will not call the Hon. John Graham to order this time. I remind Ministers to be directly relevant and not to encourage interjections.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I accept the admonition. There are also more transport subsidies for stock, fodder and water. As part of the package, up to \$120 million will be used to fast-track infrastructure for projects to get local economies moving. In addition, the package includes waiving of charges for water licences, interest on drought loans and local land service rates. We are fast-tracking new regional water strategies. As the Treasurer said in the other place, the decisions we make today will help protect and future-proof our regions tomorrow. The Deputy Premier has announced that as part of this budget, \$400 million will be invested to ensure

that our regional communities have access to the very best mobile phone, internet and data services. As part of the budget, we are also investing \$500 million to repair and replace worn-out bridges, \$500 million to repair and maintain local roads and \$100 million to build—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Mick Veitch to order for the first time. Although his ongoing interjections are very quiet, they are still interjections.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I will talk a little more quietly. Good governments run a strong budget so we can invest when it is needed. We on this side of the House are proud to be supporting our regional economies and communities who do so much for our State.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (12:48): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. Is it true that male year 9 students are more than two years below where they are expected to be? According to Dr Damon Thomas of the University of Tasmania, in year 9 their writing ability is at a year 7 level. Is it also true that the education gap between boys and girls has continued to widen, as reported by Peter Goss of the Grattan Institute? What strategies are in place to address this crisis in boys' education in particular and why are they not working?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:49): I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for his question. It is a good question. Making sure that we have the best possible outcomes for our students in New South Wales is critical for me as Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. I have said that a number of times in this House. I think Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile referred to two specific reports with respect to year 9 boys. I am not familiar with the specifics of those reports but I am happy to have a look at them.

I can say, more generally, that the Government—including me, as Minister—is very conscious of making sure that there are continuous improvements in results in our schools. One of the initiatives recently announced was the expansion of the Bump It Up initiative, which will look at student outcomes across all government schools in New South Wales in areas like literacy and numeracy, attendance and wellbeing. We are also looking at equity and the different groups that make up school communities. We are looking at ways to improve opportunities for rural and regional students and Aboriginal students. The matter that the member raises is very important. We should strive every day to improve student outcomes. We should be looking at whether gaps exist in terms of gender performance in different subjects. It is important to look at whether the boys are performing better or worse than the girls and vice versa, and the reasons behind that. That is what a good education system does.

I point to the issue of attendance and the resultant outcomes. It was recently pointed out to me that an attendance rate of 90 per cent may seem to be fairly good, but over the course of a student's school career that would mean that the student was missing about a year of education. That is not a positive outcome. I am very happy to look in detail at the reports that the member has mentioned in his question. It is important that I am aware of all the research, particularly if it relates to the writing capability of boys, as the member mentioned in his question. Strong literacy skills are important and students need to be equipped for everything that the future might bring for them. This Government is absolutely determined to do that.

STATE BUDGET AND EDUCATION

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (12:51): My question is directed to Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. Given that during the 2019 State election campaign the Government pledged to build new schools in Bungendore, Jerrabomberra, Jindabyne and Googong, will the Minister detail the funds allocated for each of these projects in the 2019-2020 budget?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:52): I thank the honourable member for her question. She is right; the Government made a lot of commitments to spend on school infrastructure during the election. Those commitments were delivered in the budget on Tuesday. The Government said that it would build 190 new and upgraded schools over the next four years—a commitment of \$6.7 billion. Part of that is going through the processes it takes to build schools.

Members on this side of the Chamber know that there is a process to go through when schools are being built; that process may be less familiar to those on the other side of the Chamber. There is the planning process, the tendering and contract phases and then the construction. That takes time; the Government acknowledges that. The budget papers listed all the 190 schools that will be built or upgraded. The figures for spending school infrastructure are available. The Government has made clear what it will be doing. Over the next four years \$6.7 billion has been allocated to build or upgrade the schools. The schools that the member has referred to in her question are amongst those schools. They are listed in Budget Paper No. 2, chapter 2, page 9.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The Hon. LOU AMATO (12:53): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. Will the Minister please outline what the New South Wales Government is doing to support early childhood services during the drought?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:54): It is good to have another question in relation to drought, following on from the earlier contribution of my colleague about ways that the Government is supporting communities that are suffering from drought. As I have visited preschools across regional New South Wales, particularly over the last 12 months, I have seen the dramatic impact that the drought is having on children and their families.

Juggling work and family commitments is always difficult. For many farming families with young children, as this crippling drought persists, things are getting harder. The workload is increasing for parents on farms to increase their sustainability. It has been brought to my attention that as the dry conditions continue to bite some families have considered making the very tough call not to send their children to preschool anymore, because they cannot afford it. The Government knows how important the two years before school are. They are pivotal to a child's educational success. That is why, last Friday, I was pleased to be able to stand beside the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales, Mr Adam Marshall, at Good Start Early Learning in Tamworth and announce that the Government will be extending the drought assistance program for early childhood services by adding another \$5.52 million.

This will provide support for community preschools and mobile preschools and, for the first time in this round, long day care services will also be eligible to receive this funding. That is very important. It will mean that more early childhood services than ever before will be able to receive support and keep operating during times of drought. The goal of these payments is to help alleviate some of the pressures on families by supporting our early childhood education services. It will mean that the services will be better equipped to provide initiatives for maintaining preschool participation for families where drought is limiting access.

In the previous two rounds there were some great examples of this. At Barraba, the preschool has already used earlier rounds of funding to reduce its attendance fees significantly. At Gilgandra, the preschool was able to give families an entire term free. From memory, the preschool at Tenterfield got the cost for families down to about \$10 a term, which meant significant savings for families. Another aspect of this program worked really well. We all know that physical environments can be damaged by dry weather. That damage can be repaired thanks to these payments, which, in turn, will support the children's capacities to learn and engage. Calrossy Preschool in Tamworth has bought water management equipment, and a service in Singleton has used this funding to replace some of the dry and dead grass with soft-fall so that the children can continue to play and enjoy the physical environment. We know that is important for children's development.

These payments can also go towards futureproofing community preschools to make sure that they are better equipped to cope with similar circumstances if they arise in the years ahead. This is a really good initiative. Early childhood services can form the hubs of rural communities. The Government understands the social importance of early childhood education. We always wanted to do more, if we could, to help. We now have this third round, which is great. *[Time expired.]*

AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER

The Hon. EMMA HURST (12:57): My question is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women representing the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Why is \$2 million over four years being spent to establish an independent agriculture commissioner with legislative powers to protect the right to farm? Will the commissioner focus on investigating groups such as animal activists and environmental activists?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:57): I thank the honourable member for her question. I think the establishment of a commissioner is a really great thing for agriculture. Those on our side of the House love agriculture. We think it is fantastic to feed the world. Exciting things are happening and we should be really pleased about that. Anything that provides a better focus on agriculture is a good thing—whether the focus be on the incredible work that farmers do, the way they care for their animals or the way they look after them. Farmers make sure that they feed their animals really well. Farmers grow great crops to feed the world, to make bread, pasta and gnocchi. The idea of an agriculture commissioner is exciting; it is a really good thing.

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: Point of order: The Minister is making a wonderful contribution in her answer. I am sitting right next to her but I am struggling to hear because of all of the interjections in the Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I uphold the point of order. I am glad the Minister referred to "all of the interjections in the Chamber" and did not single out one side. I have no chance of hearing what the member is saying because of the noise that is coming from both sides of the Chamber.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: As I was saying, it is really important to have an independent agriculture commissioner so that we protect our farmers and allow them to do an incredible job every day, whether it is looking after cattle to create great beef—Wagyu beef. I am sure all members in this place love burgers. They can thank our Aussie farmers. I love a burger. We have fantastic poultry farmers doing incredible things. Who does not love an egg on their burger? I love an egg on my burger. What about our incredible pork industry? I understand another great thing is that we are growing lots of different crops to create breads.

The Hon. Walt Secord: I would be careful. You will be needing her vote soon.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: Point of order: Yet again, I am trying to answer a question asked by the Hon. Emma Hurst and I am being constantly interjected by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. Walt Secord: To the point of order: The Minister is baiting members on this side of the House. I was warning her that she may need the votes of the Animal Justice Party members in the future.

The PRESIDENT: I remind the Hon. Walt Secord that he is on one call to order. I indicate to the Hon. Walt Secord that I have previously warned that Ministers should not encourage interjections. I also indicate to the Minister that I did not hear the Hon. Walt Secord because of all of the interjections coming from Government members. I have indicated to Government members previously that I do not appreciate interjections. It makes it very difficult for Hansard to record what a Minister is saying. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The Minister has finished her answer.

The time for questions has expired. If members have further questions I suggest they place them on notice.

Questions Without Notice: Take Note

TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I move:

That the House take note of answers given to questions this day.

ROUSE HILL HOSPITAL

The Hon. WALT SECORD (13:02): Yesterday, as shadow health Minister and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I directed two questions to the Hon. Bronnie Taylor about Rouse Hill Hospital. My third question was a written supplementary question. This morning I received a written response to that supplementary question. To remind members the question I asked was:

What is the line item in the budget papers for the \$300 million for Rouse Hill Hospital?

In response, she said:

In June 2015, the New South Wales Government announced \$300 million from the Rebuilding NSW fund to build the first stage of the Rouse Hill Hospital. In the 2018-19 State budget, the New South Wales Government allocated \$75 million out of the \$300 million to acquire a site for the future Rouse Hill Hospital. The remaining \$225 million to commence the Rouse Hill Hospital will be allocated in the next three years as part of the \$10.1 billion investment in New South Wales hospitals and health facilities across New South Wales.

I note that at no point does she answer the direct question. She was unable to cite where the \$300 million is mentioned in the budget papers. However, I am very well across the budget papers. I have been reading budget papers since 1991. At no point does that figure appear in the budget papers. However, I note the reaction reported in the *Rouse Hill Times*. At 10.33 a.m. Jake McCallum described the omission as a "knee-jerk reaction" and that the New South Wales Government has scrambled to reveal \$300 million—

The Hon. Don Harwin: Point of order: It appears the discussion of a newspaper article is underway. It is more like an adjournment speech than a contribution to this debate.

The PRESIDENT: I indicate to Hon. Walt Secord that up until he started quoting from the newspaper he was on track with the take-note debate. If members start introducing newspaper articles or third parties, they will deviate from the debate.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I will conclude on that, because I have finished the quote from the publication. But I do point out that I am very pleased with the response. In fact, it has kicked the Government into

action. I welcome this. There is now a \$300 million commitment in black and white to a hospital in the north-west. The north-west is under enormous pressure. It has the longest wait for an ambulance in New South Wales.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Point of order: The member is again well and truly straying from the answer.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Walt Secord is straying from the answer given.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I am close to concluding my comments. I also respond to— [*Time expired.*]

WIRRINGA BAIYA ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (13:05): On 29 May I directed a question to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women about the funding cuts to Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre. As I stated in that question, the NSW Women's Alliance's Safe State platform recommended that an additional \$4 million per year in funding is required for Wirringa Baiya. Instead, our information from the centre is that they will lose approximately \$30,000. The Hon. Bronnie Taylor took that question on notice and we received a response today from the Attorney General.

The Attorney General noted that compared with 2016 and 2017 the Women's Legal Centre will receive over \$18,000 more funding. I am not quite sure why we are looking only at 2016-17, or why we would be excited about a funding increase over the core funding of \$18,000 when inflation of 2 per cent would mean that the centre needs at least an additional \$20,347 to stop staff cuts so that it can serve the number of women it is currently serving. As we know, that number is far less than what demand dictates. In 2018 the centre received \$673,796, which was about \$50,000 more than what it is getting now. When considering the specific project funding the centre has received in the past, last year it ended up with \$28,225 less.

I ask the House to take note of the answer that we received and that we view it is really inadequate to deal with the number of women coming to the centre. In particular, when comparing the amount with 2016-17 figures, without taking into account inflation and increases in population, it indicates there is a funding cut, not a funding increase.

STATE BUDGET AND PUBLIC SERVICE

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (13:08): I take note of answers by the Minister for Finance and Small Business. In giving his answer, the Minister came very close to making disparaging comments about back office staff. I invite him to correct the record if he does not feel that is the case. Both sides of politics often want to emphasise front office staff and that is how politics in New South Wales works. This happened in the other place over the course of this week as well. I want to put on record that when talking about the importance of frontline staff, there is no need to diminish the work of that back office staff do in keeping government offices running. Some important parts of the Government are run by good public servants who are working hard in the interests of the public. I place on record my support for their work.

This week we heard from the Government how many people are regarded as being frontline staff. The Leader of the Government told the Chamber it is 89.1 per cent. We know that the Government will try to protect jobs in regional areas, but when those 2,500 job cuts are made they will fall very hard on just 11 per cent of the public service, and probably not in regional areas. That will hit particular areas of government hard. At the moment the staff who work in those areas are pretty worried. I put on record that we do not need any suggestion, in this place or elsewhere, that their work is not valued.

The Minister talked about the Government's support for small business. I intend to come back to the point I make now in more detail at another time, but I give the Minister warning that it is coming. I would take those claims more seriously if the Government acted on one of the issues that this House has debated and highlighted. Members of a committee of this House came to the bipartisan view that small business music venues are operating under an incredible amount of over-regulation in this State and that it should be dealt with. It has not been dealt with. I encourage the Minister to examine that issue.

WESTERN SYDNEY HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (13:10): I take note of the answer from the Parliamentary Secretary for Health. It was a detailed, elaborate answer under the new standing orders, which in itself was appreciated. I stress the need for a new public hospital in outer western Sydney because over the years the planning mistakes in the region have been very distressing and we do not want to repeat those in 2019. I am talking about the 1960s and 1970s when there was a population explosion in western Sydney without developer contributions and the provision of essential services. There were then broadacre public housing estates built in Campbelltown, putting

disadvantaged people in a disadvantaged place, magnifying the extent of their problems. We have to learn from those lessons.

It is true that this Government has more infrastructure projects than the Labor Government that will benefit the people of New South Wales, but it cannot beat its chest about these things without planning for the future. It cannot bring 1.3 million people—a vast population growth—into the areas west of the M7 without providing a new public hospital. The comparison to Adelaide is valid, which has four public hospitals in an area with the same population. The Government says it is building a city the size of Adelaide. There is no planning, no site allocation or funding in the budget for a new public hospital in western Sydney.

Page 48 of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan has a couple of paragraphs about health facilities. An integrated health facility sounds like it will be a couple of clinics to serve 250,000 people. That is less than 20 per cent of the people moving in. Surely a government that is planning ahead can acknowledge that that volume of population requires a new public hospital somewhere around the aerotropolis between Penrith and Camden but also strong consideration should be given to a third children's hospital in Sydney. This area will be the youth capital of Australia. There is a children's hospital in the east and one at Westmead, which is essentially the centre of Sydney's population.

Consideration should be given to building a third children's hospital with specialist paediatric services in the outer western Sydney region where those services are desperately needed. I intend to get worked up, but perhaps not as worked up as in years gone by because planning for western Sydney is essential. People in the region say they are not putting up with inadequate planning any more. The mistakes made in the past century were bad enough. This document on the aerotropolis is hopelessly inadequate. Given the vast number of people moving to the area, the Government needs to get moving with the planning and at least have sites allocated for those facilities. Money is being wasted on the Warragamba Dam project. I do not think Parramatta is all that accessible for a new arts facility. The bigger priority for western Sydney is getting the health services right, particularly for young families moving to those districts.

AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (13:13): I take note of the answer given by the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales to a question from the Hon. Emma Hurst about why the New South Wales Government is spending \$2 million on establishing an agriculture commissioner. Firstly, it was an election commitment. This State needs an agriculture commissioner to underpin the great work of farmers across New South Wales and to ensure that they have the right to provide food and fibre—not just domestically but also internationally—without the interference of those who are trying to shut down their legitimate operations.

More importantly, the commissioner will help farmers traverse through the red and green tape that they face daily at a State and local government level. Too many times farmers who have farmed in the same area for generations are subjected to frivolous complaints about noise and odour due to the expansion of urban sprawl, which is putting their legitimate operations at risk. Farmers get up at the crack of dawn and spend their whole day producing food and fibre. At night they are tasked with fighting this issue on their own. Usually some sort of social media campaign is trying to shut down their legitimate operations. The agriculture commissioner will support farmers.

I hope the help will first start with those mongrel dogs from the website Aussie Farms. Those people are masquerading under a charity status and posting the addresses of farmers undertaking legitimate operations. They are putting farmers' biosecurity, and at times their safety, at risk. I hope the agriculture commissioner works with the Commonwealth Government—which has taken on this task—to try to shut down this ridiculous website. It is nothing more than a vigilante group targeting farmers who are doing nothing wrong. If this group wants to boycott farming products, fair enough. But when they drive every farmer out of the State, their salad—or whatever it is they choose to eat—will be imported from overseas at a higher carbon output than any food that is produced in New South Wales. The agriculture commissioner is needed on a number of fronts. It needs to be the levelling voice that backs in our farmers because for too long they have been at the wrong end of frivolous complaints and campaigns. And you know what? We need our farmers. Just as the Minister said, farmers do a fantastic job and we should support them. That is what the agriculture commissioner will do.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

STATE BUDGET AND EDUCATION

LAND CLEARING

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (13:16): I take note of the answers given today to make three points. The Hon. Niall Blair spoke about drought. Today the New South Wales Labor Opposition replied to the Budget Speech

and, of course, offered the hand of bipartisanship to support communities in this State throughout drought. We also made one request of the Government that we hope they will take up and that is that they do not apply the efficiency dividend to frontline workers.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Point of order: There is an order in which we do this. This is a take-note debate relating to answers given to questions. This is like a—

The Hon. Don Harwin: It's an adjournment speech.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Yes, an adjournment speech or a shadow Minister's statement. It is certainly not in the spirit of this exercise.

The PRESIDENT: I was surprised that a point of order was not taken when the Hon. Niall Blair was giving his "adjournment speech". I do not want to waste the Hon. Penny Sharpe's time but I remind her of my ruling yesterday that she should focus on the answers given to questions. In future I will not wait for a point of order; I will remind members of my ruling.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Drought is important. Today a Minister gave an answer about those measures. Labor is seeking an extension of those measures and we continue to do that. I also reflect on the promised upgrade to schools that are basically a mirage in the budget. Today Labor asked a question about schools in Monaro. While those items appear on the page—and the Minister was very keen to say which page—I put on record that there is no start date, no end date and no money is allocated to those schools. Printing it in the budget is fine, but if no money is allocated, they do not exist.

I make the point that the answers regarding the way land clearing laws are applied in New South Wales continue to be inadequate. Many questions have been asked in this House and we have received very few answers. Serious concerns were raised recently about Federal members of Parliament interfering with the application of land clearing laws.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: Point of order: I ask that the Hon. Penny Sharpe refer to the answer given to the House today and specifically the answer to which she refers in her comments?

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Penny Sharpe must refer to oral or written answers given today.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I was reflecting directly on the fact that the answers the Opposition has sought have been completely and entirely inadequate. They are answers to direct questions that have been asked in this House.

The Hon. Wes Fang: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: No. The Hon. Penny Sharpe may continue. She is allowed to say what she is saying.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Serious concerns have been raised about the manner in which land clearing is operating in this State. The Government has not provided the answers that are required. I urge the Government to come clean on all its interactions relating to this matter.

The PRESIDENT: A member is entitled to refer to a question and to indicate they do not believe the question has been answered appropriately. I draw the line when a member says the question was not answered appropriately and proceeds to attempt to answer the question by introducing new material. That is why I did not take the point of order by the Hon. Wes Fang.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS FREE BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (13:20): I refer to the answer given by the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, regarding the partnership between Foodbank and the Government to provide breakfast at 500 schools. I sensed when that answer was given the whole House was supportive of that program. I participated, as did the Hon. Scott Farlow, in the inquiry into childhood obesity and children being overweight that gave rise to the Active Kids vouchers. The inquiry discovered the big issue of children not having meals at home and certainly not having breakfast. The problem is bigger than simply kids going to school hungry and not learning. There is an intergenerational problem because they are not learning about the preparation of food, nutrient food groups or the benefits of a regular and balanced diet.

That intergenerational problem will be inherited when current schoolchildren become parents. The programs that address the problem include the provision of breakfast programs referred to by the Minister, for which I commend the Government, and the cultivation of kitchen gardens. I hope I am not straying outside the permit of the debate.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: You are.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Kitchen gardens are really important.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Shayne Mallard is more than entitled to comment on the answer given. He is more than entitled to say he agrees or disagrees with the answer and he is more than entitled to comment on aspects of the answer. But one problem is beginning to emerge, and I can understand why. Members who have served on a committee now want to give a take-note speech on what occurred in the committee, the committee's findings and its recommendations. That is straying well outside the take-note debate of answers to questions.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Thank you, Mr President. It is important to point out there is an intergenerational issue. Children who are not receiving good nutrition at home also are not learning the importance of nutrition and they do not have skills to pass on to their children. I commend the Government on expanding the breakfast program to 500 schools in partnership with Foodbank, which is a great organisation that does a great deal of good work in our community. I commend the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning for her answer.

STATE BUDGET AND EDUCATION

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (13:23): I ask the House to take note of an answer provided by the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. The Minister was asked a very specific question about this Government's commitments made during the 2019 State election campaign regarding the building of new schools in Bungendore, Jerrabomberra, Jindabyne and Googong. The answer given was vague and addressed general plans for school projects, but no detail was provided regarding financial commitments in the 2019-20 budget for schools in Bungendore, Jerrabomberra, Jindabyne and Googong. I ask the House to take note of the answer the Minister provided. No dollar amounts were allocated to those schools. Where is the money? Those communities need these schools to be built now.

STATE BUDGET AND EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS FREE BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (13:24): In question time today the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning was asked a question about completion dates for the construction of the Jerrabomberra High School, the Googong Public School, the Bungendore High School and the Jindabyne High School. The Minister referred to the overall infrastructure budget and that appropriate time had to be allowed to plan the projects. It is important to note that in the case of the Googong Public School the Department of Education owns the land. Several years ago Labor promised to build the school. There has been plenty of time for appropriate planning and preparations to be made, but instead the budget and the Minister's response today confirms a lack of commitment to a firm start date, a firm completion date or even specific funding for planning. There is no line item in the budget that provides for specific planning for the Googong Public School.

The Opposition also asked a question about the Jerrabomberra High School. On polling day I had the good fortune to be in Jerrabomberra when I stood next to the Deputy Premier, who insisted on telling the community that the promise he made eight years ago to build the Jerrabomberra High School had been fulfilled and construction was underway. Anyone who refers to the budget papers released this week and to the Minister's answer will know that that is not the case. The planning is not even underway. There is not even a specific commitment for planning in the budget that was announced two days ago for that specific project. We can talk about pots of money and that there is planning for lots of schools, but there is no specific funding commitment for those schools in the budget. Time and again during question time this week we have heard Government members try—

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: I am surprised it took so long for someone to take a point of order.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: I came close on several occasions. Clearly, the Hon. Courtney Houssos is straying from the answer.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Courtney Houssos was doing well at the beginning. In the few seconds that remain for the member's speech, she should continue as she began.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: In the very limited time remaining for my speech, I refer to the answer given by the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning about school breakfast programs and refer to the fresh food pricing inquiry and the response from the Government that is due over the July break. I emphasise the need for a school lunch program as well.

The PRESIDENT: That is outside the ambit of the Minister's answer.

[*Business interrupted.*]

Visitors

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I welcome to the public gallery student leaders from Kiama who are guests of Minister Gareth Ward.

Questions Without Notice: Take Note

STATE BUDGET AND EDUCATION

[*Business resumed.*]

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (13:27): My comments will be brief. I congratulate the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox knows that there are well-established rules against the use of props.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Walt Secord will resume his seat. If the Hon. Walt Secord disobeys my ruling, I will call him to order. The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox is entitled to use a booklet and read from it. He also is entitled to use the budget papers, which other members have done.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: For the edification of members, this is a budget paper, which is a very important document to which the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning referred in her answer.

The PRESIDENT: There is no need for the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox to discuss the point of order. He should proceed with his speech.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I congratulate the Minister on a very specific answer and response to the very good question that was asked, which referred to the Bungendore, Jindabyne, Googong and Jerrabomberra schools. Because I live in the Monaro electorate, I was very pleased to hear the Minister's very specific response. The Minister's response went directly to Budget Paper No. 2, page 2-9, which refers to an unprecedented investment in school infrastructure and lists a range of schools that include each of the schools referred to in the original question. The Minister referred to those schools in her answer.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Point of order: The interjections are preventing the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox from making his contribution to the debate.

The PRESIDENT: I uphold the point of order. There are too many interjections from members on both sides of the Chamber.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: Nonetheless, I will plough on. Budget Paper No. 2 refers to record schools infrastructure investment of \$30,470,000, which is for the whole school system and new schools. The reality is that Opposition members need to learn how to read budget papers. I suggest they convene a session with the help of the Clerk to run through the details, and perhaps we could get a Treasury officer to help them through the process. [*Time expired.*]

TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (13:30): When speaking about responding to last year's Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Planning and Environment inquiry on the music and arts economy, the Hon. John Graham ought to remember that he is now a member of the Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy. The Government established that committee during this Parliament to give it an opportunity to take a holistic view of the very issues he referred to. Before he accuses the Government of not responding, he should remember that he is participating in a committee that is part of developing our response. He should remember that we are being collaborative, and he ought to give us some credit for it. The second point I make is how embarrassing the contributions of the Hon. Penny Sharpe, the Hon. Courtney Houssos and the Hon. Tara Moriarty—

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Point of order—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: The Minister will resume his seat. I will give the Hon. Penny Sharpe the call as she was referred to.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: This is a take-note debate in relation to answers. It is not an opportunity for the Minister to accuse other members or reflect on their contributions.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: In fact, that is exactly what it is.

The PRESIDENT: I do not want to take too much time. The Minister is not giving a reply—let us make that clear. The mover of the motion does not have a right of reply; the Minister closes the debate. As I have indicated previously, any speaker is entitled to refer to previous contributions of other speakers and indicate whether they agree or disagree with them. I believe that is exactly what the Minister was doing.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Those members were discussing allocations of money to schools. This from a party that spent \$500 million on a Rozelle metro without any planning—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister is straying from the take-note debate on answers.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: We can see what the Opposition's approach leads to. Let us remember, as my colleague the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox pointed out and as anyone who reads the budget papers can see, that \$30 million is allocated for planning. You do not put a final construction cost amount in a budget paper until you have planned it. Yet that is what members opposite are accusing the Hon. Sarah Mitchell of doing. Where do they get off? Clearly that is why they are still on the Opposition benches. They do not know what they are doing. [*Time expired.*]

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Deferred Answers

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

In reply to **the Hon. WALT SECORD** (30 May 2019).

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women)—The Minister provided the following response:

I understand that the Black Dog Institute has developed a confidential Suicide Prevention Intelligence System which is accessible only by approved service providers and includes a mapping study of certain existing services. Black Dog Institute informs me that data on health services is incomplete outside their four LifeSpan suicide prevention trial sites in New South Wales (located in Newcastle, Central Coast, Illawarra/Shoalhaven and Murrumbidgee.) Therefore, the data referenced in the question on Black Dog's data platform currently is unable to provide a full picture of services available in Far West Local Health District.

There are indeed mental health services in the Wentworth Shire. Dareton Community Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Team services covers the region from Wentworth to Balranald in south-western New South Wales.

Outside business hours, mental health assessment and triage is provided by video conferencing through the Mental Health Emergency Centre that operates 24 hours a day seven days a week, or through Mildura Base Hospital.

Additionally, the Director of Clinical Psychiatry for Far West Local Health District runs an outpatient clinic in Dareton two days a month. He supports the Dareton Community Mental Health team on a daily basis and is available to them for consultation and clinical support as required.

The Dareton Community Mental Health Team work closely with the following NGOs that cover Dareton and surrounding communities. These programs support people living with a mental illness to maintain and enhance their housing, participate in community life, increase their functioning and enhance their overall wellbeing while supporting family and carers.

- Mission Australia the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative [HASI], Community Living Support [CLS] program
- Catholic Care Family and Carer Mental Health Program
- Coomealla Health Aboriginal Cooperation [CHAC]
- Mallee Family Care
- Family Mental Health Support Service Buronga
- LiveBetter in Wentworth

ANIMAL WELFARE

In reply to **the Hon. MARK PEARSON** (30 May 2019).

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women)—The Minister provided the following response:

RSPCA NSW investigated the incident and there were no offences identified under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 [POCTA].

MENTAL HEALTH

In reply to **the Hon. PENNY SHARPE** (30 May 2019).

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women)—The Minister provided the following response:

The Health Professionals Workforce Plan 2012-2022 — Progress Report Year 6 was published in January 2019 and is available on the NSW Health website: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/workforce/hpwp/Pages/hpwp-progress-report-year-six.aspx>

PUBLIC SCHOOLS AWARDS PROGRAM

In reply to **the Hon. MARK LATHAM** (30 May 2019).

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning)—The Minister provided the following response:

Since 2016, the staff of Westmead Public School have engaged in research on how to effectively motivate students. The school encourages all students to understand that mistakes and failures are learning opportunities.

In 2018, Westmead Public School phased out its incremental award system which included assembly awards that were previously awarded to each child. Students in years 3 to 6 still receive three awards per class, the award of school dux for academic achievement is still presented and sports awards at carnivals continue.

In kindergarten to year 2, the school changed to a Celebration of Learning event at which each child received a reflective memento. On this memento students acknowledged an area in which they had improved that year and/or of which they were particularly proud.

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

In reply to **the Hon. PETER PRIMROSE** (30 May 2019).

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (Parliamentary Secretary for Cost of Living)—The Parliamentary Secretary provided the following response:

The New South Wales Government is honouring its commitment to make it easier for firefighters who develop cancer to claim workers compensation and support. Firefighters risk their lives to keep the people of New South Wales safe every day, and it is important they receive the full support of the communities they serve.

Regional New South Wales is experiencing record investment by the New South Wales Government, with support for regional communities and drought stricken farmers at the heart of this year's budget. The New South Wales Government continues to deliver funding for communities across regional and rural New South Wales, and is proudly rolling out over \$1.8 billion in drought support.

The 2019-20 Budget provides an additional \$355 million for drought support, including a \$170 million economic stimulus package to bolster regional economies through infrastructure investment.

The 2019-20 Budget provides an additional \$100 million top up to the Regional Growth Fund, taking the fund to a record \$1.7 billion. A further round of the popular Stronger Country Communities Fund will open this year, allowing councils and community groups to access funding for community infrastructure projects and programs.

As part of the \$4.2 billion Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund, the New South Wales Government is allocating \$400 million over four years to banish mobile blackspots and boost internet speeds in regional towns and centres, with the first \$90 million provided in the 2019-20 Budget.

The 2019-20 Budget sets out \$37.5 million over two years for a 742 kilometres extension of the wild dog fence to protect stock and boost farm productivity, as well as \$1 billion to fix and repair regional New South Wales's worst roads and timber bridges, alleviating a burden on local government.

To further address the cost of living for regional seniors in particular, the New South Wales Government is rolling out a \$250 Seniors Transport Card, to help eligible seniors in regional areas save on travel costs.

To directly assist households the New South Wales Government is providing free Cost of Living checks at Service NSW centres across New South Wales, as well as rolling out new measures such as a doubling of Active Kids vouchers.

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AND CONDUCT DIRECTORATE

In reply to **the Hon. ROSE JACKSON** (30 May 2019).

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning)—The Minister provided the following response:

Privacy considerations restrict the release of information to parents in relation to students other than their own children, or to parties who are not connected with an investigation.

Where a student is the victim of alleged conduct by a teacher, the parents or carers of the student are kept informed of the progress of the investigation, and they are further advised when the investigation is completed.

At the conclusion of the investigation, parents will be advised whether allegations involving their child have been substantiated. However, privacy concerns prevent disclosing to the parent details of the action taken against the teacher.

Only the parents or carers of students at the centre of allegations are provided with information and at any stage they may advise they do not want to be contacted or receive information about the progress or outcome of an investigation.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

In reply to **Ms ABIGAIL BOYD** (30 May 2019).

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women)—The Minister provided the following response:

The New South Wales Government is working collaboratively with the organisations which have united to form the NSW Women's Alliance to address the devastating impact caused by domestic violence on women and families right across New South Wales.

As part of the New South Wales Government's response, we are investing more than \$390 million over four years to tackle domestic violence through a range of initiatives. This is in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars our Government spends each year to combat domestic and family violence through mainstream services in justice, police, health, child protection, social housing and homelessness services.

Written Answers to Supplementary Questions

ROUSE HILL HOSPITAL

In reply to **the Hon. WALT SECORD** (19 June 2019).

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women)—The Minister provided the following response:

In June 2015, the New South Wales Government announced \$300 million from the Rebuilding NSW fund to build the first stage of the Rouse Hill Hospital.

In the 2018-19 State Budget, the New South Wales Government allocated \$75 million out of the \$300 million to acquire a site for the future Rouse Hill Hospital.

The remaining \$225 million to commence the Rouse Hill Hospital will be allocated in the next three years as part of the \$10.1 billion investment in New South Wales hospitals and health facilities across New South Wales.

STATE BUDGET AND SEXUAL AND GENDERED VIOLENCE

In reply to **Ms ABIGAIL BOYD** (19 June 2019).

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women)—The Minister provided the following response:

I am seeking advice from the Department of Justice and will provide the honourable member with the complete answer as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT: I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 3.00 p.m.

Private Members' Statements

FIREARMS REGISTRY

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK (15:00): In 2017 my colleague the Hon. Robert Borsak made a speech in the adjournment debate on the remake of the firearms regulations. The honourable member noted that the remake was intended, amongst many things, to reduce red tape wherever possible, protect public safety and ensure that the remade regulations reflected the needs of the community. It is now 2019 and anybody who has had to deal with the New South Wales Firearms Registry would know that the above set of intentions is a joke. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party could spend all day on the phone taking calls from people who are at their wits' ends with the New South Wales Firearms Registry. That this Government has ever seriously considered reducing red tape around firearm ownership is a joke. It can take up to 16 weeks for licences to be delivered.

Licences can only be applied for online; apparently this will reduce red tape. The assumption that everyone can apply online is arrogant. The fact that this Government thinks everyone in New South Wales has access to reliable internet shows how disconnected it is with the people of this State. By removing paper applications, the Government, in one fell swoop, isolated a large portion of applicants. I wonder if that was their intention. Even if you can apply online, it is still not guaranteed that you will receive your licence, as one can no longer collect a licence in person at a service centre. The "reduction in red tape" has opened up another gaping hole in the registry—the mail-merge function. Somehow, permits to acquire and licences get sent out to the wrong addresses. I have the feeling that this might fall short of the Government's "protect public safety" principle. With regard to the postal system that has been put in place, Police Commissioner Fuller said, "We are basically doing it by carrier pigeon." The Police Commissioner made that statement but still nothing has changed.

This Government might claim that everything is hunky-dory, but the experience for many customers is something else, because apparently a two-hour wait on the phone to discuss an issue is considered reasonable.

Even then there is no guarantee the issue will be dealt with or resolved. One customer complained to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party office that they were told by a member of the registry staff, "I cannot do this; I don't have time." If registry staff do not have time to do their jobs, what do they have time for?

Wingecarribee Hunters and Anglers club had to wait 13 months for an approval—an approval that came with numerous conditions that doubled down on those that already exist. So, in a bid to reduce red tape, this Government has increased it. What point does the New South Wales Firearms Registry have to get to before action is taken? None of the promises made in 2017 has been fulfilled. In fact, things are getting worse. Public safety is at risk and people's personal information is at risk. This shows the arrogance of this Government and the complete disregard for due process and for law-abiding firearm owners. I call for the Minister for Customer Service, Victor Dominello, to go to Murwillumbah and teach the registry a lesson in customer service.

TRIBUTE TO PETER BATEY

The Hon. WES FANG (15:04): Last Friday, we lost a pioneer of the Australian art world, when Peter Batey, founder of the Bald Archy Prize, tragically lost his life in a road accident in the State's south. Peter was a true Aussie larrikin with an irreverent sense of humour. As a former arts administrator, playwright and festival director, when Peter arrived in Coolac, New South Wales, after bidding farewell to Victoria, he brought with him a sharp and, at times, wicked wit, and an eccentric view of the world around him—not to mention his pet cockatoo Maude.

In 1994 the first Bald Archy exhibition was held and, thanks to Maude's enthusiastic wing flapping—a sure sign of a winner according to Peter—a portrait of Edmund Capon, former director of the Art Gallery of NSW, took home the inaugural top gong. Since then, portraits featured at the Bald Archys have seen the likes of Kerry Packer, Amanda Vanstone, John Howard, Rupert Murdoch, Bill Shorten and even Shane Warne given the satirical treatment. Although Maude passed away some years ago, Peter the larrikin ensured that her role as the 'sole juror' for the prize continued for years to come. Peter created the Bald Archy Prize not simply as a light-hearted jab at the Archibald Prize but also to provide artists with an outlet to showcase their work to a wider audience. In saying that though, Peter was never a fan of the pomp he had perceived in the art world throughout his career. He believed that art should be fun and accessible to all. He was adamant that art should be judged on its own value, and that the creativity and intelligence behind some of the Bald Archy entries should be showcased far and wide for everyone's enjoyment.

Peter had a deep commitment to the Riverina and was a tireless advocate for its people, its towns and its produce. As part of the Festival of Fun in Coolac, Peter was instrumental in showcasing the region's best food, wine and entertainment. His home at the old Coolac schoolhouse became a centre of cultural excellence which showed that even in the smallest places in regional Australia, world-class events could be created. Luke Grealy from the Museum of the Riverina remarked that when he first met him, Peter showed him that country people deserve excellence in arts and tourism as much as those from the city, and that they were more than capable of creating it. Peter loved the Riverina and he immersed himself in the community. Whether serving on local council, protecting and restoring local landmarks or hosting art events, Peter had the Riverina at his heart. He broke down barriers to the art world and made our region just a little bit more of a colourful and fun place to call home. He was a true Aussie character and he will be sorely missed.

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTOPHER CASSANITI

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (15:07): Today I pay tribute to Christopher Cassaniti, a young worker who was tragically killed by a scaffolding collapse in Macquarie Park earlier this year. I start by offering my condolences to his family, friends and fellow workers. No colleague should see a friend die at work and no parent should have to bury their child. Christopher was by all accounts a charming and respectful young man, a hard worker and an eager apprentice. We all share in the family's loss.

Christopher's death was a tragedy, but it is sadly not uncommon in the building industry. Preliminary fatality statistics from Safe Work Australia show that nine of the 56 workplace-related deaths in 2019 have been construction workers. These skilled men and women are the backbone of the New South Wales economy, providing the essential infrastructure, housing and workplace buildings we all rely on. Their contributions to our society deserve this House's support and acknowledgement. That can start by ensuring that their families know that each evening they will come home safe.

We do not yet know what caused the scaffolding collapse which took Christopher's life but we do know that properly assembled, maintained and regulated equipment should not have failed. The collapse may have been an accident, but it could have been prevented. The failure of this State's workplace health and safety regime has contributed to the death of a young man. This Chamber must listen to the collective voice of workers in the building trades and their call for superior workplace safety measures. Empowering workers to identify and resolve

issues at a workplace level, and protecting them when they have the courage to speak up, must be a priority of this place.

It is time for this Government to collaborate with the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union to acknowledge the concerns and expertise of its members and to put measures in place that ensure that people like Christopher are safe at work. If a minimum-wage worker takes \$5 from the cash register at work, the law considers it criminal theft. If a worker injures someone while speeding between job sites, their action may be subject to criminal proceedings. But when a boss deliberately steals money from their worker's wage packet, there is no criminal implication. When a boss cuts corners on safety and a worker dies, they walk free. This represents a fundamental injustice in our society. If your negligence causes the death of any person you should be held criminally accountable, irrespective of whether you are a CEO or a worker.

The only possible justification for such a disparity between the consequences for management and construction workers is that we consider the lives of people like Christopher to be worth less than the lives of their bosses. Surely no-one in this place could defend such a position. I call on the Government to introduce industrial manslaughter legislation which acknowledges the criminal culpability of people whose conduct causes the deaths of their employees. I call on the Premier to recognise the tragedy of workplace deaths and to treat them with the same seriousness as any other death by negligent act or omission. I call on this Parliament to do the decent thing by New South Wales workers.

DR DON WEATHERBURN

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (15:10): Today I acknowledge and pay tribute to Dr Don Weatherburn, director of the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. Dr Weatherburn has been a champion of fearlessly reporting the truth about crime since 1988. Dr Weatherburn recently announced he is stepping down from his current position and, in doing so, I take this opportunity to thank him for his contributions over three decades of speaking the truth about firearms crime and firearms-related policy in Australia. In a letter to *The Sydney Morning Herald* in November 2005 he said:

I too strongly supported the introduction of tougher gun laws after the Port Arthur massacre. The fact is, however, that the introduction of those laws did not result in any acceleration of the downward trend in gun homicide.

In an article on the Australian gun buyback in the *Herald* in 2006 he pointed out:

Research since the gun buyback has shown that more than 90 per cent of homicide cases involve an unregistered weapon and the alleged offender was not licensed to own a gun.

In the same article Dr Weatherburn went on to comment on how policymakers should respond to the evidence showing that the gun buyback did not affect the rate of firearm homicide. He said:

It is time to look beyond further restrictions on the level of gun ownership if we want to tackle firearm crime. The challenge facing policymakers is how to limit the spread of illegal firearms (particularly handguns) among criminals, particularly drug traffickers.

Just recently, Dr Weatherburn told the *Herald*:

Crime statistics are vital in order to hold police and governments to account in efforts to reduce crime.

Governments of both political persuasions have not always heeded Dr Weatherburn's sage and evidence-based advice, but they should. In closing, I thank Dr Weatherburn for his diligent work over the years on collating, analysing and publishing crime statistics and wish him well in his new role as an adjunct professor at the University of Sydney.

FAB FAKES EXHIBITION

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (15:12): Some might say that my private members' statement today is fake news, because today I wish to talk about the 2019 Fab Fakes Exhibition. Tuggerah Lakes Art Society is currently accepting entries for the exhibition which will be held at The Art House in Wyong from 8 until 28 November this year. I am told that the exhibition is the largest of its kind here in Australia and this year celebrates its twenty-first birthday. The exhibition encourages artists from all over Australia to submit their best forgery of famous art. In 1998 one of Tuggerah Lakes Art Society's members, Brian Hasler, founded the Fab Fakes Art Exhibition. His idea of the best way to learn art, like many art tutors, was to emulate the masters by making a forgery—a fake of a masterpiece. This contest eventually became a tradition over the years, attracting artists from all over Australia.

In 2019 a range of prizes are on offer for the best fakes and the public also have the opportunity to get their hands on a masterpiece by way of a silent auction. To ensure there are no breaches of copyright the artist of the original must have been deceased for 70 years or more. Prizes will be awarded for the Best Fab Fake, the Next Best Fab Fake as well as People's Choice, among other prizes. On the 21st birthday of the exhibition I congratulate the Tuggerah Lakes Art Society, including President Rasheeda Flight, Vice-President Donna Cole, Secretary

Tammy Briggs, membership officer Wendy Scorgie, webmaster Mal Hamilton and spokesperson Gail Brigden. Finally, budding exhibitors should keep in mind the advice of Monet when creating their piece—

The Hon. Don Harwin: Manet or Monet?

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Monet—I thank the arts Minister—and I quote:

My art is my love. I'm flattered at the prospect of someone copying my paintings but, please, just get the colours right.

ASSET PRIVATISATION

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (15:14): I inform the House of my view regarding electricity privatisation and asset privatisation in general. I note the Premier's recent undertakings both before and after the election that the Government would not engage in any further asset sales. The Premier said, "No, I will say no because it was not in an election platform for us and I do think it is in the State's interest to have a little bit of interest in those businesses". Of course, she was referring to businesses such as Ausgrid, Essential Energy—which our Nationals Party comrades lobbied to keep in public hands—and Endeavour Energy. Contradicting the Premier and the Leader of this House, we have Minister Constance and Treasurer Perrottet running around saying they think that asset sales are a great way to finance infrastructure; a good way to continue asset recycling.

I remind those members opposite that when it comes to electricity assets, just under 50 per cent of Ausgrid is still owned by this Government, by the public. Just under 50 per cent of Endeavour is still owned by the public. Essential Energy is 100 per cent retained in public hands. Now, if the Government truly believes it is in our interest to keep the public holding in it, then why the contradiction? We have to look at the history of privatisation recently and the relative failure of that to deliver for the public. Electricity bills are \$200 higher on average than they were prior to privatisation. We have lost literally thousands of jobs. Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy have shed literally 2,000 to 3,000 jobs since privatisation. Now, if this is the price we have to pay on top of less reliability, my view is it is not worth it. Essentially what has happened is a vertically integrated monopoly that was owned by the public and accountable to the public has been transferred into private hands.

Retailers are hedging their oligopoly interests in the generators against that generation ownership and gouging retail prices because this Government lifted the cap on retail prices. That is why prices have gone up. The Australian Energy Regulator has regulated the network businesses to the bone which is why you have lost 2,000 to 3,000 jobs. The solution is not to keep selling more assets. The solution is to actually look at the structure and try to work out a way to make it competitive. One option might be to look at renewables and multiplicity of generation feeding into the network and competing on price. These other sorts of things we need to work on together to move forward instead of just selling off everything with a view to short-term money grabbing.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (15:17): In July last year RSPCA inspectors attended a property in Marsden Park after receiving a report of mistreated greyhound dogs. *The Sydney Morning Herald* has reported that 12 dogs were surrendered. Many had dental problems, pressure sores, malnourishment and six dogs had anaemia due to fleas. Thankfully, 11 of the dogs have since found new homes. I pay tribute to the people who adopted these dogs. The community is consistently welcoming of dogs that have been used and abused by the greyhound racing gambling industry. However, that is where the good news ends. On 13 June the owner of the property, Charles Sultana, was fined a paltry \$2,800. The RSPCA found several greyhound carcasses at the property. However, charges were not brought because there was insufficient evidence that the dogs had been killed within the last 12 months, which is a requirement of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979.

While we have weak regulation and enforcement, while we have a spineless Government that refuses to end the cruel and corrupt greyhound betting industry, the least we can do is make it as easy as possible for people to adopt the dogs. One obvious way to do that is to treat greyhounds just like any other breed of dog. Anyone who has met a greyhound knows they are generally very placid and friendly dogs. There is no evidence to suggest any different. Yet laws and regulations treat them differently, as if they are somehow more dangerous than the average breed of dog, which discourages people from giving them a new home. In 2017 the Australian Capital Territory took a small step in the right direction. It repealed a law that required greyhounds to be muzzled in public—muzzled not because they were dangerous, but simply because they were greyhounds. The RSPCA welcomed the news by saying:

Now, these gentle giants can walk in public just like every other dog in Canberra, and that is without a muzzle by default. On behalf of the greyhounds, thank you!

New South Wales should follow suit as soon as possible and not require muzzling of greyhounds in any place where other dogs are permitted to be free of a muzzle. It is the least we can do until we finally remove big money from greyhound racing and end that cruel and exploitative industry.

Instead of taking action to improve the lives of greyhounds, in the 2019-20 budget this Liberal-Nationals Government has decided to give \$10 million to Greyhound Racing NSW and its clubs. The purpose of that money is ostensibly to improve animal welfare, including track upgrades to reduce injury rates for racing dogs. In other words the Government is giving more money to an industry that does not want to dig into its profits to pay for measures that will reduce the harm of its business to the animals it exploits to make that money. This is public funds being used to paper over the abuse and mistreatment of greyhounds. Instead of reducing rates of injury, how about we eliminate injuries altogether by ending this cruel industry? How about we use that \$10 million to assist workers in the industry to transition to other jobs, or to fund greyhound sanctuaries? Instead of propping up the cruel greyhound racing industry, this Government should get on with assisting workers to transition out of the industry, and ensure that every dog retires to a safe and loving home.

WIN REGIONAL NEWS SERVICES

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (15:20): I raise the plight of the workers within the WIN News regional centres who are facing job cuts. On Monday television broadcaster WIN announced the closure of four regional news rooms. Offices across regional New South Wales and southern Queensland will be shut down due to funding pressures. WIN News attributed the decision to a decline in viewership in favour of online outlets, that as viewership declines so does advertising revenue. Over 30 jobs are affected by the cease of operations in Orange, Wagga Wagga, Albury and Bundaberg. WIN's management team will attempt to redeploy staff to offices unaffected by the cuts.

Unfortunately, this is a trend seen across regional news outlets, both in the print and broadcast media. It is a real concern for regional communities. I have dealt with a number of the WIN offices, in particular in areas such as Orange, and they are certainly not over-resourced. Quite often a sole reporter will turn up with a video camera, cut the footage, conduct the interview, do the overlay, go back to the office, work with the editing staff or the chief of staff and put together a high-quality package that is localised. We cannot continue to see this decline in local content when it comes to our news outlets.

Our local communities in regional New South Wales value someone who understands their issues, and someone who actually knows how to pronounce the local towns and villages. That means a lot to a regional community. The more that these services are centralised, the more we lose this local fabric—something that local residents rely heavily upon. The centralisation of services, the resulting loss of good, hardworking journalists and the ability for locals to hear about what is happening in their community can be seen right across the board in the media sector. Local journalists participate in their community, become pillars of their community, report and become part of what is happening in their area.

I hope this is something that will not continue to be seen. Today The Nationals said they will stop advertising on WIN as a result of this action until it takes another look at this issue. This is something that is happening right across the board and something we should not allow to happen without rising up and saying, "This is not good enough for regional communities."

ASSET PRIVATISATION

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (15:23): The Sydney Desalination Plant, Port Botany, Port Kembla, Eraring Energy, the Mount Piper and Wallerawang power stations, the Port of Newcastle, Green State Power, Bayswater and Liddell power stations, Hunter Water Australia Pty Ltd, the M7 rental payment, Vales Point Power Station, TransGrid, Brown Mountain Hydro Power Station and Cochrane Dam, Ausgrid, Pillar Administration, the titling and registry business of Land and Property Information, Endeavour Energy, the Northern Beaches Hospital and inner west bus services—this is not a comprehensive list of all of the New South Wales public assets, assets formerly owned by our community, that have been privatised by this Government.

The list does not include the things it has tried to privatise and failed, such as five regional hospitals in Wyong, Goulburn, Shellharbour, Bowral and Maitland. Community members and unions joined together to resist their privatisation. There have been attempts to privatise parts of Service NSW, TAFE campuses, heritage buildings and disability services. This is despite the fact that privatisation is a failed economic model. Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Chairman Rod Sims described privatisation as damaging to the economy and said the evidence was clear that it was hurting productivity. Although he was an advocate for privatisation in the past, he has lost faith in privatisation as an economic model.

Despite this, the Government's Pavlovian obsession with privatisation continues. Every time it sees a public asset that is performing well, that is healthy, that is delivering strong dividends to the people of New South Wales to pay our nurses, teachers and firefighters, it is like the bell goes off. It starts salivating at the idea of selling this public asset, stripping it away from the community who own it and leaving our State without the revenue stream into the future to fund the public services on which our communities rely. The best example of

this failed economic model is the privatisation of our State's electricity assets. In 2015 Premier Baird promised that not only will prices not go up under privatisation, but also they will go down. This is the mother of broken promises. Power prices have increased massively under the private owners. If the Government does not learn that lesson then it will continue to sell our valuable assets and our community down the river.

TRIBUTE TO LOREDANA ALESSIO-MULHALL

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (15:26): On 13 April 2019 Loredana Alessio-Mulhall passed away. Loredana was a mother, a teacher, a lover of languages and a lover of plants. In May 2013 Loredana was in the Chamber when my voluntary euthanasia bill was debated. She spoke to the media and told her story. Loredana Alessio-Mulhall was a passionate advocate for Dying with Dignity NSW because she had multiple sclerosis, which affected her body for more than 20 years. By the time I met her in 2012—seven years ago—she was unable to move any part of her body.

Loredana was confined to a motorised wheelchair and had to answer the phone via a device that was essentially a straw that she blew into. She lived alone. Loredana had care in her small flat in Pyrmont for only six hours a day. For the rest of the time she was by herself, unable to move, unable to care for herself. She was taken to bed by carers and left all night, again by herself. Loredana pleaded with people in this place, via people who could do so but also via the media, to allow her to end her life with dignity before she lost what she was so afraid to lose, which was her voice and her ability to speak out for herself. I understand she was also in this Chamber in November 2017 when the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill, which the Hon. Trevor Khan championed so much, failed by one vote.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I call the Hon. Mark Buttigieg to order for the first time.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Last year I saw Loredana again to see how she was. She had begun to weaken. Her voice was failing. Finally she passed away on 13 April 2019. She lived long enough to see Victoria successfully introduce legislation to facilitate dying with dignity and that legislation was finalised yesterday. People in Victoria are able to access those laws. In Loredana's memory, I look forward to working with members of this House to finally bring dying with dignity into New South Wales for people who are suffering just like Loredana.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Somewhat belatedly, I call the Hon. Damien Tudehope to order for the first time.

ASSET PRIVATISATION

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (15:31): I draw to the attention of the House the very important role of microeconomic reform, which is the privatisation of public assets. It is not a spirited model of the Left that has been decried in this House today but rather a successful tool of microeconomic reform that has delivered magnificent benefits to the economy of the State and to the national economy. The first privatisation of public assets involved the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories [CSL]. If I had had shares in the company and participated in the float, I would be a multimillionaire. CSL has become one of the great international drug companies that is delivering immense amounts in taxation, employment opportunities, industry and creativity to the people of Australia. Members may recall that the Commonwealth Bank of Australia [CBA], which once was publicly owned, is now one of Australia's largest companies.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I call the Hon. Rose Jackson to order for the first time.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: The CBA is a great success story. The company generates billions of dollars for taxpayers every year. There is a long list of very successful privatisations that include Telstra and the Federal Airports Corporation.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I call the Hon. Mark Buttigieg to order for the second time.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I was involved in the successful privatisation of the Federal Airports Corporation, which keeps delivering dividends such as increased employment, increased efficiency and increased taxation revenue. Privatisation of public assets keeps delivering benefits on a whole range of levels to the people of New South Wales and the people of Australia. I have cited wonderful examples of the privatisation of public assets and the New South Wales Government continues that great tradition by privatising electricity retailers. There is much more to say about this topic. I look forward to making further contributions to debate on this topic. [*Time expired.*]

*Documents***VIP GAMING MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT****Dispute of Claim of Privilege**

The PRESIDENT: I inform the House that this day the Clerk has received from Mr Justin Field written correspondence disputing the validity of a claim of privilege on schedule 2 of the VIP Gaming Management Agreement lodged with the Clerk on 2 October 2014 relating to the VIP Gaming Management Agreement order for papers. According to standing order, the Hon. Keith Mason, AC, QC, who is a retired Supreme Court judge, has been appointed as an independent legal arbiter to evaluate and report as to the validity of the claim of privilege. I further inform the House that the Clerk has released the disputed documents to Mr Mason for evaluation and report.

*Bills***APPROPRIATION BILL 2019****APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2019****STATE REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019**

Bills received from the Legislative Assembly, and read a first time and ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. Don Harwin.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: According to sessional order, I declare the bills to be urgent bills.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the bills be considered urgent bills.

Declaration of urgency agreed to.

Second Reading Speech

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (15:34): I move:

That these bills be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the second reading speech given in the Legislative Assembly by the Treasurer.

Leave granted.**BUILDING A BETTER NEW SOUTH WALES****Introduction**

Just over a month ago, North West Metro opened for the very first time.

An eight year dream realised - with time and money to spare.

Over a million people have already boarded these trains.

The nation's first driverless Metro, right here in New South Wales.

The first step in a game changing network that will forever alter the landscape of our city and our State.

But North West Metro is more than just a project.

It is a monument to the difference between spin and substance.

First promised by those opposite 34 years ago - and cancelled 4 times.

Promised once by our government - and delivered - on time and under budget.

Our bold decisions have unleashed a mega building program on a scale never before seen in the history of our nation.

And North West Metro is just one of many dividends the people of New South Wales will receive for placing their trust in us.

The Newcastle Light Rail is running.

Western Sydney Stadium has opened.

The new WestConnex M4 Tunnel is about to.

The CBD Light Rail

NorthConnex

And the WestConnex New M5 Tunnel.

This is just the first wave of projects that will breathe life into our State.

After these open, along will come the second:

A new Football Stadium

Walsh Bay Arts Precinct

The Australian Museum

A redeveloped Barangaroo

The Princes Highway to the south

And the Pacific Highway to the north

Then even more will come online:

Sydney Gateway

The M4-M5 Link Tunnels

Precincts in Ultimo & Redfern

The Rozelle Interchange

A Powerhouse Museum in Western Sydney

Parramatta Light Rail

And after these, still more:

The F6

The Sydney Modern Art Gallery

Sydney Metro City & South West

A renovated Central Station

The Western Harbour Tunnel and beaches link

The Great Western Highway

The M12 Motorway

Sydney Metro West

North South Metro Rail Link

And the brand new Western Sydney Aerotropolis.

Wave after wave after wave of projects transforming New South Wales.

We're launching the biggest ever school building program since Federation.

190 projects - in every corner of our State:

Bungendore to Bangalow, Milton to Merrylands, Penshurst to Picton.

And a hospital building blitz that has never been seen before:

Liverpool to Lismore, Coffs Harbour to Campbelltown, Gosford to Goulburn,

Bankstown to Blacktown, St George to Shoalhaven, Randwick to Ryde.

We have taken windfall revenues and lazy assets and transformed them into bricks, mortar, concrete and steel.

Roads, rail, motorways and metros.

Schools, hospitals, museums and stadiums.

Every project we build standing in silent testimony to which party is on the right side of history.

And we are not even halfway through our ambitious agenda for New South Wales.

Our infrastructure investment is approaching **\$100 billion**.

A new golden century for New South Wales.

The compound effect of vision, of passion and of determination.

The Liberals and The Nationals are not content to simply sit here as passive custodians of the status quo.

We are relentlessly ambitious for the people of our State.

We share their big dreams and their drive to achieve them.

And together we forge ahead, pioneers in prosperity, so our people are free to achieve.

Even as we sit here today, in this Chamber, our machines are grinding away below us, carving another crossing under the most famous harbour in the world.

A crossing that will one day be used by our children and grandchildren.

And just as we stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us - we are building a better future for those who will come after us.

Most good governments have their legacies written long after they are gone.

But our legacy is appearing before our very eyes.

In March, the people of New South Wales made a choice.

A choice that also echoed around the nation just a few weeks ago.

To put their faith in a Premier, to put their faith in a party, that will always put them first.

The party of Menzies' forgotten Australians.

The party that knows you don't need to pull someone else down in order to lift yourself up.

This last election in New South Wales was a referendum on values and ambition.

And the people always get it right.

We thank them for the trust that they have placed in us.

And now we are getting straight to work, getting the job done for New South Wales.

Economic Context

In 2011, we faced significant challenges.

A slower economy, higher unemployment and ageing infrastructure.

Our response was to dare to do things differently.

Our record construction program is not just the foundation of our future.

It has been a pillar of our economy too.

In recent years, New South Wales has been leading the pack, powering the nation.

Almost half a million jobs have been added in just 4 years.

This year the unemployment rate fell to its lowest level since records began.

And regional New South Wales added more jobs than every other region around the country combined.

Workforce participation is at record highs.

Youth unemployment at record lows.

And it's working women who are driving our State forward.

Our exceptional strength has seen us outperform.

We are growing above trend.

Recording the fastest per capita growth of any state.

Contributing the lion's share of our national prosperity.

Adding record numbers of jobs.

Attracting increased levels of business investment.

But today we face a new set of challenges.

The global economic outlook is no doubt weaker than it was 12 months ago.

Our farmers are battling what some are calling the worst drought in living memory.

Our housing market has undergone the biggest downturn in four decades.

And with wage growth still slow, homeowners are cautious with their spending.

But just as we overcame the challenges of the past - so too will we overcome these new ones as well.

While our growth is forecast to be slower, it is strong for this point in the economic cycle - a testament to the resilience, to the flexibility of our economy and the working men and women of our great State.

We enter the future equipped with the tools that will see us return to trend growth:

Strong labour market conditions

Recent policy stimulus

A solid export sector

And our record construction program, the cornerstone of our economy.

Budget Result

While we are optimistic, the current economic headwinds have fiscal consequences as well.

The soft housing market has wiped **\$10.6 billion** in forecast stamp duty from the Budget since 2017.

The federal budget in April cut a further **\$2.3 billion** in GST receipts, which moved to \$3.2 billion over the forward estimates as consumers tighten their belts.

These drastic fluctuations are a fact of life in our federal system.

And a weak and a fragile budget would buckle under the strain.

But I am pleased to inform the House that - despite the largest write down of revenue in our State's history - Fortress New South Wales remains strong.

And today I can announce a projected operating surplus for 2018-19 of **\$802 million**, and average surpluses of **\$1.7 billion** to 2023.

Net debt is again negative - for the fourth straight year.

Our net debt to GSP - the lowest of any mainland state.

Our Triple-A rating is again secured.

Our wealth is growing - a shared prosperity in which we all have a stake.

Our net worth will surpass **\$310 billion** by 2023, fast approaching a third of a trillion dollars.

And that's because we've swapped old assets for new assets - and we are building like never before.

Our collective wealth is now invested in outstanding schools, in world class hospitals, in exceptional sporting facilities and state-of-the-art public transport.

Savings

One of the hallmarks of our government has been running a public service that is focused on the needs of our citizens.

That means a bigger, better frontline.

And a leaner, more agile back-office.

This Budget continues that journey, reflecting changes to the public service announced in April this year.

This means that 10 departments will be reduced to 8.

And while our frontline is again boosted, we will drive more efficiencies in our back-office and contingent labour expenses right across government.

We will also reduce spending on consultants and contractors, abolish bonuses for the highest paid department executives and bring long-service leave benefits into line with other states and community standards.

Strong Financial Management

While we have tightened our own belts, other states have gone down a different path – cutting wages for their workers and increasing taxes on their people.

These short-term measures by Labor governments may help plug holes in their budgets - but they cause long-term harm to their economies.

As Liberals and Nationals, we believe, as Menzies did, that people should be free to flourish.

This means less government, not more.

And lower taxes, not higher ones.

Over the last four budgets the Coalition has cut nearly **\$5 billion** in taxes to help grow our economy.

So businesses can invest.

So families can get into their first homes.

And small business can hire more people.

Like Steven Benham from Wilkins Windows.

Because of our payroll tax cuts, he has now able to take on an extra apprentice.

16 year old Chloe Wykes, who is here today, who is studying joinery using one of our new fee free apprenticeships at TAFE.

A win for business.

A win for the economy.

And a win for a young woman with the chance to now pursue her dream career.

On this side of the House, we believe that you cannot tax your way to prosperity.

Reducing wages and raising taxes should be levers of last resort - not default options of first opportunity.

And that's why I am proud to say that our Budget today will not introduce a single new tax.

Instead it continues to fund:

Stamp duty cuts to help first home buyers

Indexing stamp duty to make housing more affordable for the next generation

And further payroll tax cuts to drive investment and boost small business as the threshold lifts this financial year to **\$900,000**.

We're also using our Budget to deliver for families and lower the cost of living:

A second Active Kids voucher

Creative Kids vouchers

Baby Bundles

Free Dental checks for Kids

Reductions in early childhood education costs

Fee Free Apprenticeships

TAFE and VET places

Motor registration relief for toll users

Weekly \$50 Opal caps

Energy rebates for self-funded retirees

Regional Travel Cards for Seniors

Caravan registration discounts for grey nomads

And expanding the Energy Switch Program to help lower gas bills.

This takes the total amount that we have returned to the people of New South Wales in cost of living support in just the last two budgets alone to an unprecedented **\$2 billion**.

Drought

With drought now affecting close to 100% of our State - our farming, rural and remote communities are being put to the ultimate test.

Water is scarce.

Times are tough.

And people are hurting.

The late Les Murray once claimed - farmers have few friends in Australia's towns and cities.

But to each and every farmer across New South Wales, I say: all of New South Wales stands with you.

We can't control the rain – but what we can control is what we do about it.

This is a Budget for the bush with farmers at its heart.

It delivers critical relief to the most drought-affected communities of New South Wales, taking our total support package to over **\$1.8 billion**.

More transport subsidies for stock, fodder and water.

Further funds for emergency water supplies.

And waiving charges for water licenses, interest on drought loans and local land service rates.

We know when people on the land aren't doing well, it doesn't just affect them.

It also hurts local towns and local economies.

So we're fast tracking local infrastructure projects with another **\$170 million** investment, to keep people employed and families in towns.

Our regional, rural and remote communities are resilient.

And they will certainly get through this tough time.

But we can't just wait for another crisis in order to act.

As one farmer I met in Bourke said, "Every day, we are one day closer to when it rains, but we're also one day closer to when the next drought hits."

This Budget doesn't just provide relief for the current crisis - but also provides solutions for the long-term.

We're using the proceeds from the greatest water project in our country's history - Snowy Hydro – to deliver water security for regional communities of the future.

The total funding for water security projects in this Budget comes to **\$1.4 billion**.

Election Commitments

This is a Budget that gets it done.

It funds our election commitments - just as we promised.

And it makes record investments in the things that matter.

World class services

It boosts our frontline workers yet again.

4,600 new teachers.

5,000 nurses and midwives.

3,300 health professionals.

And **1,500** more police.

The education measures that we are launching today represent the biggest ever New South Wales Budget.

Fully meeting our Gonski commitments

Putting mental health counsellors in high schools

Offering before and after school care for every primary school student in New South Wales

Rolling out free mobile dental checks for primary school kids from 1 July

Record funding for non-government schools

Wiping the maintenance backlog to zero

Air-conditioning over **900** schools

And investing a record **\$6.7 billion** to build and upgrade **190** schools.

Our health system will be boosted to fast-track an additional **8,000** paediatric operations and **10,000** cataract surgeries.

And I can announce today, for the first time, our health infrastructure investment hits **\$10 billion**, with new facilities planned for every corner of our State.

We'll combat crime with new police stations in Bega, in Goulburn and in Jindabyne

Major upgrades at Bathurst and Bourke

And a new state-of-the-art training facility in Dubbo.

We'll build 10 new Service NSW centres

And put four Service NSW buses on the roads in our regions.

World class infrastructure

Our transport system also continues to grow, with another 17 new air-conditioned Waratah trains

More express services to Western Sydney

And congestion easing measures like smart traffic lights, pinch point upgrades and smart motorways.

Regional Investment

In our regions we'll deliver **\$500 million** to repair local roads

And another **\$500 million** to repair local bridges.

We'll eliminate blackspots and build new data centres.

The Environment

Our environment also wins with a new national park in south-west Sydney - to protect our precious koala habitats.

We will invest **\$150 million** for new and improved public parklands

Upgrade fire trails and National Park walking tracks

And give more households the choice of cheap, clean energy - with no-interest loans for solar panels and batteries.

Digital New South Wales

We'll continue to make people's lives easier with a focus on digital government.

Victoria has copied our Service NSW approach - and now the Commonwealth is jumping on board with the originally named "Service Australia".

Over 70 per cent of adults in New South Wales, that is 4.3 million people, now have a MyServiceNSW account. That is more than double the number who use music streaming apps on their phone and on par with the number of Facebook mobile users in our State.

Service NSW, better than music and almost as good as Facebook - and we are coming after that.

To drive this Budget we are going to take digital transformation to the next level.

It provides seed funding of **\$100 million** to establish a Digital Restart Fund

To drive digital transformation right across government.

And after successful trials in key locations – New South Wales drivers, this year, will be the first in the country to have the choice of a digital driver's licence in August.

Jobs for the future

At the heart of this Budget are policies that grow jobs.

We believe, as Reagan did, that work and family are at the centre of our lives, the foundation of our dignity as a free people.

A few weeks ago I was out with the Deputy Premier in Cobar, the red heart of New South Wales.

One in three people in Cobar work the mines.

Plenty more earn their living from the work and the people that mining brings in.

People like Neal Valk who's in the gallery here today - who has worked mines up and down the country.

He knows, as we do, just how much we depend on miners for their contribution to our economy.

And just how much they depend on us for policies that help, not hurt.

Unlike others, who seek to play politics with their lives and livelihoods

On this side of the House, we are proud to say that we stand in solidarity with the blue collar workers of our State.

And our commitment to them is to always put them first.

We are also helping create the jobs of tomorrow.

In 2015 we promised an additional **150,000** jobs by this year.

Instead, we have delivered more than triple that number.

This year, we have committed to an even more ambitious target of **250,000** jobs by 2023.

And we intend on achieving that too.

To help skill our workforce, this Budget funds **100,000** fee free TAFE and VET courses.

Including **30,000** for mature-aged workers.

We'll build a new state-of-the-art Western Sydney Construction Hub.

Eight new TAFE Connected Learning Centres in our regions.

And invest in training and mentoring for women to help them get into the workforce.

And we'll also develop four new major employment precincts to add to the six that are already underway.

Our policies are working - and as a result so too are hundreds of thousands more men and women right across New South Wales.

Helping the most vulnerable

One of the benefits of running strong budgets is our ability to help those in need.

We are using our financial might to help those who have slipped through the cracks.

Our previous two budgets have:

Rolled out palliative care programs

Helped injured workers recover faster

Increased funding for children at risk

Delivered initiatives to increase adoption rates

Helped indigenous boys complete their education

Supported drug addicts with a second chance

Increased funding for domestic violence initiatives

And allocated money to reduce homelessness.

Today this Budget continues our targeted investments, giving the most vulnerable among us support and care:

A new Ageing and Disability Commissioner - to stand up for those who are most at risk

Increased assistance to Lifeline and Kids Helpline, meaning there is a friendly voice at the other end of the line for kids when they need it

A new investment in cutting edge spinal research - to one day help those who were told they would never walk, take their first steps.

We are fortunate to have many guests here today representing the thousands of Australians who live with a spinal cord injury.

Among them is Sam Bloom, who many of you know from the bestselling book *Penguin Bloom*. Sam embodies triumph over adversity. Her whole world was shattered by a spinal cord injury suffered during a fall.

By sharing her story she has courageously given us all an insight into the devastation people with a spinal cord injury experience as well as their loved ones: the sense of hopelessness and frustration at the lack of their once active life.

But she also inspires with her determination to find new purpose and new meaning, clocking up some impressive sporting achievements, like gold and bronze at last year's World Adaptive Surfing Championships.

We hope that our \$15 million in funding for spinal cord injury research also leads to a brighter future for people with spinal cord injuries, possibly even bringing us a little closer to a cure.

As conservatives, we are champions of hope and opportunity.

We know that building a better future is helping people build better lives.

This Budget continues to tackle indigenous disadvantage with **\$55 million** in funding to upgrade local infrastructure and establish new opportunities to get ahead - through our Roads to Home program.

We're also proud to partner with Foodbank, with **\$8 million** in funding over the next four years, to provide breakfast for an additional **500** schools across the State.

I want to thank parents like Sam Hyratt and Amanda Mataele, who are here today, who volunteer at the Breakfast Club to make sure students at Campbellfield Public School start the day with a full meal, ready to learn.

They rise early, day in day out, to make sure no child is left behind.

Their reward is not financial, but it is invaluable - witnessing the bonds of their community grow even stronger, and knowing that so many kids will feel better and achieve more - because they've been fed and nurtured all before the school bell rings on the day.

I also want to acknowledge the former Labor leader, Mr John Robertson for his advocacy - and Gerry Andersen, OAM - for making this possible.

Setting up for success

Good governments don't plan according to electoral cycles.

They plan for the future that they know is coming.

Our economic landscape is rapidly shifting.

Productivity growth has slowed.

Our population is ageing.

Automation and artificial intelligence will soon touch the working lives of millions of our people.

And a booming middle class in Asia will open massive new markets and, importantly, new opportunities.

We must now act to overcome these challenges - and make the best of what lies ahead.

This Budget puts in place four pillars of prosperity - to set our State up for future success.

Economic Blueprint

The first pillar is a vision and a plan - to take our economy to the next level.

We take pride in our place as Australia's leading economy.

But the race that matters is a race against time - to secure and strengthen today and tomorrow.

By the end of this year the Chief Economist will formally release the New South Wales Economic Blueprint.

It will identify the industries and the markets where our future prosperity lies

And help us be ready for new opportunities that are yet to emerge.

Generations Fund

The second pillar is sustainable debt - and a commitment to intergenerational equity.

The **\$3 billion** Generations Fund - launched last year - has already grown to **\$10.8 billion**, thanks to new contributions and strong returns.

By 2030, it's expected to reach **\$28 billion** - a balance sheet buffer to keep our debt sustainable and support our Triple-A credit rating.

Federal Financial Relations

The third pillar is making the case for a better Federation.

In our three-tier federal system - federal financial relations are a mess.

The people of New South Wales contribute the most in GST and income tax - yet we have to sit and watch as it's doled out to other states with no benefit for themselves.

We rely on the Commonwealth funding for a substantial part of our funding - but we have little control over where it is spent.

When GST receipts fall - we find out at the last minute.

And the complicated tangle of financial arrangements makes it harder for states to plan for the future.

Under the current system, states that perform well are penalised.

Reforming states end up subsidising states that don't.

States that do nothing to strengthen their economies - reap windfall gains from states that do.

This is not a system that is fit for purpose.

And New South Wales is no longer going to wait for others to act.

Just like we took the lead in establishing the national Board of Treasurers.

Today I announce we will again take the lead - launching a comprehensive review of Federal-Financial Relations from a New South Wales perspective.

The review will be conducted by a panel of eminent experts led by the current Chair of the CSIRO and the former CEO of Telstra, David Thodey.

They will be charged with finding ways for the states that embrace reform to give them more autonomy and more flexibility - making dynamic federalism a reality.

They will develop practical options for State reform on how to best encourage investment and growth in the State's economy.

Above all the panel will be guided by core Liberal and Nationals principles - lower, simpler, fairer and more sustainable taxes for the people of New South Wales.

Outcomes

The final pillar is more efficient government spending - as we move to the next phase of outcome based budgeting.

No state in this country has been more committed to implementing the Gonski principles than New South Wales.

This has seen record real increases in our education budget.

But we need to ensure that this investment is matched by a corresponding increase in educational outcomes.

We want our kids not just to be the best funded, but the best educated.

Education will be the first department shifting to a focus on outcomes.

Over the coming 12 months each cluster will produce an Outcome and Business Plan - showing how the taxpayer money it spends will achieve concrete outcomes - and if something is not working - how they intend to fix it.

Conclusion

Over the last two terms we have developed sources of enduring wealth for our State.

A strong economy with quality jobs.

Record investments in the services that matter.

The largest construction program in our State's history.

Tax cuts and cost of living support.

Negative net debt and growing net worth.

And a sovereign wealth fund that will deliver dividends for future generations.

We now promise to maintain the momentum that has made New South Wales number one.

And with this Budget we are getting it done.

The best education for our children - in state-of-the-art schools

World-class healthcare in world-class hospitals.

Metro lines and better roads to get you home faster to the ones that you love.

And more help for those doing it tough.

This is a Budget that revs up our regions and supercharges our cities.

That supports people-powered businesses creating millions of jobs.

A Budget of delivery kicking off a term of delivery.

A State-building Budget from a State-building Government.

I commend it to the House.

I take this opportunity to make minor additional comments to the parts of the incorporated second reading speech that relate to my portfolio, specifically as these bills relate to small business. Previously I spoke extensively about

the impact of the State budget on small business, but I wish to make other comments. Small businesses are the heart and soul of our economy. They make up 98 per cent of all businesses, employ 1.65 million people and generate \$55.3 billion in annual wages.

This budget's \$93 billion infrastructure program is supporting businesses to start and grow. Each project—whether a new rail line, a stadium in Parramatta, a new or upgraded road, a school or a hospital—brings with it more jobs, more investment and more businesses to support communities in surrounding areas. In this budget the New South Wales Government will further increase the payroll tax threshold to \$900,000, which will provide tax cuts for another 1,000 small businesses. This payroll tax threshold will continue to increase each year until it reaches \$1 million in 2021-22, which will result in \$881 million being given back to New South Wales businesses in payroll tax cuts.

This Government is also driving down workers compensation premiums with \$300 million in savings for 280,000 employers, delivering an average discount of 8 per cent for employers with the safest workplaces. In this budget the Government has allocated \$6.7 million to the Business Connect Program so that small businesses have access to professional advisory services. The NSW Small Business Commissioner will receive \$6 million to continue important advocacy work on behalf of small businesses across New South Wales. This budget has allocated \$48.5 million to the Easy to do Business Program, which is making it easier to establish new businesses, and slashes the time taken and complexity of obtaining approvals.

This Government is ensuring the 760,000 small businesses can utilise the popular Energy Switch program and potentially save thousands off their bills. Under our Faster Payment Terms Policy, government agencies pay small business bills of up to \$1 million within five working days in 2019—an Australian first. The Government is delivering the jobs and industries of the future by investing where it counts. For example, the Government has invested \$35 million in the Sydney Startup Hub to encourage new ideas and collaboration.

Our investment in key employment precincts will drive jobs, education and create innovation in areas such as the Western Sydney Airport Aerospace and Defence Industries Precinct, the Westmead Health and Education Precinct and the Parkes Special Activation Precinct. This budget also provides funding to support the work of the NSW Productivity Commissioner, Peter Achterstraat, who will continue to look for opportunities to cut red tape and reduce costs to small businesses. Finally, this budget demonstrates a commitment from the Government to provide the conditions in which businesses in this State can thrive. I commend the appropriation bills to the House.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (15:39): As Leader of the Opposition I address the three cognate bills: the Appropriation Bill 2019, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019 and the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I commence my contribution by requesting that the question on each of the bills be put separately. The historical reason for doing this should escape no-one in this Chamber. It is a matter of convention and practice that the Opposition does not seek to hold up the passage of either the appropriation bills or the bills that are necessary to give effect to the various budget announcements.

In years past, that convention was traduced by the present Government by slipping in a number of measures into the budget measures bill. As a result, the Opposition now has a close look at the accompanying legislation. I foreshadow that there will be amendments to the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. The Greens will propose amendments seeking to remove the changes to long service leave. The Opposition will propose an amendment to take out schedule 5 of the bill, which deals with the legislated merger of Roads and Maritime Services and Transport for NSW. I will address those matters in the Committee stage.

The first budget of a new term of government is a budget of broken promises, not the beginning of a golden century, but full of fool's gold. After years of record stamp duties flowing into Treasury and \$70 billion worth of privatisation of community assets, the Liberal-Nationals Government of this State is taking New South Wales, on the back of record taxes and job cuts, towards the largest debt in our history. We are heading towards \$39 billion worth of public debt, notwithstanding record revenues, privatisations and job cuts. We have \$70 billion worth of assets, \$61 billion in stamp duty and yet more debt.

I refer to the privatisation of the electricity assets and land and property information. These revenue positive assets not only paid their own way, but also provided recurrent revenue to the State to provide much-needed, much-valued public services. The dividends from those businesses has decreased from \$2.3 billion per year down to less than \$800 million. On top of this, we have seen waste and mismanagement like never before. Some \$14 billion has been spent in blowouts on infrastructure projects such as the Sydney Light Rail. That project was meant to cost \$1.6 billion—it is now heading north of \$3 billion. It was never a good idea. It will finalise by moving fewer people around the city than the cars and buses did previously. It is just a white elephant.

On top of this, much of the work of the budget is built on job cuts of up to 3,000 public servants—not bureaucrats. People who work in the public services of this State do so with a sense of vocation and mission to serving not just themselves and their families immediate needs, but also those of the wider community. If you take the time to speak to our 320,000 public servants, you will see that they have a great sense of mission. To be referred to by various Government members as "bureaucrats"—the derogatory epithet—reveals their attitude towards those providing the public services of the State.

The Government says that there are not job cuts—that there are going to be more frontline services, that just back office jobs are going. It has never been clear to me exactly what a back office role is. Many people in the public sector do not necessarily interface with members of the community every day, but the work they do is vital and valuable, not only to the public services of the State but also to the so-called frontline staff—the teachers, the nurses, the allied health workers in the hospital system, the people assisting teachers, people who ensure the police can do their frontline work. Without the work of these people, the frontline workers have to do the so-called "back office" work. That takes them away from the work they do for the wider community. That is an important point to recollect.

The budget is filled with broken promises. For example, billions of dollars in road projects that were promised during the recent election campaign have not yet eventuated. Just 10 per cent of the \$2.5 billion promised for the Great Western Highway appears to have been allocated in the budget. In the Hunter, it says \$11 million of the \$266 million for the Muswellbrook Bypass has appeared in the budget, but it is less than that. In the current year I believe it is only \$4 million in planning funds. It can be seen that of the 190 new or upgraded schools that were promised, 60 per cent have no start or completion date, or any money provided.

The 4,600 new teachers promised by the Liberal Party and The Nationals at the March election are apparently being funded from the existing education budget—not one cent of new money, which makes you wonder how the Government is going to deal with this pea-and-thimble trick. You just cannot have an extra 5,000 teachers without spending an extra buck unless you are taking your pound of flesh from some other part of the vital State public sector services.

I am sure the Hon. Walt Secord, today or in the future, will take the Government to task about the failures in health. There is not a single mention of funding in the Foster-Tuncurry area. I refer to the Rouse Hill Hospital promised by Mike Baird—remember him?—in 2015 and then again in 2019. Not a dollar in the budget. The promised upgrades to Bankstown, Royal Prince Alfred, The Sydney Children's Hospital, Ryde, Fairfield, Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla and Manning Base hospitals are not provided for in this budget. The Government has comprehensively failed on these points.

When the Government came to office debt was down to \$6 billion—just 1.4 per cent of gross State product. Now it is up to \$70 billion and up to more than 5 per cent of the State's economy. That is a failure in anyone's record. The Government likes to say it had no net debt, like somehow the accounts of the State are a mortgage offset account. The Government is suggesting it takes its privatisation money, puts it in an account and that somehow cancels out its debt. But when one looks at the Government's record, one sees every year the interest payment on debt gets bigger because the debt the State is taking on gets higher and higher. There are just no two ways of looking at it.

The problem with privatising the valuable public assets—the ones that actually provide a revenue stream—is that the State's ability is impaired to pay back those debts. Where does that leave us? When you look at the budget, you see there is the accounting trick of the transport asset holding entity. This is an accounting trick engaged in by the Government three years ago to suppress \$7 billion worth of spending over the forward estimates and by a reclassification to say that it was not spending. That improved the budget bottom line by \$7 billion. The only slight problem for the Government is that there are rules around being able to rely on this accounting mechanism. Those rules legally had to be complied with by June 2018 and they have not been. Standing Order 52 will be discussed in relation to the transport asset holding entity. This pea-and-thimble trick has not had its requirements met, which will have implications for the integrity of the budget and budget reporting over the next four years. The Opposition will continue to pursue the Government over those important matters.

I refer to other broken promises and misleading aspects of the budget. During the recent election campaign the Government did not mention taking \$77 million from the Rural Fire Service. It made no mention of cutting the funding of Fire and Rescue NSW by \$41 million. However, that is what the Government has done in this budget. The Opposition could go on and it will do so in the budget take-note debate in the weeks and months to come.

I will dwell on two very important omissions from the budget. The first of these is climate change. There is no mention of climate change in the budget and no plan to address it in New South Wales, which is a shame. Climate change is a major threat to Australia's financial stability and poses substantial systemic economic risks.

Any bank or insurance company will tell you that, but the New South Wales Government appears to have its head in the sand. New modelling published by the Climate Council, and based on the Federal Government's approach to climate change, has found that the economic damage to Australia's property and agricultural sector resulting from climate change will be very significant. The property market could lose nearly \$600 billion in value by 2030 because of climate change and extreme weather. That would mean one in every 19 property owners facing the prospect of unaffordable insurance premiums. Extreme weather events such as drought, heat waves, cyclones and floods will affect our ability to produce agriculture and other vital products we rely on for export and domestic consumption. The costs and risks of not taking action just continue.

There is also no energy plan. At the recent two elections energy was front and centre. In 2015 it was about the privatisation of State-owned electricity assets, whereas at this year's election a significant issue was where the next generation of electricity production would come from. Although those members opposite do not want to address the issue, the fact is that today we get 80 per cent of electricity from coal-fired power stations. They have been a great source of electricity. However, each one of those machines has a use-by date. No machine lasts forever. You can tinker and re-engineer to a certain degree but at some point they go.

Ms Abigail Boyd: What is the plan?

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: What is the plan? Where is the next generation of electricity supply coming from? The Labor Party took to the election a comprehensive plan for the next generation of electricity supply based on renewables, centred on a State-owned renewable energy company with reverse auctions to ensure the market had the certainty it needed to invest. Of course, we concede it is not the only way forward on these issues but it was the way that we proposed. Those opposite had no plan. They have won the election but in this budget there is still no plan. The Morrison Federal Government also has no plan to address the next generation of electricity supply. What are the consequences of that? Industry is screaming out for a solution to the energy wars because of the uncertainty of supply and price this is causing.

We have already heard in an earlier contribution that electricity prices in this State have gone up by 60 per cent on the watch of those opposite because of the uncertainty, privatisations and the deregulation of the retail market. Labor proposed tackling the retail market—the Government did not want to listen to us and they are still not listening. However, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the NSW Farmers Association and welfare groups are all crying out for the changes to the retail energy market that we on this side of the House have been championing the past two years. These problems will not go away and they will get worse if not addressed.

There are so many other problems with this budget. My colleague the Hon. Mick Veitch has spoken about the country-city divide. Some 30 per cent of the proceeds of privatisation was supposed to go to rural and regional New South Wales but only about 18 per cent is making its way there. We can see the Government is squandering billions of dollars on Sydney-based transport projects—the light rail and WestConnex—but nothing substantial for regional New South Wales. There are further cuts to the services budget in the order of nearly 3 per cent—affecting frontline services such as Local Land Services—and the continuing underfunding of Landcare to the tune of \$9 million over the next four years.

Homelessness is up 40 per cent under this Government. Despite the Premier's alleged commitment to reducing homelessness and halving rough sleeping across New South Wales by 2025, not one dollar of new funds has been allocated to reduce homelessness or to increase social housing supply despite more than 37,000 vulnerable people sleeping rough every night. There are 60,000 applicants on the social housing waiting list facing a wait of 10 years or longer. That figure could well represent over 100,000 people when dependents—mainly children—are taken into account. There is a failure to address domestic violence. The Premier's Priority on domestic violence is to reduce recidivism by 25 per cent by 2021. But what does the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research quarterly update of March 2019 say? According to the update, domestic assault is up by 6 per cent; indecent assault and other sexual offences up by 5.8 per cent; stalking, intimidation and harassment up by 3½ per cent; and breaches of apprehended violence orders up by nearly 10 per cent. However, there is no new money in this budget to tackle these issues.

The child protection and justice sector has been squeezed again, with reduced staffing costs of nearly \$75 million in the current budget jumping to \$161 million when inflation is factored in. There is pressure on the people who deliver casework, the courts and every aspect of the social welfare and justice system presided over by the State. There is a lack of investment—indeed, a cutting of resources—because in the Government's mania for concrete, steel and spending billions of dollars on infrastructure it has given no thought to the human dimension: The human beings that need to be invested in to deliver the services everyone requires; the human beings in our society who depend on those vital services being provided to an appropriate level. That is the failure of this budget. There are many more failures that could be detailed. The Opposition will hold this Government to account and pursue these matters through this debate and the estimates process, but the items mentioned are the

tip of the iceberg. Humanity needs to be put back into the heart of government. That is that the approach that members on this side of the House will be taking to the budget and to holding this Government accountable in general.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (15:56): I address the Appropriation Bill 2019 and cognate bills on behalf of The Greens. I place on record that we will go through the detail of those bills during budget estimates. The 2019-2020 budget continues the Government's stubborn allegiance to discredited neoliberal ideals of small government and low taxes. The flipside of that approach is fewer services delivered by a smaller number of overstretched public-sector workers, environmental degradation and higher economic inequality. In his address the Treasurer celebrated the supposed collective wealth of New South Wales, but there is nothing collective about the wealth of the State of New South Wales. As we know, in Sydney the top 20 per cent of income earners have an income around five times higher than those in the bottom 20 per cent. Household debt and expenses continue to skyrocket, median wages have flatlined and one in six people are living in poverty.

For anyone who has not been paying attention, the global economy has not recovered since the global financial crisis and it does not look likely to. The current economic system is on life support. The Australian economy is heading for recession and the so-called "Fortress New South Wales" will crumble. Running a surplus is these circumstances is the act of a government unable to manage the New South Wales economy for our future prosperity. Maintaining a surplus means that the Government is taking more from households and businesses in New South Wales than it is giving back, right at the time when those households and businesses are least able to take on more debt. Successive surpluses push economies into recession.

In an increasingly shaky economic environment now is the time to act to stimulate productivity, reduce unemployment—not turf 2,500 workers out on their ears—to grow wages and to reduce economic inequality. The Government has shown that it has not been looking at the economic statistics or paying attention to the evidence that neoliberal policies cause harm to people, the economy and the environment. If it does understand these things then we must conclude that it simply does not care. Again, it is public sector workers and the most vulnerable people in society who pay the price for the Government's lack of economic management. This budget is about individual wealth and building more stuff. It is a budget of a government that sees itself as a business; the people of New South Wales are its customers—the people it sells its services to in order to make profit or surplus—to please its shareholders, whoever it thinks they might be.

This Government is not—and no government should be—a business. A government is the representative body of the people of New South Wales. It is a critical part of a society that provides for the wellbeing of all of its citizens. It could not be more different from a business. This budget tells us a lot about who and what this Government thinks is important. It is not people with a disability. It is not people at risk of sexual and gendered violence. It is not young people. It is certainly not the environment. It is not the community. It is not the wellbeing of people and animals. It is just business as usual while the planet burns and more and more people in this State go without their basic, fundamental human needs being met.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (16:00): I will make some very brief remarks as I have not had the chance to approach the budget from the perspective of the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio. At the end of Ms Abigail Boyd's contribution, in remarking about who she felt the budget did not address, she thankfully did not include our First People; nevertheless I was ready in case she did. I respect Ms Abigail Boyd's contribution and the fact that she is always quite clear that she rejects the dominant economic paradigm that we have in our western society. That is her view and she is quite entitled to it. Obviously I profoundly disagree with her; nevertheless she is forthright in what she has to say and she is entitled to do that. I could not say the same for the comments of the Leader of the Opposition, who I felt—

The Hon. Adam Searle: What? I am not entitled to my views? Is that what you are saying?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No. If the honourable member had that impression then I withdraw that and I apologise for giving him that impression. However, I did feel that in the long list of sins he felt this budget was committing, and what he felt was important, he did not address the infrastructure that this Government has already built with \$70 billion—and will continue to build with another \$93 billion—and how that addresses the human dimension and improves people's lives.

I thought the Leader of the Opposition might talk about how workers in north-western Sydney will have more time at home with their families as a result of the Government finishing the Sydney Metro Northwest. That would be a start. We could then talk about families in outer western Sydney and how finishing WestConnex and the resultant elimination of 26 sets of traffic lights between Strathfield and Haberfield will help workers in western and central Sydney get home more quickly to spend more time with their families. I could go on about all of the

cost-of-living measures in previous budgets that continue in this budget, but that is not what I plan to do. I plan to talk about Aboriginal Affairs and I will get back to it.

We have been listening to and working side-by-side with Aboriginal people and making significant progress across a number of areas, in particular—health, education, culture and language revitalisation, healing and the delivery of community infrastructure and jobs. Specifically under the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio it is important to emphasise a few key initiatives. First is the establishment of an Aboriginal Languages Trust to resource local language activities, with \$3.2 million being allocated in this budget for that. Second is the establishment of Kimberwalli, a unique initiative to support young Aboriginal people in western Sydney to transition from school to education and/or further employment. That is on the site of the old Whalan High School.

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: Hear, hear!

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The Hon. Shayne Mallard said "Hear, hear!" As he is from Penrith he would probably be aware of Whalan, although it is still a fair way from Penrith, now that I think about it. The third key initiative is \$5 million allocated in 2019-20 for the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme. The scheme has been allocated a total of \$75 million, including \$54 million for reparation payments to survivors, and this is the latest instalment. We understand the importance of acknowledging the past, and those initiatives are very important. As well as building from the past, we are building much-needed infrastructure through the Roads to Home program—I am particularly proud of this program—an election commitment from the Government. The program will provide much-needed infrastructure to Aboriginal communities across the State, including rural, remote and urban communities. A total of \$54.8 million for the first tranche of investment will include \$32.9 million for infrastructure works in the first 10 communities, \$17.8 million for operation and maintenance spend and \$4.1 million for project management office operations.

The first 10 communities are Bellwood Reserve at Nambucca Heads, Bowraville, Cabarita near Forster, Gingie Mission at Walgett, Gulargambone Top, Weilwan near Coonamble, La Perouse Mission at La Perouse—believe it or not there is a need under Roads to Home for work there—Namoí Reserve at Walgett, Narwan Village at Armidale, Three Ways at Griffith and Wallaga Lake Koori Village at Merriman near Bermagui, which I visited recently. In addition to our Aboriginal-specific initiatives, Aboriginal people will benefit from our record investments across other portfolios. The Hon. Bronnie Taylor told us in question time that the \$45 million investment for palliative care includes funding for Aboriginal health workers, which is extremely important. Along with my other ministerial colleagues who have responsibilities for the delivery of services to Aboriginal people, we will continue to look at targeted programs. I assure the House this is an inclusive budget that will benefit Aboriginal people and people across the State.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (16:08): I note the contributions to date on the Appropriation Bill 2019 and cognate bills. I also note and endorse the contribution of my colleague Ms Abigail Boyd which I will not repeat. I would like to touch upon two issues. The first is the myth that there are 2,500 back office jobs that can be stripped out of the public sector and that it will not have an impact. I want to be very clear: The Greens oppose the loss of those 2,500 jobs. We know what it means. That means the nurses and teachers who have been put on—together with the thousands of existing nurses and teachers—will spend more and more of their time filling in paperwork, which was otherwise done by the very competent administrative team behind them, and not teaching or assisting patients. The work of those nurses, teachers and other frontline public service workers will not be adequately directed because the policy and implementation processes essential to ensuring that we get the best value out of frontline workers will not be done.

In the long run that will mean less expertise and talent in the public sector and even more reliance upon outsider consultants. Those consultants will have a vested interest in downsizing and dumbing down the public sector because they will receive payment for not only the strategic thinking but also, in the long run, the outsourcing. At least 2,500 families will feel the impact of the loss of those 2,500 jobs. During the Federal election campaign there was appropriate concern about the loss of 1,000 jobs here or there. Those kinds of numbers could turn a Federal election, yet this Government pretends that 2,500 long-term, permanent, high-quality public sector jobs can be stripped without impact. We know it will have an impact. Thousands of families will be hurt. These cuts will do long-term damage to the public sector and, ultimately, to the services provided to the people of New South Wales.

I listened with care to the Minister's contribution about the Aboriginal Affairs budget. The Greens welcome each of those projects and support the infrastructure project investment of something in the order of \$17 million. We support that kind of spend in Aboriginal communities. One only has to visit those communities to realise there is a desperate need. However, we do not support the large strategic decisions in this budget that will have a far bigger impact on First Nation people, including the record spend on prison officers and prisons. This Government will open the largest private prison in the country—a 1,700-bed facility—at Grafton. It has a \$2.5 billion contract with Serco that will run over the next 20 years. We know that First Nation people will be

grossly over represented in that prison; they will be incarcerated at enormous public expense. That prison is being funded in the same budget as the \$17 million to \$20 million for infrastructure in Aboriginal communities.

A 1,700-bed privately run Serco prison at Grafton will have a vastly bigger negative impact on First Nation communities across this State. In the budget there is a series of those kinds of spending priorities but a few small, ad hoc—albeit well meaning—capital and pilot project investments in Aboriginal communities will go nowhere near alleviating them. We need to fundamentally revisit those priorities. We need to engage in a statewide campaign of justice reinvestment. Instead of building a 1,700-bed private prison, we should be building TAFEs, funding driver education and driver licence programs. We should be doing things across the State that will make a positive, meaningful difference to First Nation communities.

With those comments I note The Greens' concerns about the budget. Finally, the budget was introduced on Tuesday and we are discussing it on Thursday. That is not sufficient time to come to grips with its full details. The budget papers themselves have little disclosure or detail about the actual programs, which makes it harder to interrogate them—I am certain we will explore that matter more during our expanded budget estimates hearings. But the 2019-2020 budget papers are the least transparent budget papers I have ever seen. That should be a concern for all people in New South Wales because we are talking about the expenditure of \$84,000 million of public funds.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (16:18): I speak on the Appropriation Bill 2019 and cognate bills. This budget is an absolute testament to our strong record on health, mental health, regional youth and women. The Government has committed to commencing 29 new hospital and health facility upgrades over the next four years. It has announced \$2.8 billion to recruit 8,300 new frontline health staff over the next four years: 5,000 nurses and midwives, including mental health and palliative care nurses; 1,060 medical staff, including doctors, psychiatrists and specialists; and 880 allied health staff, including social workers and physiotherapists. Importantly, 45 per cent of the new staff will be located in regional New South Wales.

This is the biggest investment in frontline health staff ever seen in this State and we are very proud of that. We often get swept up talking about nurses and all sorts of things to do with nurses, but this budget validates that health care is about so many professions working together in a multidisciplinary way to achieve good outcomes for their patients. We know that the best outcomes are achieved by a whole team of health professions. That is exactly what this funding boost does. It does not concentrate on just one profession in health care; it acknowledges that we need all of those professions to work together for better outcomes. I repeat, this is a record spend in the Health portfolio. Regardless of one's side of politics, we should all be very proud of this investment.

In our health system we can look after our most vulnerable. The Government is investing \$19.7 million to support the implementation of key initiatives in New South Wales for Towards Zero Suicides. This is the second stage of a three-year almost \$90 million commitment. This funding will support a range of initiatives targeted at providing communities with the most effective tools to prevent and respond to suicide. Health facilities, particularly in the United States, have done some incredible work in suicide prevention and working towards zero suicides. There are some really great stories about health professionals setting targets. Some may say, "How can you set a target of zero?" We absolutely can. We can all work together in our health facilities and make it a priority to prevent suicide and work towards zero suicides. I am really excited to be part of a government that has put money into suicide prevention. I look forward rolling to this out and doing some really fantastic work in this space. We need to get on top of suicide rates and I intend to work very hard at that.

The funding will also support a range of initiatives targeted at providing communities with the most effective tools to prevent and respond to suicide, both in acute settings and throughout the community. Planning will begin to deliver specialised beds for mothers and their babies at Westmead and Royal Prince Alfred hospitals as part of the \$700 million Mental Health Infrastructure program. This will allow new mothers who need hospital admissions for mental health issues to stay with their babies. Indeed, the building of that new infrastructure will see that happen for the first time. It is very important for those mothers not to be separated from their babies when they are not feeling as well as they should.

Planning will also begin for the redevelopment of the Banksia mental health unit at Tamworth under the Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program. I give a big shout-out to my friend in the other place and member for Tamworth, Kevin Anderson, who has advocated tirelessly for this funding. He is a great local member and an all-round good person. The Government will invest \$9.4 million over four years to hire extra mental health nurses for specialist mental health units and more mental health workers to improve access to psychological supports.

As Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, I am proud of what our mental health workers do on the ground. It is wonderful to support them with more staff so that they can do even more terrific work. This Government will invest an additional \$23.5 million to expand the capacity of Lifeline and Kids

Helpline over four years. The great thing about that initiative is that it will be targeted at children and will communicate with them in the best possible way to provide the best possible care and the best possible service. We will give a \$9.6 million boost over four years to medical and mental health support services for those struggling with eating disorders, which will also help young people. I am pleased that across the local health districts we now will have people who can work full-time as area coordinators to educate and help people with eating disorders. Some people find this is health topic difficult to talk about, but it is great to start providing much-needed support to not only people who are suffering from an eating disorder, but also their families and carers. It is an incredible initiative.

An amount of \$4.4 million will be allocated to treatment and support hubs across metropolitan, rural and regional areas to help adults and children with an intellectual disability who need mental health treatment. That cohort deserves help and our time and investment in them will make their journeys through their mental illnesses that little bit easier. We will invest \$4.2 million over four years into the school nurse coordinator program. All members in this House know how strongly I feel about that program and how proud I am of the results it is achieving. Just recently two young boys from a local high school said to me, "Thank you, Bronnie. If it wasn't for the school nurse I wouldn't have sought the help that I needed." Being able to talk to a nurse directed them to the right place. In this place we talk about lots of things that we are able to achieve and that was one moment I will never forget. If we can help one or two, then we are going okay.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Hear, hear!

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: I know how strongly the Hon. Greg Donnelly feels about school nurses and I thank him for his continued support. There will be \$11 million for Getting on Track in Time—Got It!, which is a statewide, school-based early intervention program to support social and emotional learning for children. This great program is having some really exciting outcomes. I am keen to see it continue and achieve those outcomes. Over the next year our regional communities will receive \$8.3 million for drought-related mental health initiatives as part of a \$355 million expansion of the Emergency Drought Relief Package. I commend the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales in the other place, Adam Marshall, for his advocacy and work on that. I commend also the previous Minister, the Hon. Niall Blair, who advocated hard to implement mental health support workers.

In Orange last week I spoke to a couple of those workers, who are doing a great job. They are able to bridge the gap and help people on the land make decisions that are very difficult for them to make. The mental health support workers walk beside them in making those decisions and refer them to appropriate services. They are great workers doing great jobs. We have confirmed \$3 million in funding over four years for the not-for-profit Gidget Foundation to expand its work to stop maternal suicide by identifying, diagnosing and treating perinatal depression and anxiety among mothers and fathers.

Last week I was happy to open Gidget House in Queanbeyan with Deputy Premier John Barilaro. It is a terrific service co-located with the Tresillian Family Care Centre, which has also benefited from a recent budget investment. Now mothers, fathers and children can come to one place to see their early childhood nurse. If they need to access specialised services from a psychologist run by the Gidget Foundation, they are now able to do that in the same place. It is a really exciting and great initiative that demonstrates that this Government is prepared to bring services to our rural and regional communities. It has been demonstrated in Queanbeyan that if we bring those services to communities people will access them. Presentation rates at Tresillian and the Gidget Foundation are going up and they are supporting more people. It is terrific to support young parents and young families so that their children have an opportunity to thrive. Everyone should have that opportunity regardless of where they live.

It is an honour to represent the 390,000 young people in regional New South Wales. I am honoured to be the State's first Minister responsible for regional youth. We have already established our Office of Regional Youth and the Regional Youth Strategy is well underway. Young people in our regions will benefit from this budget delivering \$50 million to fund dedicated regional youth projects and programs into which the Office of Regional Youth will have an input. This is certainly groundbreaking stuff. It acknowledges that this Government wants to support our youth. We want them to stay in our regions, if that is their choice, and to thrive.

It is also an absolute honour to represent the four million women who call New South Wales home. The 2019-20 budget will deliver \$4.1 million for Women NSW to lead the advancement of women's equality and economic opportunities through women's policy in New South Wales. That is in addition to the \$390 million in funding over four years allocated to the prevention of domestic and sexual violence in New South Wales. This budget is for the people. I am proud to be part of the Berejiklian-Barilaro team that will deliver for the people of New South Wales over the next four years.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (16:25): I am not sure if members are aware, but three months ago I was The Nationals candidate for Ballina in the State election.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: What happened?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Well, I lost. The Ballina shire community voted very strongly for me. The Byron shire community, on the other hand—as Ms Abigail Boyd is delighted by—not so much. Frankly, the Leader of the Opposition knows that those communities did not vote much for the Labor candidate either. Nonetheless, that is not the point of this contribution. As part of the New South Wales budget, I am delighted that the *Election Commitments* document is open and transparent. I will particularly talk about the election commitments that were offered and have been delivered in the electorate of Ballina. Why? Because this Government delivers on its promises. When it makes a commitment, it comes through because it knows that keeping trust with the people of New South Wales is important. They will ensure that we are accountable. Around the world people are losing faith in their elected representatives and in authority structures. It is important that an elected government delivers on its promises not only in the electorates it wins but also in the electorates it does not win. Those promises should be incumbent upon the Government being returned, not upon an individual candidate getting elected. I am delighted that this budget proves just that.

Let us start with the Ballina District Hospital, which was a critically important commitment. The hospital that was built decades ago was appropriate for the time but it is tired now and needs an upgrade. It needs a new emergency department, a new ambulance bay and new medical imaging facilities. It needs an \$80.4 million refurbishment. That is what this Government committed to and that is exactly what this budget is delivering. I acknowledge Ballina Hospital Auxiliary president Barbara McFadden and secretary Marie Gray and the incredible work that they have done over many years in providing the extra funds required for the wonderful services of that hospital.

Last weekend I was delighted to attend the auxiliary's Annual Craft Show at the Ballina Jockey Club. As an aside, I won first prize in the raffle, which was a beautiful handmade quilt. They invited me and I felt it was important that an elected member of Parliament attend the event. Unfortunately the local member did not turn up, but that is okay. I am sure she had something much more important to do during that 48 hours while the Ballina Hospital auxiliary was hosting its most important fundraising event for sick children. But I was there because those things are important. That is why this Government delivered exactly that commitment to the hospital. It has done the same thing with roads. Throughout the election campaign we understood there was an issue in the Byron shire. The Byron shire receives more than two million visitors per year. That is more than visit Sri Lanka per year and 50 per cent more than visit Tasmania in a year.

During the election campaign the Government committed to a \$25 million tourism fund to understand the impacts of tourism on that shire. This budget delivers that fund. The council will receive the funds to fix the roads in the shire. That is critically important. We know that it will not fix every road. But the Government is adhering to the principle that because of the dollars that flow into the State's economy from the extraordinary number of visitors to the Byron shire—it is the third highest area for visitors in the country after Sydney and Melbourne—the State has a responsibility to look after it. That is what is provided in this budget, because the Government keeps to its commitments.

One road in the Byron shire that needs funding is the Bruxner Highway. At the turn-off to Alstonville on the Ballina Road there is a real blackspot. About 12 months ago a tragic accident occurred there and a young man died. He was hit by an oncoming car as he was turning. In the past four years four serious accidents have occurred at that blackspot. I pay tribute to all sides of politics with respect to this blackspot, which was not a political issue. It was above politics; everyone wanted to fix the problem. The Government committed to doing that and the money to fix this blackspot was allocated in this budget. It will affect people's lives. It will give an extraordinary measure of comfort to Carol Myers, the family of the poor soul who was lost, and the entire community. Nothing is more important than the safety of the community.

Government members know that we can never make our roads 100 per cent safe. Every driver has a level of personal responsibility. Every passenger must take responsibility too. If a passenger thinks that their driver is driving inappropriately—whether they are under the influence of an inappropriate substance or even just driving dangerously—it is incumbent on the passenger to speak up. We should all do that. Commitments made by the Government are important. It is important that commitments are delivered and that they are above politics. That is exactly what has happened in this case.

During the 2019 election campaign commitments were made with respect to education. I want to focus on the commitment to establish a school hall for Teven-Tintenbar Public School. I think that that school is one of the most beautiful schools in the State. It is situated in the rolling hills of the Alstonville plateau. It is a beautiful example of how an environment can impact wonderfully on the education and upbringing of children. From

memory, that school has 130 kids but it does not have a school hall. All the school assemblies and prize-givings are conducted in a covered outdoor area. Last year I was proud to attend the annual prize-giving ceremony. Unfortunately, the local member was not there—nor was she at the 13 other prize-giving ceremonies that I attended last year.

The Hon. Adam Searle: But you are not bitter!

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Not at all. The school sat me between the principal and the P&C president in the front row. It started to rain just when the presentation ceremony began and we got wet. I thought that it was very impressive for somebody who had the right connections to deliver that announcement at that time. It certainly got the message through that those kids need a school hall. The message was heard and this budget has delivered funding for the school hall, because nothing is more important than the education of our children.

It is not just education that is important for kids while they are growing up. Sporting endeavours are critically important. We are living at a time when social media is having a deep impact on the lives of children and on the formation of young minds. Facebook, Instagram and so forth—or even the compulsion to look at YouTube or play video games—are keeping young people inside rather than playing outside. We have probably never seen anything like that before in human history. The Government is very conscious of that, so I am very pleased that a commitment of \$3.6 million was made for the outdoor sporting hub and the upgrade of Kingsford Smith Oval—the home of the mighty Ballina Seagulls Rugby League Football Club. I pay particular credit to the President Max Beecher and all the boys who do such a fantastic job. The captain-coach Jamie Lyon is outstanding, and I thank him for the presentation to me of a signed rugby league ball on the night before the election when I helped to launch the season. I note, by the way, that the local member was not at that event.

Members will have picked up the drum beat of my contribution to this debate today—that is, that the promises that were made during the election campaign are listed, and they will be delivered. It did not matter that I was not successful in becoming the member for Ballina, because nothing is more important than keeping our word. There is nothing more important for a Government to say than, "If we make a commitment that is in the best interests of the people of New South Wales then we will come through with it." I refer not only to the Kingsford Smith outdoor sporting hub and the Kingsford Smith Oval but also the Alstonville football club. Members may not be aware that the Alstonville football club has 700 members. It is one of the largest football clubs in the Northern Rivers. It is an incredibly successful, passionate club. It provides programs not just for boys but for girls too across four or five ovals. That club desperately needed an upgrade so I met with Michael Buckley and the entire committee as well as a lot of the parents and the kids. I saw their need, made the commitment and the commitment was delivered. That is what this Government does.

The same thing occurred at the Brunswick Heads Surf Life Saving Club. I acknowledge the Hon. Taylor Martin who will shortly move a motion about the importance of surf lifesaving. Surf lifesaving is critically important in keeping beaches safe for surfers and swimmers. That is why I have worked closely with clubs at Ballina, Byron and Lennox Head. I have consulted with the Brunswick Heads Surf Life Saving Club President Craig Reid and the whole team. The club needed a full redevelopment of its clubhouse. The Premier and Deputy Premier came to that clubhouse and looked the people of the community in the eye. That clubhouse is critical for the surf club but it is also important for the whole community because it is a meeting space for the Brunswick Heads community. It is probably the most important meeting space for the entire community. It is where people meet—

Mr David Shoebridge: It is where they can see the surf.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: It is that, too. It is an evacuation centre when there are emergencies. The point is the community needed a new clubhouse and the budget, once again, delivered.

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox: An embarrassment of riches.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: It is. I make a serious point. We live in a time when it does not seem to be important to keep one's word. There was a time when you could shake someone's hand and you did not need a signed contract or litigation. People would think, "I will do this because it is the right thing to do." If a commitment is made it should be kept and that is what this Government is doing. I would say exactly the same if the Labor Party had won and it was in power. If that party kept all of its commitments I would congratulate its members, because it is about more than individual political parties; it is about the way our entire system of government, including all its institutions, is perceived.

There has to be trust in our institutions. Look at what is happening in other countries around the world where that trust is starting to erode. It has a fundamental effect on all of society. We cannot let that happen here. That is why the delivery of all election commitments is actually important. We cannot fudge words anymore. We cannot say there are core promises and non-core promises. It does not work like that because people will not

accept it anymore. Such a commitment is The Buttery. It is a wonderful organisation on the Northern Rivers—which we know has been enshrined in song—that takes care of people at their most vulnerable. People who have had an addiction to drugs or alcohol can go to The Buttery for treatment. It is an extraordinary centre that has an almost unrivalled reputation and set of outcomes in rehabilitating people.

The Buttery needed extra funding to develop services to assist emergency workers and soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Frankly, that probably was not going to win any votes in the election because it is not something that should be politicised. But this was the right thing to do. This Government committed to supporting the establishment of its CORE program. The infrastructure has been delivered in this budget. Those things make me proud to be a member of this Government. We have kept trust and faith with the people. We have done the right thing. We have delivered for the community of New South Wales. We can hold our heads up high and say, "We understand what it means to govern for all people—those who voted for us and those who did not."

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (16:41): I thank the Hon. Ben Franklin for his inspirational speech.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: I wanted to applaud.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It was a speech that deserved applause. I am very grateful to the Hon. Ben Franklin for outlining the commitments in the budget, particularly those made to the Ballina electorate. I commend the Hon. Ben Franklin for the great work he has done to deliver those outcomes for the local community. It is a good budget for New South Wales; indeed, it is a great budget for New South Wales. The first point to note when we look at the budget result this financial year is the \$802 million surplus. The budget is in surplus and it remains in surplus for the future. It remains at \$1.7 billion of average surpluses over the budget period. They are strong results because this Government has delivered strong budget surpluses for most of our time in Government. I was particularly interested to note in the budget papers that the bill is supporting this State's credit rating. I turn to 1.1 of the budget overview:

The state is now one of only five sub-national jurisdictions around the world to have the highest possible credit rating, rated triple-A by both major credit ratings agencies.

That is quite an amazing feat for this budget and for the people of New South Wales. All members of this House should be very proud because we have all worked towards it—some maybe more so than others—to create this economic environment in New South Wales. We know that New South Wales is the best-performing State in the nation. Our unemployment rate of 4.6 per cent is the lowest in the nation, as outlined in the budget. We have strong gross state product growth in this State. The State has the lowest net debt in the country. In this budget it is negative \$8.8 billion. That is a very strong result which is helping to build our State of the future.

The budget is titled *Getting it done*, but it is a budget about building New South Wales. The budget is about delivering on our election commitments. As we discussed earlier in the *Election Commitments* document, this Government will be held to account and it is happy to be held to account, because this Government is about delivering. It is making sure that the people of New South Wales come first and that the infrastructure will be delivered. That infrastructure is enormous when you consider the pipeline ahead. I note some snapshots of those figures when it comes to our infrastructure agenda as outlined in the budget. The Hon. Sarah Mitchell is very happy to be delivering 190 new and upgraded schools across New South Wales. The Parliamentary Secretary for Health and the shadow Minister for Health are very interested in the 40 new and upgraded hospitals and health facilities that will be delivered across the State.

Five new motorways will be delivered and we are soon to see my personal favourite, WestConnex, being delivered. Having grown up in Strathfield near the entrance to the M4, I am very excited to see the twin tunnels opening up soon. I note the Hon. Andrew Constance, the Minister for Transport and Roads, is in the President's gallery. The budget will also deliver the NorthConnex, which I believe will be opening in the near future, maybe next year. We on this side of the House believe very strongly in the F6 extension. Members opposite took a policy to the 2019 election that they would not deliver the F6 extension. Our policy was rewarded by voters in the electorate who are very keen on the F6 extension.

We also have the M12 and the Sydney Gateway project. The three museums included in the budget are very close to the arts Minister's heart. The Powerhouse Museum will be relocated and I note the Hon. Shayne Mallard and the Hon. Ben Franklin are in the Chamber. I have spent a lot of time with them recently as part of our museums and galleries inquiry and looking into the relocation.

The Hon. Don Harwin: Years—2½ years.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It has been 2½ years. It was the inquiry that never seemed to end. The relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta will present a fantastic opportunity for the people of Parramatta to have a world-class facility in their midst. We heard recently in the Chamber that there will be a \$50 million extension to the Australian Museum not only for King Tut in the Tutankhamen exhibition but also for

a multipurpose space to house travelling exhibitions. As the Minister outlined today, it will be either one exhibition across two levels or two exhibitions. The Sydney Modern Project will expand the Art Gallery of NSW. I know the Hon. Shayne Mallard has been a strong supporter of that project since day one. Indeed, it is a very exciting project for the people of New South Wales and it is funded in the budget.

We do not shy away from the three stadiums that have been delivered for the State—the Western Sydney Stadium, the Bankwest Stadium and Sydney Football Stadium. The Bankwest Stadium is already hosting some fantastic sporting events. Unfortunately, to date I have not been too happy with the Tigers' performances at Bankwest Stadium. I am sure that will improve in the near future. In the future the redevelopment of Stadium Australia will make it a top tier rectangular facility. The budget contains three light rails. The CBD and South East Light Rail project is coming online soon. The barricades across the city are being removed as that project is coming to fruition. The Parramatta Light Rail is to be constructed. The Government also opened the Newcastle Light Rail which is running very well.

If the Hon. Taylor Martin was in the Chamber I am sure he would show he is a very enthusiastic supporter of the Newcastle Light Rail and what it is delivering to transform the city of Newcastle. I note the member for Newcastle might be a little late to the party but he has been calling for its extension recently. Obviously he is a convert to the Newcastle Light Rail and the great way it is transforming the second city in New South Wales. It is making Newcastle a premier, world-class location in the Hunter. The budget also outlines the continuation of the Sydney Metro project. The Sydney Metro Northwest open in recent months. We have delivered a fantastic piece of infrastructure for the people of New South Wales. Its next iteration will extend it to Martin Place and out to Bankstown. We on this side of the Chamber were committed to ensuring it was in the budget. Opposition members did not support that metro being extended to Bankstown but I am sure the commuters in Bankstown are very thankful that this Government is delivering a world-class piece of infrastructure.

The budget includes allocations for the Sydney Metro West. Again, we on this side of the Chamber are very proud to be delivering this piece of infrastructure. It will go all the way from Westmead to the city and I was very proud to see it connect to North Strathfield.

[Interruption]

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon Trevor Khan to order for the first time. I remind members to turn their phones to silent.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: There is also the North South Rail Link, which will connect up Badgerys Creek. That brings us to the aerotropolis. The Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport is in this budget. There has been some debate in the Chamber today about the things the Government is considering regarding the aerotropolis and catering for that third city in New South Wales. We spend a lot of time talking about the infrastructure that is provided in this budget—and rightly so because it is an infrastructure budget.

The Hon. Ben Franklin: A golden century.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It is a building budget. We are approaching a golden century. I often enjoy reading through Budget Paper No. 1.

The Hon. Ben Franklin: Often?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I do. Every budget period I comb through Budget Paper No. 1 because it has so many great insights as to how we have achieved the budget results and what is in our future. Budget Paper No. 1 outlines the four pillars—which the Treasurer also mentioned in his speech—that the New South Wales budget, and particularly the economy, is built on. The first pillar is the economic blueprint outlining New South Wales' economic transition. The Chief Economist is working on that blueprint, working towards the reforms we must continue to deliver to make sure that New South Wales remains number one. The budget papers outline that, and state:

In the last year alone, New South Wales attracted 37 per cent of Australia's overseas tourists and 38 per cent of international students coming to Australia. Both these sectors account for a significant share of New South Wales' services exports.

That economic blueprint looks at what makes our State competitive and what drives trade and economic activity in New South Wales, because economic activity is not an end in itself. This helps us bring down a strong budget and ensures that we can deliver 4,600 additional teachers, 5,000 additional nurses, 3,300 additional health workers and doctors, and 1,500 new police on the street to help the most vulnerable in our community. That is what a strong budget is able to deliver, and that is what the budget handed down by Treasurer Perrottet on Tuesday delivered.

[Interruption]

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Greg Donnelly to order for the first time. I have to be consistent if a member's phone rings.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The second pillar is the NSW Generations Fund. We talked recently about the proceeds of assets and transactions. This is a ring-fenced \$10 billion fund that will help New South Wales meet its future commitments. This year we implemented the My Community Dividend off the proceeds of the fund, which will keep growing into the future. We see the impact on gross debt, as outlined in the budget, when the NSW Generations Fund delivers for the people of New South Wales. It is a key plank in our budget success into the future. Of particular interest to me is the third pillar, which is re-examining Federal financial relations from a State perspective. This is something I spoke about in my maiden speech.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: You did?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I did. I described how under our current arrangements the Federal Government—the big parent—treats the States like errant children, doling out their payments. In recent times there have been many reviews of the Federation—usually conducted by the Federal Government from a Federal perspective. Unfortunately, those reviews have not progressed a great distance. There were some changes recently with the introduction of the floor in GST distributions. Treasurer Perrottet has led the charge with other State Treasurers for the "no State worse off" provision to be enshrined in law to ensure that New South Wales taxpayers are no worse off as a result of the Commonwealth grants system. I commend Treasurer Perrottet for taking up that fight. David Thodey has been appointed to chair a committee that will examine Federal financial relations—and particularly opportunities for reform from a State perspective, including reform of State taxes.

New South Wales' submission to the horizontal fiscal equalisation task force a couple of years ago revealed that there are disincentives in the current model of horizontal fiscal equalisation in that States are penalised for their reforms. For argument's sake, if New South Wales were to move from an inefficient tax, such as stamp duty, to a more efficient tax, such as land tax, there would be penalties under that system. The new forum will be able to investigate opportunities for the State to come together with the Federal Government to encourage reform and look to the future so that we have a better-performing tax system for the people of New South Wales. I was especially pleased to hear the Treasurer say in his Budget Speech:

Above all the panel will be guided by core Liberal principles, lower, simpler, fairer and more sustainable taxes for the people of New South Wales.

That is essential because on this side of the House we want lower taxes in New South Wales and a reduced tax burden. The budget includes an increase in the payroll tax threshold to \$900,000 this financial year, increasing to \$1 million. The Hon. Damien Tudehope, the Minister for Finance and Small Business, has talked about that in this Chamber. The Government is proud to deliver support for small businesses across New South Wales, reduce the burden of payroll tax and stimulate economic activity. The Minister has outlined stories of businesses across the State that have taken on more employees because of the changes in payroll tax and the payroll tax threshold.

This stands in stark contrast to the performance of other States and their budgets. In Queensland there has been a 0.2 per cent increase in payroll tax for businesses with a wages bill over \$6.5 million. Queensland has more taxes compared with New South Wales. That was not the only tax that increased in Queensland. Registration costs also increased, as did petroleum taxes. Queensland moved forward with additional taxes as part of its budget. In Western Australia surcharges were increased. Victoria also increased a whole raft of taxes. Victoria picked up one tax from the New South Wales Opposition: the duty increase on what are described as "luxury vehicles" worth upwards of \$100,000. It was the policy of the interim Leader of the Opposition in the lower House, the member for Keira, that went missing during the State election campaign and that he could not explain.

Victoria has also introduced a 2.75 per cent gold royalty and State debt will more than double to fund a \$27.4 billion transport upgrade. In New South Wales there are lower taxes, with the payroll tax threshold increasing to \$900,000. New South Wales has also been able to give back when it comes to cost of living. The Hon. Ben Franklin mentioned doubling the Active Kids voucher to make sure that kids can play summer and winter sports. We encourage that in New South Wales. That is \$200 for each child across the State.

The Hon. Wes Fang: Plus Creative Kids.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: There is Creative Kids as well. The Creative Kids program was announced in the last budget, and it is continuing. During the election campaign Labor members did not support doubling the Active Kids voucher. It is important to get more kids active and playing sport. Earlier today the Hon. Shayne Mallard referred to the parliamentary inquiry into childhood overweight and obesity that I chaired and of which he was a member. One of the inquiry's recommendations was the introduction of the Active Kids voucher.

The budget also provides for the introduction of the regional seniors travel card. For \$250, seniors in our regions will be able to travel around New South Wales. This will address the fact that seniors in rural communities do not have the same level of access to public transport as do people in cities. The budget makes the same concessions available to them as are available to people who live in the city through the provision of the gold Opal card. The Government has also provided by capping Opal card fees at \$50 a week. The budget contains significant cost-of-living measures to assist people across New South Wales. The Government knows that some people in the State are doing it tough and that every concession helps.

The budget also provides for the establishment of 10 new Service NSW centres to help people save money by providing concessions at a one-stop shop. Somebody I know recently saved \$1,400 by visiting Service NSW and taking advantage of all the concessions that they previously were not aware of, such as switching energy providers. Gas Switch has been increased following the introduction of Energy Switch. I pay tribute to the Hon. Don Harwin, who as Minister for Energy and Utilities introduced the Energy Switch program, which was a fantastic way of helping people throughout the State. There is a lot of good news in the budget. The bills before the House will assist in building up New South Wales. It is a State-building budget from a State-building Government. It is a budget that gets the job done.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (17:01): It is with pleasure that I make a contribution to debate on the Appropriation Bill 2019 and cognate bills. This is life-changing legislation for future generations, and not just because it enables the Government to fix the economic mess left behind by previous Labor governments; the budget is designed to ensure that future generations have the best State in the best country in the world. When I was a child I asked my parents what I should be when I grew up. My Mum said to me, "Darling, be whatever makes you happy." My Dad said to me, "Be reliable." My Dad's response was not a very cool answer for a teenager, but in hindsight I have come to appreciate the wisdom of his words: If you say you are going to do something, do it. If you say you are going to be somewhere, be there. Make sure you are reliable and that your word can be relied upon. I am proud to be part of a government that does exactly that. If the Government says it will do something, we do it.

I remember clearly when the Coalition came to government in 2011 and members swapped from one side of the House to the other. As the record shows, at that time there was a significant budget deficit. While large numbers may not mean something to us each day, they mean something to our everyday lives. Deficit has an impact on services, on service delivery and on people's lives. The Workers Compensation Scheme had a monumental deficit. I know that some members of this House sat until the wee hours of the morning to negotiate and implement changes to that scheme.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: As did some staff members.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I acknowledge the interjection of the Hon. Damien Tudehope. Those Government and Opposition members worked very hard to arrive at a reasonable outcome that turned the scheme around and changed people's lives. In 2011 the Coalition Government made tough decisions about public sector wages to ensure that the Government could achieve the budget position we have today. At the time the wages cap was very controversial. The Government capped wages at 2.5 per cent across the public sector, which includes all of us.

The Hon. Adam Searle: Including superannuation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Indeed. They were not easy decisions, but they were necessary as part of cleaning up the fiscal mess. When the Coalition Government was elected, apparently Labor had had a metaphorical good old party. There were bottles and cans everywhere. The place was a mess and the Coalition Government cleaned it up—eventually with Opposition members' cooperation. New South Wales was on the cusp of losing its triple-A credit rating. I remember conversations with a very worried and stressed Mike Baird, who was Treasurer at the time. He said there was no money in the tin.

Hard decisions were made by Treasurers Baird, Constance, Berejiklian and now, thankfully, Perrottet, who did magnificent work to put the State in its current fiscal position. We now have a booklet—the like of which I have never seen previously—outlining all the promises and election commitments we made. The Government will be reliable and will deliver on those promises and commitments. I thank those past Treasurers and Treasurer Perrottet for their hard work and all they have done. I also thank members of this House for their hard work to ensure that we cleaned up the mess. The Government is now in the position of not only having balanced the budget but also having no net debt. That is easy to say but difficult to achieve. For my sins, I have not achieved no net debt in my household.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Who has?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It is something I still aspire to achieve. It is something to which we all should aspire—living within our means—because it makes sense of what we do. The State is not only living within its means with no net debt but also renovating its house at the same time—and it has not taken out a loan to achieve it. The Government is bringing transport infrastructure, schools, hospitals and roads up to speed for the next generation. The Government is doing what Coalition members said they would do. But not only that, the Government is putting aside money for a rainy day with our Generations Fund, which is ring fenced so that it cannot be touched until things are tough and it is needed.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: To pay down debt.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Exactly. I am in awe of this Government. I fear I will wake up and all this has been just a fabulous dream, but it is the State's reality—thanks to the hard work of consecutive Treasurers. This Government not only is reliable but also puts the people of New South Wales first. This Government can do that because it has a balanced budget and there is money in the tin. Then you can have a heart and do all the other things that should be done when we put people first. People are at the centre of what this Government does. I will deal with that in more detail shortly. I will focus on just two areas to illustrate my point. One is the State's world-class innovation of having a Minister for Customer Service. Who would have thought of putting people at the centre of everything this Government does and having a Minister whose job it is to make people's lives better in New South Wales?

The Berejiklian Government has introduced a cluster for customer service that will improve the lives of all New South Wales citizens, no matter where they live or what their circumstances might be. The Government has not framed the policy electorate by electorate or person by person, but rather right across New South Wales. The Government is focusing on the quality and level of services and is using technology and data to better integrate customer services. I am sure we all remember the days when updating our car registration took half a day—queueing up, picking the wrong number and joining the line again, getting another number and filling in the wrong form—and having the nightmarish experience of paying some money just to drive your car and get to work to earn some money and pay taxes. But those days are over. I am pleased to say that Service NSW is a world-class organisation that looks after its customers by putting customers at the centre of everything it does. Service NSW makes dealing with government easy—and you might even get a person who smiles and welcomes you.

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: You always get a person who smiles.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, they do smile. Gone are the days of counter with bulletproof glass. Gone are the forms and the wrong form numbers. Recently I had the pleasure of attending a Service NSW centre with my son so he could get his learner driver licence.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: No!

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I know I look way too old for that.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Way too young!

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I gratefully acknowledge the Minister's interjection. It was a pleasant experience end to end. As the next generation, that was my son's very first experience of interacting with government. It was pleasant and efficient, which is exactly what it should be. It is important to this Government that we improve the quality and level of services available for the people of New South Wales. I congratulate the Minister for Customer Service, the Hon. Victor Dominello, on his endeavours. I know that customer service will be a world-class cluster and that he, as the Minister, will deliver world-class services—as he has already demonstrated, not just in Service NSW but in interacting with our schools, hospitals and social services to redesign each of those services so that they work better for our citizens. The Minister will focus on reducing red tape, simplifying processes and delivering measures that will help people to manage their cost of living.

This is a government that has introduced the most innovative ways in living memory to tackle cost of living. I received a letter in the mail from the Government asking, "Have you claimed your rebate?" I should have framed it. I was so excited to receive a letter saying, "We would like to give you some money back". The Government wants to return money—taxpayer's money—to the citizens of New South Wales. The tolls and other relief available to people are extraordinary. As a mother, I am so pleased about the Active Kids vouchers—now not just one, but two. Active Kids vouchers make a difference to people's lives no matter where they live—the extra pair of footy boots, the extra registration—

Mr David Shoebridge: It doesn't pay for a pair of footy boots.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It depends where you buy them.

Mr David Shoebridge: Does it?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It certainly does. The vouchers encourage family members to register a child or a second child or for a second activity. While the vouchers may not pay for everything or might not pay for the most expensive pair of boots, they certainly do help. I have had not a single person complain to me about them yet. As I often say, you do not need to choose between arts and sport—you can have both. The Creative Kids voucher ensures exactly that. If your child wants to try sculpture or painting or take music lessons, they can do that also—and we recognise that they should be able to. There is the Baby Bundle to help new parents. We know how expensive it is to have a child and we are supporting our citizens in that endeavour. Free dental checks for kids is another fantastic initiative. There is a reduction in early childhood education costs. We are walking the talk; we are here to help families and their cost of living every day.

The \$50 weekly Opal cap is an exciting initiative. Citizens can get money back through energy rebates, and we will help them do it. We will not only talk about it; we will help you walk that journey. We will help you apply for your rebate—in fact, we will do the work for you. Now people can do it with their electricity bill as well as their gas bill. We will help them lower their bills through the Energy Switch program. It is a brilliant initiative that I have not heard a single person complain about—in fact, some members in this place have accessed it already.

I am pleased to be a part of this Government, and I highlight another groundbreaking initiative. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces is well known in this place as being a flag-bearer for the environment and open spaces, and his pedigree in planning is renowned. Having a Minister for public spaces touches us all. In this budget \$19 million has been allocated to enhance green spaces. Not only is there a Minister whose job it is to get that done, but also we have put money behind it. Soon residents will have access to new playgrounds, walking trails and cycleways as part of this transformation of Government-owned land. We will turn it into space that can be used by our citizens.

The next phase of the Government's \$50 million commitment is to create new open spaces, and the suburbs next in line to benefit from this investment are Beaumont Hills, Hurstville and Frenchs Forest. Everybody wants access to high-quality open spaces. They play into health, wellbeing, family and a range of good, healthy activities. Investment includes \$9 million for walking tracks in Frenchs Forest—in my backyard—and \$6 million for a new running track. There is no excuse for me now; I will have to get out there and get moving again because there will be a running track. A playground will be built in Hurstville and \$4 million has been allocated to add nature trails to open space at Withers Road, Beaumont Hills. These are discrete, tangible improvements to the cost of living and to people's lives. We do not just talk about it; we deliver it.

There is \$31 million to upgrade open spaces in Appin, Ermington, Hurstville, Leppington and Penrith. It is almost fair to say that every player wins a prize. We are offering so much to citizens in this State to ensure that their lives and their quality of living is improved. We are ensuring that we promise not just the big infrastructure, but also the little things that make a difference to people's lives. It is important that we consider our rural and regional friends. There has been no greater tragedy in recent times in New South Wales than the drought which is affecting almost 100 per cent of our State. We cannot survive in this country without our farmers, without our food bowl. As we support our city and local citizens, we must support our regions—and we do. We do not just talk about it; we deliver it.

There is no water. We know that. That is fine for us in the city, where we can turn on a tap. It does not affect us. But people in the country are doing it tough. There is no water, as we have heard repeatedly in this place. We must get behind our farmers and deliver critical relief to them so that they can get through this period. We know there will be rain in the end, but for the moment there is none and we need to get behind the farmers and support them. We have done that. Critical relief has been delivered to the most drought-affected communities, taking the total support package to \$1.8 billion—a big number—making a real difference to real people and real lives. There will be more transport subsidies for stock, fodder and water, and further funds for emergency water supplies. What a tragedy—of no-one's making—that we need this. We are right there for those citizens with emergency water supplies and by waiving water licence charges, interest on drought loans and Local Land Services rates.

We know that when our country cousins are not doing well it not only affects them; it affects everybody. We know we can get them through this period. We know local communities need that help. When kids cannot go to school, it affects their families. When there is no food on the table and no water, it affects families. We are right behind them to assist by fast-tracking local infrastructure projects, with \$170 million of investment to keep people employed, keep them in their towns and keep families together. We know that country people are resilient; we know they will get through this time. But we are here for them. It goes without saying that the numbers are big, but they are important. There has been some talk about frontline workers, but this is the party of the worker. This is the party that provides more frontline services because we said we would do it—and we have. We have put on another 4,600 teachers. We promised we would do it, and we did. We have put on another 5,000 nurses and midwives. We promised we would do it, and we did.

All members stood at polling booths and people asked us what had happened with frontline services. We listened and we are delivering. There are 3,300 more health professionals—absolutely critical. We said we would do it, and we are doing it. We are putting mental health counsellors in every high school. As a parent of teenagers, I cannot tell you how relieved I was to hear that. We have all heard tragic personal stories that have touched us. They should not have happened. Putting counsellors in schools, on the ground, in every school ensures that our kids—our teenagers—can talk to someone. That is absolutely critical. I am so pleased to be part of a government that has delivered that, not just talked about it. It is easy to talk about mental health in a general sense, but having a person there whom a child or teenager can access or be referred to will change lives. We may not know about it. In fact, I hope we hear nothing about it; I hope it makes a quiet, effective difference.

It is important that when we say we will do something, we do it. We are getting on with the job of doing what we said we would do in our election commitment document. I am pleased to be part of that. We cannot ignore that infrastructure goes hand in hand with the arts. I am pleased that the Minister for Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts is progressing with the Powerhouse Museum. The people of western Sydney deserve that museum—there should be no debate about it. There should be no question that they are as deserving as any other citizen in this State.

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: It was bipartisan for five minutes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I acknowledge the honourable member's interjection. It is important that we balance that with our infrastructure—that we balance people's lives with the big picture of cleaning up after this party and getting the infrastructure put in place. My personal favourite is the fact that we can have it all. Having three world-class stadia in New South Wales ensures that we do not have to go to a world final in Melbourne, we do not have to go to a final in Western Australia—where they also have a brand-new stadium—and we do not have to go to South Australia to see a grand final. We have three world-class stadia right here—as we should as the best State in the best country in the world—for no other reason than, first, we can afford it and, second, our citizens deserve it. I am pleased to have visited Parramatta Stadium. It was unbelievably beautiful and efficient. The game was magnificent to watch.

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox: Who was playing?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The Waratahs were playing. Sadly, they lost again. However, controversially there will be a Shute Shield final held there at the end of this season. I am pleased that the Government can deliver all those things. As our Premier has said, we can have it all. We have said to our citizens, "You deserve the best". We have taken the hard decisions to ensure we are in a position to deliver the best and we deserve it. We have done that sensibly. We have planned it, costed it and we are delivering it in a sensible, calm, organised way. I thank the House for its time.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (17:20): I support the budget bills today. I congratulate the Treasurer in the other place for this outstanding budget and congratulate the Liberal-Nationals team for delivering such an outstanding and responsible budget that builds upon eight years of careful reforms—difficult reforms at times—and budgeting innovation. I remind members in the House of the history of the Coalition Government, which was elected on 23 March this year to an historic third term—the first third-term government since the seventies. When we were first elected in 2011, Premier Barry O'Farrell and the team then had to make hard decisions. The State was last-placed in Australia for economic performance. The slogan in that election was "make NSW number one again" and we did do that. The O'Farrell Government had to make hard decisions about reforming government: reining in costs, capping wages, restructuring the public service as well as difficult areas like workers compensation reform. The work in that period, led by the Treasurer of the day in Mike Baird, laid the foundations for this budget.

Mike Baird's premiership brought innovation to our finances, not just the simple approach of privatisation but asset recycling—retaining these assets on the books in terms of the State's net assets and then recycling that revenue into infrastructure—while at the same time brokering a very good deal with the Federal Government to get support in doing that. As a result we are now at the point of opening infrastructure that was paid for by programs such as the sale of poles and wires. The Treasurer in that period was the current Premier, Gladys Berejiklian. We now stand on the shoulders of those two great governments. Premier Berejiklian and Treasurer Dominic Perrottet are bedding down the finances of this State. We are futureproofing the State for a generation from mismanagement by those members opposite if they ever get on this side of the Chamber. As they said, it is the golden century, which I think is a great term. We have record low unemployment. As we have heard from other speakers in this debate the State has essentially no debt. We have such prosperity and optimism in our business community and our community that it is—

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: Because you've sold everything—that's why. There's nothing left. That's why there's no debt.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Well, that is not what your friends are saying in the other House at the moment. The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane should probably go and listen to question time there. I am proud to stand behind the election documents. I am proud to be a member of a Government that is delivering these commitments responsibly. I note there was debate earlier today in this House over the election commitments document. For the first time in one concise document is the transcript of our election commitments. Those members opposite were a bit excited about that document. Frankly, everything in that document you could find by doing a media search of the election period. What it essentially contains is those election commitments, costed and funded. It is something that the electorate and those members opposite will be able to hold up in three and a half to four years' time and say, "Did they deliver these things?" or, "Where are they at with them?" This is accountability. It is something that those opposite did not have—although they did have lots of glossy brochures.

I thought that in my contribution I would look into the magic mirror. What would it have been like if those opposite had been in government? We do not have to go too far to compare the New South Wales budget to a Labor budget. The recent Victorian State budget was touched upon by the Hon. Scott Farlow in an earlier contribution. The Victorian State budget is a classic example of Labor's economic mismanagement. They made some very ambitious promises to get elected and now it is time for a dose of reality for the Victorians. Labor cannot afford the promises they made, so what did they do in the budget? They are raising taxes again, even though they promised in the election campaign that they would not do so. They have delayed nine major road projects—I will come to our Government's road projects in a moment. They are slashing funding from the public service which is being forced to take an eye-watering \$1.8 billion worth of so-called efficiencies. The Victorian public service is having a \$1.8 billion cut.

Those members opposite might like to pay attention to their Victorian colleagues before talking about what the New South Wales Government is doing with our efficiencies. We all know what that really means: It essentially means cuts to programs in Victoria. Even with higher taxes, cuts to programs and departments Victoria's net debt is set to double. It is expected to balloon to \$55 billion in just four years. Clearly the fundamentals are wrong in Victoria but are right in New South Wales. Victorians have had five years of spending—all propped up by the property boom. Now their stamp duty income is decreasing and they cannot make up the budget gap as they have put the money into short-term operations. They have treated stamp duty as a permanent source of income; this Government has not done that. They have absorbed that money into the operational baseline rather than recognising it as a once-in-a-generation opportunity. Surely they ought to have seen that the property boom would not last forever.

The New South Wales Government has a responsibility around operational budgets and is aware that the property boom will not go on forever. We have made prudent plans in the forward budgets about reductions in stamp duty fees. The Victorians cannot afford big infrastructure projects like the airport rail link that they promised in the election campaign, which their infrastructure Minister has previously labelled as a crucial project for the Victorian economy. Clearly they did not bother to factor the costs of such an important project into their budget when they were planning their budget as they were assuming—and this has been well reported—that the Bill Shorten Labor Federal Government was going to pay for it. Obviously they were very wrong. They delayed their State budget waiting for the Federal election to deliver that funding.

The Hon. Natalie Ward: How did that work out?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: That did not work out too well, did it? Meanwhile, rather than focusing on transformational infrastructure projects like this Government is, they are frittering away taxpayer dollars on small-target vanity projects that range from the irrelevant to the misguided. For example, they are spending \$350,000 on free mobile phone charging bars at inner-city train stations—that is a big election commitment. They are giving away a million dollars in grants for silo art—paintings on silos, I think that is. They are spending \$5 million on marketing for the wine industry and \$106 million on camp site improvements. These should not be the priorities of a State government that is strapped for cash, putting up taxes and cutting public services. In terms of the hierarchy of needs for the Victorians, the Andrews Labor Government has got its priorities wrong.

No doubt there is going to be an exodus of Victorians coming to New South Wales to work in our government and State. Let me compare the results of five years of Labor's economic management in Victoria to the current situation in New South Wales. As I said when I started making the comparison, I am looking in the magic mirror. What would have happened at the last election or the one before if Labor had won office in this State? I have just given a nightmare view into the future. Members know the advertisement on the television, "Compare the pair" where one goes up and one goes down.

Let us compare Victoria after five years of Labor government to that of New South Wales, which has a diversified economy. Data on economic output in New South Wales for the last financial year of 2017-18 shows that gross domestic product per capita in New South Wales was \$74,900 but in Victoria it is only \$66,000; the

figures are in. New South Wales has a much greater level of economic output relative to population than Victoria. This effect is replicated in wages. According to the most recent data of the Australian Bureau of Statistics from November 2018 the average weekly earnings for a full-time worker in New South Wales is \$1,622 while the equivalent worker in Victoria only earns \$1,568. The citizens of New South Wales not only produce more per head of population but also are more productive to our economy and earn higher wages than Victorians.

This is a result of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's excellent economic management. Over the five years of the Andrews Government the gap between Victoria and New South Wales has been widening—compare the pair—with New South Wales pulling further and further ahead. New South Wales punches above its population weight in economic output while Victoria is punching below its weight. The reason behind this difference is the policy and budget decisions of the two State governments. While the Victorian Labor Government does not have its budget priorities right and is set to spiral even deeper into debt and more taxes, the New South Wales economy is performing strongly. Fiscal discipline and smart economic management over eight years means that the New South Wales Coalition Government has been able to get it done for New South Wales.

Let me touch on some of our key projects for the next financial year. We have heard from other speakers about the record spend in education, with 180 new or upgraded schools, and a record spend in health. I am particularly proud of the record spend in western Sydney at Nepean, Campbelltown, Bankstown and Liverpool hospitals—the list goes on—yet there are no new taxes in the budget despite stamp duty revenue decreasing. The Government is, in fact, cutting payroll tax, saving about 40,000 businesses a total of more than \$880 million over four years. Victorians must weep when they see these figures. The Government is doubling the number of Active Kids vouchers, supporting solar power packages on family homes and continuing tax relief for first home buyers.

The Government is focused on the bush with a \$355 million drought stimulus package, giving farmers access to more subsidies on top of the \$1.5 billion already committed at the election. The Government is boosting the numbers of teachers, nurses, doctors, police and other frontline workers by almost 15,000 over four years. Members opposite have spoken about 2,500 being restructured out of the middle ranks of the public service and I acknowledge that they make an important contribution to our State but the net increase is 12,500. No-one seems to have picked up that we are increasing the number of public servants in the State by 12,500. The Government is not providing a short-term sugar hit to plug budget holes, as was done in Victoria and Queensland, but instead is delivering strong and sustainable financial management.

It is no secret in this House that one of my passions is transport and roads, particularly public transport, so I thought I would touch on some of the transport initiatives contained in the budget. Members should hang onto their seats because some of this information shows a comparison with some of the cancellations in Victoria. The budget contains \$22.8 billion in capital and recurrent expenditure to continue building and improving our road and transport infrastructure to provide transport services, tackle congestion and make public transport cheaper and more accessible. The Victorians would not even know what that figure of \$22.8 billion was, other than debt. The budget allocates \$5.4 billion towards building key public transport projects and \$2.8 billion for major road projects.

I turn now to talk about rail, metro and light rail, three of my favourite transport modes. The budget includes \$561 million to continue work on the Parramatta Light Rail stage one to link Westmead and Carlingford through the Parramatta CBD, \$3.6 billion to operate rail services and \$1.2 billion to continue the delivery of the Sydney Metro City & Southwest linking Chatswood to Bankstown. During the election Labor said it would cancel the metro from Central to Bankstown. The budget includes \$643 million or \$3.2 billion over four years to progress the More Trains, More Services program designed to overhaul the rail network to provide increased rail services, a long overdue investment in public transport. The budget allocates \$6.4 billion over four years for the Sydney Metro West to go from Sydney to Parramatta to enable construction to start in 2020 to provide the fastest, easiest and most reliable journey between the CBD and greater Parramatta, while \$207 million has been allocated for planning and pre-construction activities of stage one of the north south metro rail, a link to service the new western Sydney airport—and I notice the Hon. Mark Latham is in the Chamber—a metro rail line from the airport through to St Marys. That will be an important link service for that community.

The budget has \$812 million to progress the new intercity rail fleet to bring a new level of comfort, safety and accessibility for customers. In my neck of the woods members opposite misrepresented the facts by suggesting the fleet was bought without consideration being given to whether the trains would fit on the tracks. Nothing could be further from the truth. Money is in the budget to upgrade the rail system over the Blue Mountains to the standard across the entire metropolitan system so that all trains can travel on it. This is one of my hobby horses. The V-sets, which are cute on a train set, were from the 1970s and 1980s and when Labor upgraded the inter-urban train fleet and bought the Oscar train, which I understand from transport officials is quite a good train, the train could not travel up to the Blue Mountains because Labor did not upgrade the tracks. The interurban trains were put on the

Newcastle and Wollongong lines but not on the Blue Mountains line. This Government is providing a state-of-the-art train system to the Blue Mountains, contrary to the comments of those opposite.

The budget allocates \$520 million to continue planning for delivery of the motorway links in Sydney including the F6 extension stage one, the Western Harbour Tunnel, the Beaches Link, NorthConnex, and the Sydney Gateway—great projects—and \$50 million to preserve future road and rail corridors across western Sydney, something Labor usually sells; and they will probably do so if they ever win office. The budget contains \$15 million to commence New South Wales' largest single station accessibility upgrade at Redfern to provide six new lifts, new stairs and a southern concourse. When the Labor Premier was the member, Redfern did not even have a lift. When Premier Berejiklian was transport Minister a lift was put in there straightaway and now we are doing the big upgrade.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: That's not true.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It is absolutely true. There is \$298 million in the budget towards 68 more accessibility upgrades to train stations to be completed over the next four years, including some in the Blue Mountains, adding to the 57 upgrades already completed. The budget allocates \$357 million over four years in New South Wales and Australian government funding to provide additional car spaces through the commuter car parking program and \$87 million for community transport and home community care services. There is \$57 million towards new walking and cycling infrastructure across the State and \$256 million over four years—and this is something dear to my heart—to make walking and cycling a more convenient, safer and enjoyable transport option.

There is \$1.6 billion in the budget for bus services throughout New South Wales, including regional and metropolitan bus services and school services, as well as funding for new and replacement buses and bus upgrades. In addition, \$480 million has been committed to upgrade Mulgoa and Mamre roads in western Sydney in my area to deliver important improvements to those key western Sydney routes and more than \$300 million to deliver the upgrade of Prospect Highway between Prospect and Blacktown and the Memorial Avenue upgrade at Kellyville.

There is \$9 million in the budget for additional measures to ease congestion; introduce technology, including intelligent traffic lights—I do not know if any members have seen those lights on social media, but they are pretty amazing—and plan for a smart motorway upgrade on the M1 between Gosford and Sydney, which will include digital parking and clearway signage. Speaking of smart motorways, the \$600 million smart motorway project on the M4 from Emu Plains to Church Street is coming to fruition. It is pretty incredible. The budget also includes \$18 million to reduce traffic congestion at 12 key pinch points in metropolitan areas. The Government is investing \$631 million in key projects as part of the Australian- and New South Wales Government funded Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan.

That plan includes \$404 million for the upgrade of the Northern Road between Narellan and Penrith; \$145 million for planning and property acquisition for the M12 Motorway, which will link Western Sydney Airport with the M7 and the Northern Road; and \$1.6 billion for the delivery of the final stages of WestConnex, the M4 and M5 links and the tunnels at the Rozelle Interchange. Those are all exciting projects. This Government delivers. I gave the House a nasty shock when I talked about Labor in Victoria and what could have happened if those opposite had been elected. I commend the bill and the budget to the House. I am proud that our side has delivered this great budget. I know that when they assess this budget in the future the electors in New South Wales will look at the document and mark it completed.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (17:40): My contribution will not be long, so hopefully my friend and colleague the Hon. John Graham can give his opinion on the budget. My opinion is that it is a sound enough document with two major oversights. Earlier in the day I spoke about the lack of planning and land allocation for a new public hospital in the growth corridor between Penrith and Camden. In the absence of such a facility, 1.3 million people coming into the area will place enormous pressure on Nepean, Liverpool and Campbelltown hospitals, which are already bursting at the seams. A few weeks ago I visited a sick relative—she got better, thankfully—at Campbelltown Hospital. I had not been to the hospital for quite some time and I was surprised at the extent of overcrowding. They really do pack people into western Sydney public hospitals these days.

With more than one million extra people coming into the area, that pressure will only worsen. I know the Government is trying to keep up with capital works, but a new facility is a logical response to a city the size of Adelaide being built in outer western Sydney. The other issue I raise with regard to oversights in the capital works program is the lack of an effective rail link between the centre of Sydney and the new Badgerys Creek airport site. As the Hon. Shayne Mallard mentioned earlier, the Government is moving forward with the north-south metro link from the airport site at Badgerys Creek to St Marys. The Government seems to have a fetish for and overwhelming commitment to metro. A lingering legacy from the former Labor Government—I think it was the only rail line it built—is the two-station line from Glenfield to Leppington.

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: We finished that.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You finished it but they started it. And, I assure you, you did not build enough parking spaces at Edmondson Park and Leppington stations. You knew all the people were coming and now they are parking up the side streets and on the footpaths, which you are responsible for. I should direct my comments through the Chair. I apologise to the Deputy President.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I remind the Hon. Shayne Mallard not to interrupt. I do not think he was winning the exchange.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I can only plead provocation. The reality is that the two-station line was originally designed to go out to the Badgerys Creek airport site. I started advocating for a Badgerys Creek airport in 1991 when I was the Mayor of Liverpool and chairman of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils. The original purpose of the airport was, of course, to generate jobs and overcome the employment deficit in our part of Sydney. It was never meant to create western Sydney as some sort of self-contained satellite city. The demand in western Sydney has always been for it to be a regular, integrated part of the metropolitan area. In planning the north-south metro, the idea is to develop a metropolitan or residential corridor that is self-contained in western Sydney, but we need integration into the rest of Sydney.

I fear that without an effective fast rail link to the centre of Sydney, the Badgerys Creek airport will not maximise the tourism trade, will not maximise urban efficiencies and will not integrate into the growth opportunities across Sydney. The metro from Badgerys Creek to St Marys is 20 kilometres. By my calculations, an overseas passenger who gets off the plane with luggage will have to take a 25-minute trip on the metro to get to St Marys, change trains and then take an hour-and-five-minute trip on the heavy rail to get to the centre of Sydney. All up we are probably talking about an hour-and-40-minute trip to get from the international airport at Badgerys Creek to the centre of Sydney.

Of course, as a western Sydneyite I want tourists to visit the Blue Mountains, Penrith, Liverpool and Campbelltown, and some will. But we cannot force people to stay in western Sydney. Inevitably, a high proportion of people coming into Badgerys Creek airport will want to visit the Emerald City, the harbour and all the attractions in the CBD. The economic viability of the second airport hinges on having a fast rail link into the centre of Sydney. If the Government extended the line a few more stations from Leppington to Badgerys Creek then it would be a 60-minute trip into the centre of Sydney—50 minutes with fast trains. The other advantage of extending the south-western line through what is known as the airport line is that it would link the two international airports. There is an advantage to move from Mascot to Badgerys Creek for airport staff and for tourists who might be staying at a hotel at Mascot, visiting the centre of Sydney and then flying out of Badgerys Creek.

When we spoke about it in the 1990s the plan was always to integrate the two airports and have a fast rail link between Mascot and Badgerys Creek for all the airport staff, workers, management and tourists. I know the State Government has worked this out with the Federal Government as part of the Turnbull Government's city plan. I know there is a fetish and determination to have metro. That is essentially because the metro is driverless and there are no trade unions to bog the transport Minister down in negotiations. That is the reality. But that is a separate question of industrial relations. I am putting the western Sydney argument that integrating the region and the airport with the rest of Sydney is essential. The funding is there to go ahead with the north-south metro, but I hope that the second stage of linking Badgerys Creek to other parts of Sydney will be to extend the heavy rail from Leppington. There are a couple of stops there—Bringelly is one of them.

It is not a big project but I do think it should be the essential second stage of integrating the airport. To have a slow rail link into Sydney at the opening of the airport would be an embarrassment. When word is out that it takes an hour and 40 minutes to get from Badgerys Creek to the centre of Sydney we will be as embarrassed as we are about the lockout laws. It will be a source of embarrassment if, to get to the centre of Sydney, passengers with heavy luggage have to go 20 minutes on the metro, change trains and go an hour and five minutes to get to Circular Quay. It is inadequate. It is not how the airport was planned and conceived in the 1990s. It is not the best outcome for western Sydney. We want Badgerys Creek to be a raging success and a hub of tourism with full economic and transport integration into the city. I know the Government sometimes listens to an old political hat like me and thinks that I have a bit of wise advice. I hope the Government can listen to what is being said and, from a western Sydney perspective, do the right thing.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (17:47): The thing I am maddest about with this budget is the contrast between what it delivers and what the Premier said during the election campaign—that you can have it all. The statement was not a throwaway line. It happened in the middle of the campaign launch and was the central line made for TV. She said, "As Premier, I will never ask you to choose between having world-class schools, hospitals, transport, roads, stadiums or cultural facilities because the hard work we have done means that today New South Wales can have it all and New South Wales should have it all." Can you imagine Greiner, Howard or Costello

saying that? You absolutely cannot because it is totally out of step with the Liberal philosophy. Hawke and Keating would not have said it; Carr and Egan would not have said it. It is totally out of step with modern economic management.

At the time the Treasurer defended the comment. But we did not hear anything about it in the budget, which was no surprise because it was totally irresponsible. I will not reflect on the fact that the finance Minister is not here at the moment but he indicated that he might respond to Labor's criticisms of that statement. I note he has not done so this week in the House. I invite the finance Minister—the Government's last line of defence of any sort of economic credibility—to put his view on the record and either defend the Premier's comments or disown them. I will be very interested in his view.

Labor has been critical of the Government's overblown claims on jobs and on how the economy is travelling. In New South Wales we are doing well on employment and unemployment. That is absolutely true when you look at the historical record. We have to be upfront about that. But while the Treasurer is claiming a "golden century", what the Government never says is that the same is true around the world. This Government never acknowledges that the same is true in 26 OECD nations around the world. It is not the product of the Treasurer's "golden century"; a jobs boom is occurring around the developed world. That is why last month *The Economist* reported:

In 2018 the employment rate among people of working age was the highest ever in Britain, Canada, Germany, Australia and 22 other OECD countries.

A number of factors are driving these historically low unemployment rates. Citizens are getting older, and that is just slightly lowering unemployment rates in those countries—probably by about half a per cent. Partly it is cyclical: The world economy is recovering. Partly it is technological: We are getting better at matching people who want jobs with the jobs that are available. There is structural change in the economy, but job matching is getting better. Of course, we should also acknowledge that often the same technology is responsible for putting wages under pressure in the gig economy. Those are some of the things that are contributing to the worldwide change in employment markets.

Around the world, women's participation rates are up—above 60 per cent on average in the OECD. Higher education rates have risen above 40 per cent across the OECD. At the same time—and we are seeing the political impact of this around the world—middle skill-level jobs are down 10 percentage points across the OECD over 10 years. All developed countries are dealing with these issues and with the politics of them as good, secure jobs disappear from the economy. These are some of the pressures around the world and some of the reasons why there is a jobs boom. Unemployment is historically low across all these countries. I raise these points simply to say that we never hear them from the Treasurer. The Treasurer believes it is he himself pulling the levers in the right order that is producing this historically great result. That is not the case and it is incumbent on us in this House to be upfront about it.

I make a couple of broader observations about the budget. There has been a lot of commentary and criticism about the level of debt. It is very high; it is the highest raw number. I am probably a little more relaxed about that, in this sense: It is not a terrible time to be borrowing money in order to fund the activities of Government, given where we are in the global financial cycle. Really, though, from what we know of this Government, the debt that is loaded up in the forward estimates is being allowed to go that high because the Government desperately wants to privatise more assets. That is what we have called out over the past couple of days, because we know that is the plan if the Government can get away with it. So I note the commentary on the debt. It is historically high but it really is a Trojan horse for the privatisation the Government would love to see.

I was pleased to see that the New South Wales Treasury projections about economic activity and wage growth and a range of other projections are less optimistic than the Federal budget predictions. That is important because over the past few years, on a State and Federal level, we have been caught out by the fact that optimistic predictions keep making the budget look like it will return to surplus and things will recover. I am pleased to see there is a New South Wales Treasury discount in those figures for the early years. This budget is built on the assumption that all those things will return to trend, and that is not the history of the New South Wales or Australian economy since the global financial crisis.

As shadow Minister for tourism, I note that the budget reveals another 20 per cent cut to Destination NSW, on top of the 16 per cent that my colleague the Hon. Penny Sharpe was critical of in the last budget. I also note that indexation for frontline workers of community services is at only 1.7 per cent—on top of that efficiency dividend. This measure was buried in the budget, of course, and will mean a real cut for those services. It will roll through the community services sector, which has not yet been briefed by the Minister. That is yet to come. The budget is out but that briefing is yet to come. Members will hear more about this. I put on the record my concerns about it.

I turn to revenue in the budget, and to what I regard as a GST and stamp duty revenue hoax that is being perpetrated by the Treasurer. He has a right to make points about the volatility in those figures, but the figures in the budget do not bear the amount of attention he is trying to put on them. GST revenue is growing by 4.5 per cent a year. The transfer duty component of stamp duty is growing by 5.2 per cent per year. They are both above the average growth in revenue, which is 3.2 per cent. These are the growing parts of the budget; what is falling is the dividend income. That is falling by 20.2 per cent per annum. Every year it is collapsing. It used to be \$2.2 billion coming safely into the budget year on year, funding services. It is now down under \$800 million every year. That is the bit that is collapsing.

We have to be honest about where revenue is at in this budget. To indicate how much of a structural impact that has had on revenue coming into the budget, the historic long-term revenue growth average—this is contained in the Fiscal Responsibility Act—is 5.6 per cent. In 2018-19 the actual result was 0.6 per cent. Over the next four years, the figures are 3.9, 3.9, 2.7 and 2.2. That is what has happened to revenue as the Government has restructured the budget with privatisations. That is going to be a long-term view and we are drawing attention to it today. As always, the Treasurer was entertaining while giving his Budget Speech. He is a very good speaker in the House; he put a good story to the figures in the budget. But we object to the Premier's claim that "You can have it all". We say that life is about choices; Government is about choices. We object to the choices that have been made in this budget.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (17:58): It is my pleasure to make a few remarks in respect of a really gold-standard budget. I am proud to be part of this Government, which is delivering for the people of New South Wales and has delivered for many years now on the back of a strong budget and a strong economy. That is the almost unattainable thing that Premiers and Treasurers chase after—the Holy Grail, if you like, of budgets. If you could grab the Holy Grail, you would just about have it with both hands with this budget. We have a strong economy, which by any economic paradigm is as resilient as it has been for a long time; low unemployment; strong revenue growth; strong investment in infrastructure and the delivery of massive public services to the people of New South Wales.

I could not help but reflect on some of the comments from the post-capitalist Greens, who are seeking some nirvana—I am not sure of what economic construction that might be built. Then there is the collectivism of the ALP Opposition—postmodern cultural Marxism, economic Marxism. We all understand where they come from: Privatisation is the bogeyman and all the rest of it. The reality is they do not like to see strong economic management. They do not like to see an economy that is delivering for the people of New South Wales.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (19:30): As I was saying before the dinner break: What a gold-standard budget! Opposition members squirmed in their seats as they listened, over the last couple of hours, to one of the most edifying debates. The Hon. Greg Donnelly is nodding in quiet agreement as he leaves the Chamber. I conclude by congratulating the Treasurer and the Government on an excellent budget that will deliver for the next four years. Whatever those opposite might think, the facts might catch in their throats as they look at the cold, hard numbers on the wonderful spreadsheet that is the 2019-20 budget. As the years pass we will know what a magnificent moment in time this has been. With those few words, I commend the bills to the House.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (19:31): In reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. The members who spoke in this debate included the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Adam Searle, Ms Abigail Boyd and Mr David Shoebridge. I thank the Leader of the Government for his excellent contribution and the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, who also made an excellent contribution. I also thank the Hon. Ben Franklin, the Hon. Scott Farlow, the Hon. Natalie Ward, the Hon. Shayne Mallard, the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox, the Hon. Mark Latham and the Hon. John Graham. As members are aware, the convention is that members largely make contributions with respect to the budget during the take note debate but they also have an excellent opportunity during budget estimates to put their views in relation to the appropriation bills.

The Leader of the Opposition has made a request about how the bills will be dealt with. He has proposed that the question on the bills be put separately: the Appropriation Bill 2019, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019 and then the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, in that order. The Government has no problem with that arrangement. With those few remarks, I commend each of the bills to the House.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that these bills be now read a second time. The Hon. Adam Searle, the Leader of the Opposition, has requested that each bill be voted on separately. The Government has no objection to proceeding that way. I propose to put the question on the Appropriation Bill 2019, the Appropriation

(Parliament) Bill 2019 and then the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, if there is no objection.

The question is that the Appropriation Bill 2019 be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019 be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

In Committee

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): There being no objection, the Committee will deal with the Appropriation Bill 2019, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019 and the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 as a whole. There are, as I understand it, no amendments in respect of the Appropriation Bill 2019 or the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019. There are two sets of amendments in respect of the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019: The Greens amendments appearing on sheet c2019-024 and the Opposition amendment appearing on sheet c2019-026.

The question is that the Appropriation Bill 2019 as read be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): The question is that the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019 as read be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): We will now proceed to the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (19:37): By leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2019-024 in globo:

No. 1 **Extended leave**

Pages 12 and 13, Schedule 4, line 1 on page 12 to line 24 on page 13. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 2 **Long title—extended leave**

Page 1, Long title. Omit "to reduce extended leave entitlements for certain public sector employees and".

These amendments are quite simple. They delete in its entirety schedule 4 of the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Schedule 4 seeks to reduce the long service leave entitlements—referred in this schedule as extended leave entitlements—for all public service workers, including police, teachers, people working with the transport services and the balance of the people working for the State of New South Wales. The argument raised by the Government in support of this reduction is a budgetary argument, although I do not think the savings will kick in for a significant period because the changes are grandfathered for 10 years.

The Government's argument is that the amount of leave given to New South Wales public sector workers on their twentieth anniversary of working for the people of New South Wales is excessive compared with other public sector workers across the country. It is true that the amount paid to public sector workers on their twentieth anniversary of working for the people of New South Wales is marginally above—it is a number of weeks—that paid to comparable public sector workers in other jurisdictions. But that is only a small part of the story. The amount of long service leave paid to New South Wales public sector workers at their tenth anniversary—after 10 years working for the people of New South Wales—is at the lower end of the spectrum, being some 8.67 weeks. In other jurisdictions around the country it is 13 weeks. Indeed, there are vastly more public sector workers who work for 10 years than who work for 20 years.

On balance, the long service leave entitlements for New South Wales public sector workers are at the meaner end of the scale, because a vastly larger number of workers will be obtaining their 10-year entitlements than those who will work continuously for the State of New South Wales for 20 years. If the Government had said, "We want to equal them up; we will take a bit off the 20 years and we will add it to the 10 years to even it out", then there might be a case to be made for that. But simply cutting off and slashing the long service leave

entitlements for workers after 20 years, in light of the fact that New South Wales' long service leave entitlements are not overly generous—they are at the meaner end of the spectrum for the first 10 years—is something The Greens will not support. Indeed, we are unlikely to support any unilateral removal of public sector workers' entitlements. The Greens fundamentally believe that the kinds of rights and entitlements in the public sector—

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I remind Mr David Shoebridge that he should be speaking to the amendment.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes, indeed—should be setting the basis for improvements in the private sector. We should not be looking to comparisons around the country in the private sector or the lowest common denominator in the public sector to be reducing the rights and entitlements of public sector workers. Not only do these amendments seek to remove the statutory entitlements under the Industrial Relations Act 1996, the industrial relations regulations and the Government Sector Employment Regulations, but they also go beyond that. Schedule 4.2 inserts new paragraph (g) in clause 6 (1) of the Industrial Relations (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Regulation 2014. It states:

- (g) Long service or extended leave entitlements for public sector employees that exceed the minimum leave entitlements prescribed under the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* are not to be incorporated into industrial instruments.

It even prohibits unions and State Government employees from bargaining to get improved long service leave entitlements in their award—it prohibits any improvement in the award. It forever freezes out public sector workers from increases in entitlements. So it takes it away and then puts them in the deep freeze and says that they can never come back and get more in an award negotiation. These are not amendments to long service leave that The Greens can ever endorse. That is why we have moved these amendments. That is why I hope we get a majority of members in the Chamber to support the amendments and protect these long service leave entitlements for public sector workers.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (19:43): The Opposition fully supports The Greens amendments. This is one of the measures in the budget package, if I can call it that, that the Government curiously failed to mention at the recent State election. On this side of the House, we put a pretty bold, full-blooded industrial relations agenda before the people of New South Wales. But this particular amendment that the Government has proposed—affecting the rights and entitlements of public sector workers regarding long service leave—was not put to the people. There was no proper public discussion leading up to the budget where the Government made the case for these changes. As Mr David Shoebridge has pointed out, it not only chips away at the rights and entitlements that would accrue to future employees, but also prohibits the industrial relations system from dealing with the subject matters in terms of bargaining between workforces and management in the public sector.

This is similar to the one budget that was delivered by Mr Andrew Constance when he was Treasurer. Members on this side of the House will remember it was the convention of the House to wave through not just the appropriation bills but the bill that accompanied them—sometimes called the budget measures bill. In this case it is called the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. Such bills were waved through as a matter of convention because there was a level of trust between the Government and the Opposition. But when the then O'Farrell Government and then the Baird Government in the Court of Appeal lost on the issue of whether the 2.5 per cent wage cap included superannuation, they snuck a little provision in the budget measures bill and it sailed through this House on trust. That is why we are voting on these bills separately.

That is why we now give a careful look at the accompanying bill, which is not an appropriation bill. What did we find? We found a budget nasty. We found an attack on workers' rights, an attack on the independent industrial relations system and—I will come to the other amendment on Roads and Maritime Services—the Government has again tried to pull a budget nasty through the back door, hoping nobody would watch. That is not the case. We have seen it. We propose to take it out of the legislation. There are other measures in this bill that we could also turn our mind to but we will not on this occasion. But the Government is now well and truly put on notice: If it is going to try to do this kind of thing, make the case, have a public discussion. Do not try to sneak it through.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Before I call on the Minister I indicate to all members that we are speaking to the amendments—I will decide which order people go in—we are not doing a second reading speech. All speakers should be alive to that.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (19:46): Currently, New South Wales public servants accrue two months of long service leave for their first 10 years of service and five months of leave for each subsequent 10 years of service. New South Wales leave entitlements are the highest of any State or Territory; higher than Victoria, higher than Queensland and higher than the Commonwealth. Our long service leave entitlements are more than double the private sector, which only grants two months. In fact, the long service leave entitlements in New South Wales are 66 per cent greater than Victoria. Therefore, we are

proposing to bring long service leave entitlements in New South Wales back to the standard around the rest of the Commonwealth.

This is a fair and rational policy. It puts long service leave on a more sustainable footing alongside that of other States. But the policy grandfathers long service leave entitlements. It will not affect any current employees of the New South Wales public service. Their rights are maintained. This means that no current employee will be worse off under these changes. People who are working in the public service will continue to have five months of long service leave for every subsequent period of 10 years of service. Again, it will remain in those circumstances higher than the private sector but will keep entitlements the same as other States and Territories. But those opposite would prefer that workers in western Sydney and in the regions support the bloated entitlements of inner-city public servants.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: This is every public servant, no matter where they are.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): If there are further interjections members will be called to order.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Therefore, these are fair and responsible reforms that will ensure that New South Wales has a strong long service leave system that is in line with other States and communities. As I have already said, the arrangements in New South Wales are currently higher than in other States and Territories. Under the Government's new policy long service leave for the subsequent 10-year periods of service will be reduced from five months to three months. I urge on this House that this is sensible reform. This policy better aligns New South Wales with other States and Territories. Importantly, it brings the system into line with community expectations. These changes will align New South Wales with the Commonwealth, Queensland, Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory for extended leave after 10 years of service. At the same time, extended leave entitlements after 10 years of service will remain more generous than the standard amount of two months for non-government employees.

The changes will generate long-term savings to taxpayers by better managing the costs of employee benefits. From 2029—that is what we are looking at, and Mr David Shoebridge acknowledged this—annual savings to the taxpayer could begin around \$26 million and increase steadily each year through staff turnover. Over the four years to 2032, total savings could reach over \$250 million. These changes also reflect trends in the modern workforce. Workforce patterns are changing. Many employees do not remain in the public service long enough to accrue extended leave. Average tenure in the public sector is currently nine years—less than 10 years when employees start to benefit from extended leave. I repeat, these changes will not affect any employees of the New South Wales public service who commenced employment before 1 July 2019—all public servants that I love. Current employees will continue to accrue extended—

Mr David Shoebridge: I thought you called them bloated entitlements of inner-city public servants?

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I call Mr David Shoebridge to order for the second time. It only requires a modicum of restraint.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: This will mean that current employees will continue to accrue extended leave at the same rates as previously. These changes will be fully grandfathered and will only apply to new employees who start in the public service from 1 July 2019. Employees covered under the Commonwealth Fair Work Act will not be impacted by this bill. The Government rejects the amendments as proposed by The Greens.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (19:52): I support The Greens amendments. The amendments seek to remove from the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 measures intended to reduce the extent of leave entitlements of public sector workers as announced in the Treasurer's Budget Speech on Tuesday. This initiative provides a window into the way this Government views public sector workers. It sees our hardworking public sector workers as somehow privileged, as enjoying benefits above and beyond those enjoyed by workers in the private sector. This Government does not aspire for the public sector to be an employer of choice, despite the rhetoric of the New South Wales Public Service Commission. It thinks employment standards should be lowered in the public sector.

The Government fails to see the opportunities available to it. It can work to raise standards in the private sector labour market through leadership in the public sector. That can be done by setting new standards and widening the horizons of what a modern workplace might look like. This Government seems unapologetic about creating a two-tier public sector workforce composed of frontline and back office workers. It views back office workers as expendable and unimportant so as to more easily justify further cuts to the sector. The Government does this without consideration of its impact on the capacity of the sector to continue to deliver and on the

consequential work intensification that follows these types of cuts. It is blind or indifferent to the unfairness of the consequences of its agenda on these workers.

That is why this Government can, without compunction or restraint, use its wages policy to violate the rights of public sector workers to free collective bargaining—a policy that contravenes Australia's obligations under International Labour Organisation conventions. The current proposal around extended leave is consistent with this approach to employee relations. The Government believes it should be able to dictate terms of employment to public sector workers without negotiation or consultation. It has now done this on a number of occasions with its destruction of our longstanding system of conciliation and arbitration through its legislated approach to its wages policy, and with its elimination of the industrial rights of ministerial and parliamentary staff. Each occasion highlights a fundamental conflict between the roles of the Government as legislator and employer. It is a classic poacher and gamekeeper problem. Public sector wages and conditions should be set at arm's length from the Government through an independent tribunal.

This attempt by the Government to reduce employee conditions to achieve savings demonstrates the nature of the temptation when government assumes a direct role in setting wages and conditions. That temptation is too great. Basic rights are consequently violated, which is why this function should rightly be returned to the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission. The Government's initiative is a petty attempt to punish public sector workers. It delivers no savings in the forward estimates and as a consequence sits uncomfortably as a cognate bill with the Appropriation Bill. It should be rejected. I commend the amendments to the Committee.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK (19:55): I note with interest that the Hon. Damien Tudehope expressed his love for public servants. I was one of those public servants whom he loved. Since I have come to this place I think we have possibly fallen out of love.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: We can always work to reconcile.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: We can.

Mr David Shoebridge: That is a beautiful moment.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It is. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party supports The Greens amendments. I was a former teacher who suffered under the unprovoked cuts by this Government on our sick leave, which was absolutely gutted, and now it is attacking our extended leave. I do not think I could stand here as a former teacher and a former public servant and not speak out against this. I would also hope that the non-career politicians to my left and my right who have worked in the public service will be able to see this for what it is—an attack on public service rights. Some members to my left worked in the public service for similar stints as I did. I hope they will see this for what it is and vote sensibly.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (19:56): I make a short contribution on these amendments. We should aspire to have the best public service in the world. How do we do that? We look after the workers, the very good people who get up every day to defend the public interest and to implement the policies of the day of the elected Government. They are incredibly important and their entitlements are the same whether they are private sector workers or otherwise. This Government continues to try to draw a line. It thinks it is okay to cut 2,500 or 3,000 public sector jobs as though people do not care about that. These are real people who get up every day to do nothing else except to work in the public interest. We have gutted the public service over many decades. We have lost good, competent people who we want to stay for 10 or 20 years.

Every member who votes against these amendments tonight should remember the next time they are standing at ceremonies presenting public servants with awards for 10, 20 or 25 years of service that they voted tonight to take away the entitlements for all of that excellent work. I understand that some of this will be grandfathered but let us understand what we are doing here. Public sector workers are important. If we want the best public sector workers in the world—and that is what we should be aspiring to, nothing less—we need to treat them properly and not pretend that they are somehow less worthy than other workers. This Government has had a conga line of people today talking about the surplus and how fantastic they are as great economic managers. Those on this side of the House obviously disagree with that. Let us understand what we are doing here. This legislation is mean and unnecessary. It does our public service and our public servants a great disservice. I support The Greens amendments.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (19:58): I am intrigued by the contribution to debate of the interim Leader of the Opposition, who accused this Government of being mean because of what it is doing to its public servants today whereas no existing public servant will be affected at all. I would like to share the confidence of the Hon. Penny Sharpe that I will still be the Leader of the Government in 10 years time when the first-time implementation hits the forward estimates and is put into effect.

The Opposition's criticism is just ludicrous. This legislation represents a government doing prudently what a government should do for the future. This Government is bringing into line New South Wales public sector long service leave entitlements with every other State. It is a prudent and long-term policy from which I would like to think the State will receive fiscal benefit. Perhaps it will.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (19:59): My comments will be brief. I make the obvious point that this is responsible economic management. It is not voodoo economics. It is post-capitalist economy economics. It is not Monty Python economics. The Government is not chasing shrubbery. Clearly the Government is implementing responsible and universal coverage. That is what this legislation is about. I have been a senior public servant. I have worked in senior positions in the private sector and I am now a member of the Legislative Council.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I point out to the people in the President's gallery that this is not a social gathering. The Committee wants to get the amendments decided.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: The Government is invoking a universal standard. The Government is being more generous than the private sector standard of two months after every 10 years of service. The Government is proposing three months after the second 10 years of service, which is very generous and beyond what is universally applicable in the private sector. The Government's policy will apply to those who are employed from 1 July this year, which is why there is no immediate budget impact. That is an important part of the suite of bills because it underpins the budget for the next four years. The Government's policy is about universal coverage, equity and real-life economic management.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (20:01): I have just heard a vacuous defence of a mean-spirited policy. The Government proposes to take conditions of service from people who are earning \$50,000, \$60,000 and \$70,000 a year while CEOs who are earning \$50 million, \$60 million and \$70 million a year are left untouched. The Government's policy reflects an attitude of pettiness and mean-spirited penny pinching against people who go out every day and work hard and have a long-term employment commitment. I think the Government's policy is terrible.

I support the amendments. Long service leave is uniquely Australian. It is a right that does not exist in any other jurisdiction in the world and originates from the very early days of colonisation. The objectives of long service leave are to reduce labour turnover, provide reward for long and faithful service and enable employees halfway through their working life to recover their energy and return to work renewed, refreshed and reinvigorated. Not only did long service leave originate in the public service but also its predominance in the public service has enabled decades of institutional knowledge and wisdom to be preserved. The value of a stable civil service is paramount to good governance.

The legislation impacts upon the public service, the teaching service that currently employs 92,000 people, the NSW Police Force that currently employs 20,000 people, and NSW Health that currently employs 120,000 people. Under current rules, public sector employees get two months on full pay after 10 years service and five months on full pay for every decade worked after that period. This Government wants to take that from public sector employees. The legislation retains the two months on full pay after 10 years service but then reduces the amount from five months down to three months of full pay for every decade worked after that point. Apparently, for some, that is too much.

It has been pointed out that currently serving officers are protected, but this legislation will unfairly punish new employees taken on after 1 July 2019. The Government should be improving the pay and conditions of future generations, not reducing them, and we should not be cutting people loose because they are born on a certain date in the future. That will create a worse society for our kids and our future. Transport for NSW spent \$86 million on communications, advertising and marketing in 2018 alone. That is more than the entire long service cost for that year; yet slashing workers' entitlements is prioritised. Along with my colleagues in the union movement, I do not see the transition in our economy towards casualisation and the insecurity of employment as a good thing. Younger generations of Australians face more uncertainty at work than ever before, with more of them on short-term or casual contracts.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! The Hon. Mark Buttigieg is beginning to stray somewhat from the nature of the amendments that are before the Committee. I understand that the member is being quite brief, but his comments must address the amendments.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: The relevance of my remarks is that they go to security of employment and the ability of people to predict their income, to take out loans and spend money in the economy.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I do not wish to truncate debate because I know this is an important issue for the Hon. Mark Buttigieg. Nevertheless, the amendments relate to the terms of the long service leave entitlement. Comments should be directed to that issue.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: My point is that reduction of the entitlement will have deleterious effects on the economy because it will erode the ability of people to have a secure and stable income. Future employees, who will experience reduced conditions and cuts, will feel that they cannot take out loans and they cannot spend as much in the economy. Therefore, the legislation will have an effect on demand and will affect performance of the economy. It represents very short-sighted thinking. A tool that governments have to correct the current malaise of wage stagnation and employment insecurity is to use the public service to set the pace. We should be encouraging continuity in employment, not discouraging it by cutting entitlements. We should be encouraging teachers with 20 years experience to stay in teaching. We should be rewarding police officers who have decades under their belt for their service and experience. We should also recognise the dedicated and loyal service of hospital workers and nurses.

If the Government has not succeeded in its ideological crusade to privatise every one of our trains, buses, ferries and trams by 2039, the drivers and guards who are currently employed by the public service in the public transport industry should have security of employment as well. The Government's proposals are not compensated changes. If the Government's proposal was a change to an enterprise agreement, it would fail the better off overall test. It is a permanent change to the structure of workplace rights with no proposed upside for the workers affected. Just because it is grandfathered, that does not make it a just change. Cutting loose future generations is no justification for a policy. The Government has introduced these changes and on the same day has put the axe to 2,500 full-time equivalent positions across the public service.

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox: Point of order: I want to give the Hon. Mark Buttigieg the opportunity to fully ventilate his views, but I believe he is drifting away from the substance of the amendments and moving on to other issues, particularly job losses in the public sector.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I rule that the Hon. Mark Buttigieg's remarks go beyond the amendments. I recognise how important this is, but the member should address the amendments. His remarks are really a second reading speech and address the budget as a whole as opposed to the amendments before the Committee. I invite the member either to direct his remarks to the amendments before the Committee, which relate to long service leave, or to truncate his speech. I indicate to members on my right that I have already called to order members who are on my left. Members owe the courtesy of being quiet to the Committee and to me when I am addressing another member; otherwise, all members on my right will be called to order. The Hon. Mark Buttigieg has the call.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: I acknowledge it is uncomfortable for people to have to accept the truth that this legislation is basically taking money from people who work hard for those entitlements, but that is the reality of what is happening. As the current conditions bleed into the private sector, they encourage employers across the economy, not just employers in the public sector, to reward long-term stable employment. We should not have a race to the bottom, rather a race to the top. Many residents of this State are crying out for this kind of employment. To strip away these rewards from long-term State employees will send a clear signal to the private sector that future contracts should not reward this kind of employment. That will have a negative impact on every worker in the State of New South Wales. This is not budget innovation; this is a petty, cost-cutting surrender of workplace rights with no increase in compensation. The long experience of the union movement is that once these rights are gone, they are gone forever. I commend The Greens amendments to the House.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (20:10): I thank all members for their contributions. I will address some matters that have come from the Government. The Minister for Finance and Small Business said that these amendments were being put "to protect the bloated entitlements of inner-city public servants." On behalf of all the public servants in New South Wales, I find that offensive. The alleged inner-city public servants the Minister was referring to are the future police, the future teachers and the future transport workers in this State. To refer to them in those derogatory terms is insulting and demeans even the spirit of the Government in this legislation. Other Government members suggested that this was a "generous" proposition because it retains three months additional long service leave after 20 years. The only effect this will have is to take two months long service leave off public sector workers after their twentieth year of service. One cannot credibly call that a generous proposition. This is all about reducing workers' entitlements. As it is late, I will end my contribution there. I again commend The Greens amendments Nos 1 and 2 to the House.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (20:11): I clarify that I intend no derogation of public servants. This is "bloated" in the sense of comparable to their private sector counterparts. The suggestion was that compared with the private sector these were very generous long service leave entitlements. That is the suggestion I was making, not the suggestion made by Mr David Shoebridge.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Mr David Shoebridge has moved The Greens amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2019-024. The question is that the amendments be agreed to.

The Committee divided.

Ayes24

Noes15

Majority.....9

AYES

Banasiak, Mr M
Buttigieg, Mr M
Faehrmann, Ms C
Hurst, Ms E
Mookhey, Mr D

Borsak, Mr R
D'Adam, Mr A
Field, Mr J
Jackson, Ms R
Moriarty, Ms T

Boyd, Ms A (teller)
Donnelly, Mr G
Graham, Mr J
Latham, Mr M
Moselmane, Mr S
(teller)
Primrose, Mr P
Secord, Mr W
Veitch, Mr M

Nile, Revd Mr
Roberts, Mr R
Sharpe, Ms P

Pearson, Mr M
Searle, Mr A
Shoebridge, Mr D

NOES

Ajaka, Mr
Cusack, Ms C
Harwin, Mr D

Amato, Mr L
Fang, Mr W (teller)
Maclaren-Jones, Mrs
(teller)
Mason-Cox, Mr M
Tudehope, Mr D

Blair, Mr
Farlow, Mr S
Mallard, Mr S
Mitchell, Mrs
Ward, Mrs N

Martin, Mr T
Taylor, Mrs

PAIRS

Houssos, Mrs C

Franklin, Mr B

Amendments agreed to.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (20:21): I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-026:

No. 1 Dissolution of RMS

Pages 14–18, Schedule 5, line 1 on page 14 to line 18 on page 18. Omit all words on those lines.

Schedule 5 to the bill will transfer all assets, rights, liabilities and functions of Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] to Transport for NSW. Since the announcement of the merging of the two bodies unions representing the workforce have been given undertakings from Transport that the workforce and its representative unions would be consulted on any proposed changes to legislation or regulations. However, the unions were not consulted on schedule 5 or the timeline being proposed by the Government. At present it is unclear how the dissolution would impact on the employees of the RMS. It is a matter of record that representative unions are also currently in the process of negotiating four RMS awards covering the workforce.

It is not surprising that with the impact of the dissolution unresolved and the lack of consultation, the unions and workforce are not very happy about the proposed dissolution of the RMS. Transport first gave unions an undertaking of consultation on 15 April 2019. My understanding is that there have been 12 meetings in total, involving consultation meetings and report-backs at the Industrial Relations Commission, which is the independent umpire. I am advised that in the most recent consultation meeting on Monday 17 June the unions were advised by representatives of the Government that there were no updates relating to the legislative change. This is an important matter, because the bill containing the change in schedule 5 was introduced in Parliament on Tuesday 18 June.

This kind of deceptive sleight of hand is similar to a manoeuvre by Mr Andrew Constance when he was Treasurer, which I have already referred to this evening. Perhaps it is no surprise that it is the same manoeuvre from the same Minister, hoping that the upper House would simply waive the legislation through without noticing. I am advised it is a matter of record that at the first consultation meeting on 15 April the unions and the workforce

put an extensive list of questions to Transport, one of which was what legislative and regulatory changes would occur in the merger. The answer was given by Transport in writing on 1 May. I quote:

Legislative change is not required to enact a customer-centred reform and integration of RMS and Transport for NSW. The Transport Administration Act provides the mechanisms to carry out the integration and transition to the new operating model and these will be used to achieve our objectives by 1 July 2019.

The unions had no information regarding the impact of the bill on employees or their terms and conditions of employment, or what impact the bill might have on the award-making functions of the commission. I am told they are awaiting response from Transport for NSW as to why there were not consulted prior to the amendments being introduced to Parliament, or indeed what necessitates these legislative changes given the written advice of 1 May. Those changes do not appear to lead to any particular financial impact in terms of the budget bottom line. There is no necessity for those changes to be enacted now, if indeed they are necessary at all.

In the time this debate has been conducted I believe that representatives of the Government have been having a dialogue with Unions NSW. I acknowledge the presence in the President's gallery of Unions NSW secretary Mr Mark Morey. Other unions affected by those changes were present in the building this evening. I am told that no outcome was reached. Intriguingly, the Government has not sought to have a dialogue with the Opposition on those matters—that is a matter for the Government. Nevertheless we propose this amendment so that those issues can be put to one side, the rest of the budget package can be enacted and should the Government wish to proceed with this reform proposal we can have a longer discussion about it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (20:25): The Greens support the Opposition amendment. I will say at the outset that we see good strategic reasons to merge Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] and the Transport ministry into one entity so that we have a single transport agency, rather than roads being done over here and rail being done over there.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I ask the Hon. Mark Pearson and his associates that if they wish to have a lengthy discussion they have it outside the Chamber. Mr David Shoebridge is entitled to be heard in relative peace. Mr Shoebridge has the call.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: For other members you say "silence", but I will deal with "relative peace". I am on two calls to order so I will not cavil with your ruling. As I said, The Greens are not opposed to the concept of merging RMS and Transport for NSW. We see a strong strategic argument for having a single transport agency so that we do not have roads decisions made over here ignorant of the public transport needs and solutions elsewhere. We are not opposed in principle to the creation of a single agency. Our concern solely relates to the potential lack of protection for employee entitlements. I find it concerning that there has been such late dialogue between the Government and unions in New South Wales. Indeed, the proposed amendment has come to members in this House as recently as today because the concerns have only become apparent since the tabling of the budget bills.

One reason for concern is that none of the unions have been advised that there was a need or intent to have legislative changes. Having been told for months and months there was no need for legislative changes and to then find they were put in the budget without prior notice causes a high degree of concern and suspicion. We are currently in a minimal trust environment and that is when things break down. The Government and unions have not been able to bridge those concerns in the time they have consulted today. That is not to say they have not made efforts to do so. The concerns that have come to us not only from Unions NSW but also from Professionals Australia are very real. Professionals Australia represents a good many of the engineers employed by the RMS, where there is a very large engineering cohort. Four separate awards apply to RMS workers.

One of the very real and live concerns they have is: If the RMS is abolished what happens to the four awards that expressly reference RMS workers? I understand that all of those awards are currently up for renegotiation. There is a large degree of uncertainty in that. A number of points were put to us by Professionals Australia about the lack of consultation, lack of discussion about the organisational chart and what no regional job losses mean for jobs in the cities. I will read onto the record their primary concerns about the award. Professional Australia's representation dated today states:

- There are 4 RMS Awards, the first question we asked post-RMS merger announcement was – will RMS employees maintain their conditions and what legislative changes will there be?
- Answer has been RMS employees will keep their awards and no legislative changes are required – this has been what we were told as recently as Monday this week by the Secretary of TFNSW.
- Negotiations have been continuing with the RMS Awards, PA is involved in the Salaried Award along with PSA, ASU, AIMPE, AMOU, and MUA.

- The consultation on the org structure has been woeful, every fortnight we turn up with fresh complaints – the latest report back was that again we read in SMH instead of hearing from the employer the rationale for Evolving Transport, likely job losses, etc.

I will say, though, that Minister Constance's staff has attempted to address those points and they have engaged in some dialogue to try to address those points. I put on the record that we have been advised:

TfNSW has given a commitment to abide by the Government's commitment of no regional job losses.

RMS employees will maintain their existing terms and conditions and the 4 existing RMS Awards will continue to apply notwithstanding the removal of the RMS agency from the Transport Administration Act.

RMS employees will continue to remain employed under their existing group notwithstanding the removal of RMS from the Transport Administration Act. The Secretary has the ability to create groups. Such groups do not have to align with agencies.

It has been noted at consultation meetings and in communication to staff that legislative changes were not required, but it was never ruled out and remained an available option as a way of effecting the transition to the new Transport for NSW operating model.

Negotiation for all Awards (RMS and TfNSW) are continuing. Transport has approval to negotiate for a 2 year term for the TfNSW and RMS Awards. That means agreed terms and conditions of the Award will remain in place for 2 years from when the Award is made.

They are the commitments we have been given. If there was a sense of comfort that those commitments stacked up in law we would not be having this debate. However, there are a series of quite difficult legal issues in this, such as the nature of the awards and what would happen when the employees transfer. As I understand it there literally has not been time to be satisfied with the legalities of those matters. That is unfortunate. It would have been much better had the Government advised everybody of the need to do this with legislative changes weeks before the budget was presented. Unfortunately, the first advice that came to unions was literally on Tuesday and the implications, on reading through this quite complicated set of bills, only became apparent today.

It is really poor timing, a lack of consultation and a lack of giving employees the legal comfort they need. It may well be that all of the points put by the Government are right but we are not in a position to be satisfied with it at the moment, nor are the unions. If this amendment succeeds—I do not know if it will—I hope that over the winter break there is consultation and engagement, with commitments given and legal advices obtained and exchanged. If those matters are satisfied we can come back after the winter break and move forward with creating the agency.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (20:33): I agree with Mr David Shoebridge on behalf of The Greens when he said there is value in merging Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] and Transport for NSW. That is a position I take because there will be no change to the employment status of any staff member as a result of the transition to a single agency. RMS staff and Transport for NSW staff are already members of the same Transport Service as distinct from the public service. The Premier first announced a restructure of the New South Wales public sector, including the merging of Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services, in early April this year. The Transport cluster is being reorganised to deliver a better customer experience to the people of New South Wales no matter where they live.

The integration of Roads and Maritime Services into Transport for NSW will fully integrate every area of transport under a single and unified transport banner, which I believe will bring a great degree of efficiency in the provision of services. I have been advised there will be no change to the employment status of any of those staff members as a result of the transition to a single agency. By drawing various functions together Transport will be better placed to deliver the mobility services that customers need whilst continuing to respond to an ever-changing operating environment. Transport for NSW and RMS already work very closely together on a day-to-day basis. The full integration of RMS into Transport for NSW will mean there will be no organisational barriers to realising the full benefits of integrated and coordinated services. Therefore, I cannot support the amendment.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (20:35): The Government does not support Opposition amendment No. 1. I welcome the concession made by Mr David Shoebridge, which was reinforced by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. I place on record again exactly what is sought to be achieved. There will be no change to the employment status of any staff member as a result of the transition to a single agency. All Roads and Maritime Services staff and Transport for NSW staff are already members of the same Transport Service as distinct from the public service. The transport secretary exercises the employer functions relating to all members of the Transport Service. All staff will remain members of the Transport Service and the transport secretary will remain their employer.

Roads and Maritime Services staff will be transitioned into the new divisions of Transport for NSW in a lift and shift process where they and their teams will be moved intact into relevant new divisions. All that will change in this transition is the senior reporting lines. Roads and Maritime Services staff will remain on their current awards, as will staff of Transport for NSW and all the other transport agencies. The Secretary of Transport

has reiterated his commitment that employees in the Transport Service currently working within RMS will continue to be covered by their respective award. I will read onto the record the legal advice provided by Mr Tony Woods of Lander & Rogers, Lawyers, that confirms this position. I am advised a copy has been provided to Unions NSW. It states:

20 June 2019

Ms Clair Hodge
General Counsel
Transport for NSW
Level 6 18 Lee Street
CHIPPENDALE NSW 2008

Dear Ms Hodge

Schedule 5 - State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

You have asked for our advice on the impact of Schedule 5 on the industrial coverage and application of the four Roads and Maritime Services Awards. In seeking this advice you have instructed us that Transport for NSW will maintain existing RMS employees in the RMS Group of Staff.

The Roads and Maritime Services Awards apply to employees in the Transport Service who are designated as being in the "RMS Group". The designation arises from section 68Q(1) of the Transport Administration Act 1988. We have reviewed the amendments in Schedule 5 and they do not change the application of the Awards. While there are changes to references to RMS particularly in clause [35] they will not impinge on the designation of employees within the RMS Group and the application of the RMS Awards.

Yours faithfully

Anthony Woods | Partner The transport secretary cannot unilaterally abolish awards. Awards are made by the Industrial Relations Commission. The wages policy taskforce has agreed to a further two-year duration for the RMS awards. This decision was made after Transport for NSW made submissions to extend the previously approved duration period of only 12 months. This is a clear indication of Transport for NSW's commitment to retaining existing RMS awards and of Transport for NSW's good faith in the award negotiations, as is the ongoing consultation about the changes to the operating model. RMS employees will maintain their existing terms and conditions and the four existing RMS awards will continue to apply, notwithstanding the removal of the RMS agency from the Transport Administration Act.

RMS employees will continue to remain employed under their existing group, notwithstanding the removal of RMS from the Transport Administration Act. The secretary has the ability to create groups and such groups do not have to align with agencies. Transport for NSW has already commenced and is continuing a program of ongoing consultation with staff and unions about the reorganisation. Consultation with staff and unions has taken place in accordance with the applicable awards. I reiterate to the House that it has the NSW Government's absolute commitment that Transport for NSW will continue to negotiate with the unions and staff in good faith. Transport for NSW has committed to continuing to engage in negotiations in good faith with the relevant unions and staff including after 1 July 2019. Transport for NSW has also given a commitment to abide by the Government's commitment of no regional job losses.

The Premier first announced the restructure of the public sector, including the merging of Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services, in early April this year. On 4 April 2019, two days after the new Cabinet was sworn in, employee representatives and union delegates met with Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services for the first time at a meeting that was chaired by Transport for NSW's acting chief people officer and attended by the transport secretary. Opposition members claim that the unions have not been consulted on the transition. Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services have met with the unions at least eight times since the integration was first announced. I am advised that they met this year on 4 April, 15 April, 30 April, 7 May, 30 May, 11 June and 17 June.

How can members opposite credibly stand up in this place and suggest that the unions have not been consulted when no less than eight meetings have taken place between some of the most senior representatives of Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services—including the transport secretary on three occasions—and the unions? Those meetings included representatives from Unions NSW; the Public Service Association of NSW; the Seamen's Union of Australia; the Australian Maritime Officers Union; the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers; the Australian Workers' Union; the Australian Services Union; the Rail, Tram and Bus Union; the Transport Workers' Union; Professionals Australia; the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union; the Plumbing Trades Employees Union; the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union; and the Electrical Trades Union of Australia.

The Transport cluster is being reorganised to deliver a better customer experience to the people of New South Wales no matter where they live. We are putting the needs of the customer first and the mode of transport second. The integration of Roads and Maritime Services into Transport for NSW will fully integrate every area of transport under a single and unified transport banner. There will be no change to the employment status of any of those staff members as a result of the transition to a single agency. All Roads and Maritime Services staff and Transport for NSW staff are members of the same Transport Service as distinct from the public

service. The transport secretary exercises the employer functions relating to all members of the Transport Service. All staff will remain members of the Transport Service and the transport secretary will remain their employer.

Roads and Maritime Services staff will be transitioned into the new divisions of Transport for NSW in a lift and shift process, where they and their teams will be moved intact into relevant new divisions. Only the senior reporting lines will change in this transition. Roads and Maritime Services staff will remain on their current awards, as will staff of Transport for NSW and all of the other transport agencies. Transport for NSW has already commenced and is continuing a program of ongoing consultation with staff and unions about the reorganisation. I reaffirm that no award staff will be made redundant as part of the transition as all functions are needed in the new structure. Therefore there will be no redundancies as a result of the transition of Roads and Maritime Services and Transport for NSW functions into the new operating model.

By drawing various functions together, Transport will be better placed to deliver the mobility services that customers need whilst continuing to respond to an ever-changing operating environment. Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services already work very closely together on a day-to-day basis. Whilst business will continue to operate effectively during the transition phase, the full integration of Roads and Maritime Services into Transport for NSW will mean there are no organisational barriers to realising the full benefits of integrated and coordinated services. It will ensure the breakdown of any residual silos that frustrate effective service delivery. I want to touch on regional jobs. With this bill the New South Wales Government is once again demonstrating its commitment to the regions. As the Deputy Premier and member for Monaro said—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order: I have listened carefully to the Minister's very lengthy speech, which I would suggest is more of a second reading speech. He is straying into regional jobs, which is well beyond the remit of what this amendment is about.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: To the point of order: The issue of regional jobs was raised by the Hon. Adam Searle in his initial speech.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): It might have been. I do not remember that. I know that the Hon. Adam Searle's speech was substantially shorter than the Minister's. I am struggling to see how some of this is on point. I invite the Minister to address the amendment in the short time he has left.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I make this point: Importantly, this integration will not result in job losses in rural and regional areas. The priority is to bring teams and staff into the combined organisation intact. There are no plans to change the location, classification or number of roles during transition. Legislation is needed because it is appropriate to enshrine the changes in legislation to ensure that the reforms can be implemented in the simplest and most efficient way, providing greater clarity and certainty for staff, industry, the private sector and the community. In particular, the bill will end concerns about authority and enforcement powers that were raised by the unions at a number of consultation meetings.

Integrating Roads and Maritime Services into Transport for NSW will make it a lot easier for customers, industry, councils and other government agencies to effectively engage on transport matters. Integration will result in increased accountability and transparency for all transport stakeholders. The new operating model will ensure decision-making happens in a timely manner, ensuring that decisions truly reflect customer needs and expectations. The new operating model will encourage better coordination and collaboration and allow Transport to respond nimbly and creatively to changes in the operating environment. Transport is a technology business in a period of unrivalled growth, change and disruption. The new operating model will position Transport to be more agile in responding to emerging challenges. The new Transport for NSW structure will include two new geographically focused service and operational divisions. In making what sought to be a comprehensive analysis, I wanted to give Mr David Shoebridge the assurances he needed that would have enabled him to support the Government's position in relation to this and reject the Opposition's amendment.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I will not prevent anyone from speaking and I am not being critical of anyone. However, I note that it is 8.50 p.m. We have a heck of a lot of work to get through tonight. Again, I encourage everyone to speak who wants to speak, but I would like to get to bed before dawn.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (20:50): Given the state of my voice, your ambition to get to sleep tonight is shared by me and by other members. I make a limited contribution to the consideration of Opposition amendment No. 1, having paid careful attention to the Minister's lengthy remarks. The Minister drew attention to some legal advice, which he then read onto the record—a welcome gesture. The Minister made the point that the advice was provided to the trade union movement, and he said that it was provided in a way that allowed the trade union movement to ascertain for itself what would be the effect of this legislation on the awards. He said that this took place as a result of a series of consultations; I think he listed eight meetings. He said that, on the basis of

those eight meetings, the Government's consultation was therefore legitimate and the Committee should take it in good faith. That was the Minister's point.

Apart from quibbling with one of the dates he gave, which I think was wrong—a minor point—I thought it prudent to check precisely when that advice was provided to Unions NSW. Lo and behold, the first time Unions NSW saw the advice was at 5.41 p.m.—four hours ago. On that basis, the Government asserts it has been acting with integrity and in good faith. The Minister now comes to this Chamber and says therefore this amendment is unnecessary. It is open to the trade union movement and Unions NSW to infer that perhaps the reason this advice was transmitted to them at 5.41 p.m. was that the Opposition lodged its amendment at 2.59 p.m. It is entirely possible that perhaps the Government realised it might be sensible to come to the table and negotiate and consult properly. If that is the conclusion the Government drew from the fact that we planned to move this amendment, then the fact that we moved the amendment is in itself a success.

It is about good faith. We find ourselves in a situation where a substantial agency, which is a major employer of lots of people, is being merged into another. At no point has the union movement ever said that that should be stopped or reversed. In fact, it has been amenable to the Government's desire to integrate the two agencies. All the unions wanted to do was understand the implications for them and their members—which, incidentally, is their responsibility as well. They have participated in eight meetings in good faith. They have not once sought to disrupt the process; they have been negotiating. As recently as Monday, they were advised by Transport for NSW that no legislative changes would be needed. They discovered in the media that this change was happening and the bill was coming. A bill was then dropped into the budget bill, which for all intents and purposes looks like perhaps the Government was prepared to risk the budget in order to slip this through.

The substantive effect of legislative change, as everyone knows, is that the Government is tilting the field. A government that unilaterally tries to change the law while undertaking a negotiation like this is usually trying to tilt the negotiations in its favour. When the Government was caught out—when we lodged the amendment—that is when the Government got serious about this. The Government ought to take the period between now and Parliament returning in August to get even more serious and consultative and be reasonable with the trade union movement. The Government ought to support this amendment because if we take it at its word that it is acting in good faith, this is what it means to be acting in good faith.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (20:54): The fundamental point that the Government has failed to address in its comprehensive, lengthy, meandering and often off-point submission to the Chamber is that if there is nothing to fear, if there will be no practical impact on the workplace, why does it need this legislation to merge these two bodies when its advice to the workforce as at 1 May was that it did not need to do so? We have also learned that the affected workforce has had the benefit of the Government's advice only since 5.41 p.m., so dealing with this matter by acquiescing to the Government's proposal seems unreasonable to us. We maintain our support for our amendment.

Turning to a point that was laboured strenuously but unconvincingly, it was the Minister's submission that there will be no impact on existing awards because the Transport for NSW secretary cannot cancel awards. That is not the issue. Four awards are currently being renegotiated; they are up for renewal. The Government did not address what impact, if any, these legislative changes will have on the future award-making capacity of the Industrial Relations Commission, given it is my recollection that the transport legislation gives the transport secretary the power to determine the wages and conditions of employees of Transport for NSW. Maybe that is not a problem; maybe other provisions cancel that out. Maybe there is no impairment to the powers of the commission. But making these potentially far-reaching changes on the hop is unsatisfactory. We suggest taking this out of the bill. The Government can talk to the workforce and then come back to this Parliament in August or September. We urge all members to support the amendment. First, do no harm.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): The Hon. Adam Searle has moved Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-026. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The Committee divided.

Ayes23
Noes16
Majority.....7

AYES

Banasiak, Mr M
Buttigieg, Mr M
Faehrmann, Ms C
Hurst, Ms E

Borsak, Mr R
D'Adam, Mr A
Field, Mr J
Jackson, Ms R

Boyd, Ms A
Donnelly, Mr G (teller)
Graham, Mr J
Latham, Mr M

AYES

Mookhey, Mr D

Moriarty, Ms T

Moselmane, Mr S
(teller)

Pearson, Mr M

Primrose, Mr P

Roberts, Mr R

Searle, Mr A

Secord, Mr W

Sharpe, Ms P

Shoebridge, Mr D

Veitch, Mr M

NOES

Ajaka, Mr

Amato, Mr L

Blair, Mr

Cusack, Ms C

Fang, Mr W (teller)

Farlow, Mr S

Franklin, Mr B

Maclaren-Jones, Mrs
(teller)

Mallard, Mr S

Martin, Mr T

Mason-Cox, Mr M

Mitchell, Mrs

Nile, Revd Mr

Taylor, Mrs

Tudehope, Mr D

Ward, Mrs N

PAIRS

Houssos, Mrs C

Harwin, Mr D

Amendment agreed to.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Trevor Khan): The question is that the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 as amended be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I move:

That the Chair do now leave the chair and report the Appropriation Bill 2019 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019 without amendment, and the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 with amendments, including an amendment to the long title.

Motion agreed to.**Adoption of Report**

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I move:

That the report be adopted.

Motion agreed to.**Third Reading**

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I move:

That these bills be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.**AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER BILL 2019****Messages**

The PRESIDENT: I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Assembly:

MR PRESIDENT

The Legislative Assembly has considered the Legislative Council's message dated 19 June 2019 insisting on its amendments nos 4 and 34 to the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill, to which the Assembly has disagreed.

The Legislative Assembly informs the Legislative Council that the Assembly agrees to Legislative Council amendment no 4 and insists on its disagreement a second time to the Legislative Council amendment no 34, and moves a further amendment:

No. 1 **Funding for disability advocacy**

Page 14. Before line 13:

25 Report about disability advocacy

- (1) The Commissioner must, by 31 December 2019:
 - (a) prepare a report in relation to the funding arrangements for independent specialist advocacy, information and representative organisations for people with disability in New South Wales, and
 - (b) consult with independent specialist advocacy, information and representative organisations for people with disability in New South Wales in relation to the report, and
 - (c) provide the report to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), in preparing the report the Commissioner must take into account any funding provided by the Commonwealth, under the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 of the Commonwealth, to independent specialist advocacy, information and representative organisations for people with disability in New South Wales.
- (3) Before providing the report to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament, the Commissioner must give a copy of the report to the Minister.

And the Assembly requests the concurrence of the Legislative Council in its proposed amendment.

Legislative Assembly
20 June 2019

Speaker
JONATHAN O'DEA

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I move, according to sessional order:

That the Legislative Assembly's message be considered in Committee of the Whole forthwith.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I move:

That the question be amended by inserting at the end:

- (b) that consideration of the message in Committee of the Whole not exceed 30 minutes.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I move:

That the amendment of the Hon. Adam Searle be amended by inserting at the end:

- (c) that if proceedings in the Committee of the Whole have not concluded by the expiry of 30 minutes the President put all questions necessary to dispose of the matter.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Don Harwin has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Adam Searle moved an amendment, to which the Hon. Don Harwin moved a further amendment. The question is that the amendment of the Hon. Don Harwin to the amendment of the Hon. Adam Searle be agreed to.

Amendment of the Hon. Don Harwin to the amendment of the Hon. Adam Searle agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The question now is that the amendment of the Hon. Adam Searle as amended by the Hon. Don Harwin be agreed to.

Amendment of the Hon. Adam Searle as amended by the Hon. Don Harwin be agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The question now is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

In Committee

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (21:13): I move:

That the House not insist on the Legislative Council's amendment No. 34 disagreed to by the Legislative Assembly in the bill, and that the House agree to the amendment No. 1 proposed by the Legislative Assembly.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (21:13): I move:

That the question be amended by omitting the word "not".

In short, the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 has shuttled between the two Houses. The Legislative Assembly has accepted the Legislative Council's principal amendment to maintain the independence of the new Office of the Commissioner for Ageing and Disability but it is still dissenting from the recommendation of disability advocacy funding. Instead, it has proposed a different amendment that the new commissioner conduct an inquiry into the satisfactory nature or otherwise of disability advocacy funding. We are happy to accept the amendment providing for that inquiry, but we do not see the need to abandon the recommendation made to the Government by the Legislative Council. We maintain our insistence on amendment No. 34.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (21:14): It is counterintuitive to potentially have an inquiry by the commissioner as to the appropriate level of funding when—

as the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting—it does not matter what that inquiry finds because he will still be bound by the recommendation of this House.

The Hon. Adam Searle: I have a different view to Mr David Shoebridge on that.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I accept that the Leader of the Opposition has a different view. Notwithstanding that, I put it to the Chamber that the recommendation of the other House runs contrary to a circumstance where the two can live together. It is inconsistent to hold an inquiry against a background where the recommendation—certainly in the eyes of Mr David Shoebridge—would override whatever finding the commissioner made and would render it of little use whatsoever. This potential inquiry by the commissioner will be conducted in good faith, with a view to reaching an appropriate amount of funding. There is no reason that \$20 million is an appropriate amount of funding for advocacy bodies; it is just an amount that has been picked from somewhere. The process proposed by the Legislative Assembly is one where the commissioner will engage in ascertaining what the appropriate level of funding should be for advocacy groups, taking into account submissions by them and taking into account the level of funding being provided by the NDIS. I urge the Committee to reject the amendment moved by the Opposition.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON (21:17): The Animal Justice Party has looked closely at this amendment. We commend the Hon. Alex Greenwich for recommending it in the other place and the Government for supporting the amendment. The Animal Justice Party is satisfied that this amendment addresses our concerns. The main factor is we believe the commission and the commissioner, by being completely independent and in no way interfered with by the Government or the Minister, will be able to address this issue, analyse it and make recommendations about funding and other aspects of disability services.

The other aspect that we are also satisfied with, and which we think has probably been overlooked to an extent, is that there are aged people involved who will need to continue to receive care. Now that the commissioner will be able to investigate and report on what the commission believes is necessary for the adequate care of adults with disabilities and older adults, the Animal Justice Party is satisfied that humane requirements for the care of those people will be put in place. In fact, the commission may recommend an even greater figure than what is proposed to be locked in as a minimum figure in the bill. For those reasons, the Animal Justice Party supports this amendment to the bill.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (21:19): The Greens have looked at the proposed amendment moved by Mr Alex Greenwich in the Legislative Assembly. We think a review would be great. The sector supports a review. It thinks it would be a good idea as well. Clearly it has to be done well. That means it will need to be well resourced and, as we have already spent time talking about, \$3.4 million to fund the Ageing and Disability Commissioner per year is such a woefully inadequate amount that we have real doubts about how well resourced such an inquiry would be. The sector also needs to be well resourced and given time to have this review conducted properly. These disability advocacy groups will lose their funding at the end of June 2020. Anyone who has worked in a service of this kind will know that in the final year before losing funding they wind down, staff are let go and eventually the clients are forced away. To ask these organisations to commit the substantial time and resources required to participate in a review at the end of the year in the midst of that ticking time bomb is completely unreasonable.

Clearly we need both. The sector needs a commitment to funding, as well as this review. They are compatible. The Government can commit to a certain amount of funding and also have a review as to whether the amount of funding is adequate. The Government has said a few times, "Where is this number randomly picked from?" Again—because I have said this a couple of times now—the \$20 million figure is not arbitrary. They currently receive \$13 million and they turn away at least half of the people who come to their door. In the past 18 months, 18 separate independent disability advocacy organisations have come together in the Stand By Me campaign to make it very clear that they need \$20 million. That \$20 million figure has been constantly mentioned on Facebook, in the streets and in protests. It has been laid out for the Government time and time again. They have explained exactly why they need the \$20 million. Rather than call it arbitrary, why can the Government not commit to \$13 million ongoing? Why are we pushing this to the eleventh hour when a sector is about to face such looming cuts that it will not survive? It will not survive to be able to participate adequately in a review by a commission that is funded with only \$3 million a year.

The Animal Justice Party said it is satisfied. One of the reasons is its concern about aged people. The Greens share the concern for aged people. We do not believe that this amendment would stop the commission going ahead. The bill can still go ahead with this amendment. Aged people will also be able to take advantage of this commission, despite the lousy \$3 million funding amount. But they are not the ones losing their funding. It is the disability advocacy sector that is currently just barely surviving on a measly \$13 million while turning away half of the people who come to its door. They are the ones that are going to lose their funding at the end of June 2020. By agreeing to the Government's amendment, rather than supporting both the review as well as this

recommendation for funding, we are effectively turning our backs on the independent disability advocacy sector and that is heartbreaking for the millions of people with disability across this State.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (21:23): I would like to think that when we make decisions in this place about legislation we take on board the best information that we have available from those in the community who are most affected by those decisions. Ms Abigail Boyd has laid out exactly where the need for \$20 million has come from. It has come from those organisations that work with people who face these challenges in their daily life.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: What about the NDIS?

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: With respect, Minister, she spelt that out. We pass legislation in this place all the time. After it is put into place reviews are conducted by various organisations. They might be statutory authorities or agreed reviews that are established at the time of the making of that legislation. We receive those reviews, and we often come back and reassess that legislation. The same principle applies here. We can continue to insist on the amendments that were made in this place the other day recommending to the Government that it commits \$20 million to advocacy funding for the disability sector. The review can take place and if that review shows that was either inadequate, or in some way needs to be amended, we can come back to this place and make a different decision. Those two things are entirely compatible. The best information that we have is what Ms Abigail Boyd has laid out for us here today, and we have the opportunity to have more information before us later on. We can come back and consider those matters then.

I made clear when I first spoke on this in the Chamber that the Government had the opportunity to make a statement in the House committing to ongoing funding. We are having a dance here about the legality of this. I think the Government does not want to have that challenged in the courts, so it has put up an amendment to try to avoid that. We should probably have that dance. We should do that so we do not keep having these arguments. We now have evidence that suggests there is a need. We have the ability to strongly make that recommendation. We now have a commitment from the Government to ensure that we have more and better information in the future to make alternative decisions. We can do both here tonight. It does not seem to me that there is any real reason why the Government cannot support that, except that they do not want to have the fundamental principle tested before the courts. I do not think that is something that should be held over at the expense of those who are most disadvantaged in our community.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK (21:26): The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is a party of principle. We have never flip-flopped on this issue, and we will never flip-flop on this issue. Once we say we are going to do something, we commit to it. I agree with Mr Justin Field that this is a way of avoiding having that difficult discussion about the legitimacy of what has been proposed. I agree with Mr Justin Field, let us have that dance. Let us get it out in the open and sort it out, resolve it once and for all so that it does not come up again and again with every other bill that comes before this House. Let us have that test. Let us have that dance.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (21:27): I speak briefly in debate on this amendment. Let us understand why we are here. We are here because the Government refuses to provide ongoing funding for disability advocacy services in New South Wales. It decided two years ago that it would cut the funding in June 2020. Since then there has been a very long campaign by disability advocacy groups who have made it abundantly clear why this is very important. They made it abundantly clear because most people with disability are not covered by the NDIS and all the discussion from the Government that says that the NDIS will cover this advocacy has been shown to be complete and utter bunkum.

Through a very short inquiry that we had to have through the processes of this House, the disability advocacy groups said that disability advocacy was absolutely essential to making both the NDIS and, more importantly, the Ageing and Disability Commissioner work. That is why this House took the very unusual step—and I accept it is unusual, and we talked about this when the bill was here before—of recommending that the Government guarantee the \$20 million. There is nothing in the current amendments from the Government that means we cannot have a review. Have a review. That is fine. But we can also guarantee funding to the sector that says it desperately needs it and has made the case very strongly. There is nothing that stops us from doing that, other than the Government's unwillingness. This is on the Government. This is on the Minister and the Government refusing to fund disability advocacy services. If the amendment is knocked off tonight, that is on their heads.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (21:29): Perhaps this argument would not be as intense as it is except for the difference of opinion that exists between the Government and The Greens on whether this is a binding appropriation that can be delivered by the Legislative Council. I acknowledge that the Leader of the Opposition says that it is not binding and that the Legislative Council has no power to make an appropriation amendment to a bill that would be binding on the Government. The so-called dance that is being engaged in probably could be alleviated if The Greens agreed to a position whereby they would

acknowledge any recommendation is not binding on the Legislative Assembly or on the Government because the Legislative Council has no power to do it.

If The Greens were prepared to acknowledge that, we may not be having this so-called dance. This all emanates from an intransigence by The Greens who suggest that in the Legislative Council they can impose an obligation on the Government to appropriate moneys. That is the nub of the whole issue. If The Greens were prepared to say that they acknowledge the Government would not be bound by the recommendation, in those circumstances we may not be having the discussion that we are having now. The solution that was identified in the other place identifies a process to get to a result that will be reported to the Houses of Parliament by the commissioner. It will take into account factors such as how much funding organisations are getting from the NDIS. The \$20 million figure has not been addressed as a factor to be taken into account. It is an in globo figure.

What is occurring is that a figure has been assessed or addressed. There is no material that can be seen or relied upon as to how that figure has been arrived at. The process that has been identified by the Minister will provide concrete evidence of what would be necessary for appropriate funding, given the new regime under which we operate by virtue of the NDIS. I acknowledge the position being adopted by the Animal Justice Party. The Government wants people to be covered by the commissioner's role from 1 July onwards. The Animal Justice Party rightly identified the cohort of people who will get that protection from that day onwards. In those circumstances we should not be standing in the way of the appointment of the commissioner. The Legislative Council has an obligation not to stand in the way.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (21:32): That is the first time I have heard the Government say that its reason for not agreeing to the amendment is that it is fearful of the view that it is an appropriation. Let me be very clear about the amendment moved by my colleague Ms Abigail Boyd. The amendment was in the form of a recommendation. It is in the form that previously was not only passed by the Legislative Council—

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Add the proviso.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The Minister should let me finish. It is in the form that previously was not only passed by the Legislative Council but passed by the other place in 1993. The amendment not only has passed both Houses but also was acted upon. Let me be clear that I believe the Legislative Council has the power. I made very clear my belief that the Legislative Council has the power to make an amendment in the form of an appropriation in a bill such as the one before the Committee. I believe that for reasons I set out on a previous occasion. But the amendment presented by my colleague Ms Abigail Boyd does not have to be construed as an appropriation.

As I understand it, the basis upon which the amendment was crafted and proceeded through two Houses of this Parliament in the Letona precedent in 1993 was that it was crafted in such a way that it could be construed as not being an appropriation. As I understand it, that is the characterisation that the Opposition seeks to give to this amendment. It is the characterisation that the Government seeks to give to this amendment which, if I am accurate in reading the numbers, is the characterisation that a majority of the Legislative Council seeks to give to this amendment—despite the fact that it would be open to the Legislative Council on my reading of it and for the reasons I stated earlier to make an appropriations amendment to it. It would appear that a majority of members of this Chamber in this debate have formed the view that an amendment in the form as presented does not form an appropriation.

For the Government to say that because The Greens have put the proposition that it is open to the Legislative Council in these situations to craft an amendment in the form of an appropriation—despite the fact that the Opposition and the Government forming a majority do not believe that the current amendment is in the form of an appropriation—and use that as a reason for not supporting the amendment, while allowing the recommendation to lay on the table and allowing the recommendation to remain in the Act, is specious.

The TEMPORARY CHAIR (The Hon. Niall Blair): The Minister moved that the House not insist on the Legislative Council's amendment No. 34 to the bill and that the House agree to amendment No. 1 proposed by the Legislative Assembly. The Hon. Adam Searle moved an amendment to the Minister's motion. The question is that the amendment moved by the Hon. Adam Searle be agreed to.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 18
Noes 19
Majority..... 1

AYES

Banasiak, Mr M

Borsak, Mr R

Boyd, Ms A

AYES

Buttigieg, Mr M
Faehrmann, Ms C
Jackson, Ms R

D'Adam, Mr A
Field, Mr J
Moriarty, Ms T

Donnelly, Mr G (teller)
Graham, Mr J
Moselmane, Mr S
(teller)
Secord, Mr W
Veitch, Mr M

Primrose, Mr P
Sharpe, Ms P

Searle, Mr A
Shoebridge, Mr D

NOES

Amato, Mr L
Farlow, Mr S
Hurst, Ms E

Cusack, Ms C
Franklin, Mr B
Latham, Mr M

Fang, Mr W (teller)
Harwin, Mr D
Maclaren-Jones, Mrs
(teller)
Mason-Cox, Mr M
Pearson, Mr M
Tudehope, Mr D

Mallard, Mr S
Mitchell, Mrs
Roberts, Mr R
Ward, Mrs N

Martin, Mr T
Nile, Revd Mr
Taylor, Mrs

PAIRS

Houssos, Mrs C
Mookhey, Mr D

Ajaka, Mr
Khan, Mr T

Amendment negatived.

The TEMPORARY CHAIR (The Hon. Niall Blair): The question now is that the House not insist on the Legislative Council amendment No. 34 to the bill and agree to amendment No. 1 proposed by the Legislative Assembly.

Motion agreed to.**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I move:

That the Chair do now leave the chair and report that the Committee has resolved to not insist on the Legislative Council's amendment No. 34 and agrees to amendment No. 1 proposed by the Legislative Assembly to the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019.

Motion agreed to.**Adoption of Report****The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I move:

That the report be adopted.

Motion agreed to.**Messages****The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I move:

That a message be sent to the Legislative Assembly informing the Assembly that the Legislative Council has resolved to not insist on the Council's amendment No. 34 disagreed to by the Legislative Assembly and agrees to amendment No. 1 proposed by the Legislative Assembly in the bill.

Motion agreed to.**STATE REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019****Messages**

The PRESIDENT: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly agreeing to the Legislative Council's amendments to the bill.

*Documents***TABLING OF PAPERS**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I table the following paper:

1. Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984 and the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983—Border Fence Maintenance Board of New South Wales for year ended 31 December 2018, together with a statement of reasons for lateness.

I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

*Motions***WOMEN IN SPORT**

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (21:48): I continue speaking about Easts Rugby and women in sport. From its first ever try scorer H. D. Thompson on 9 May 1900 through to its first Wallaby in J. W. Maund, it is well known that Easts Rugby is a trendsetter across the State. Easts is a place where young athletes discover their potential and grow on and off the field, finding a sense of belonging in a club with a strong moral compass. Now Easts has become an emerging stronghold of women's rugby, giving women the opportunity to reach new heights in the sport.

It is a growing truism that women are leading the way in Australian rugby—doing slightly better than the boys. Easts now has the fastest growing women's program in New South Wales. It has gone from 12 players in 2017 to over 60 players in 2019. The club began 2017 with zero juniors and has now proceeded to over 40 school-aged women players in 2019. Female international representative players from Ireland and Scotland have been attracted to the Easts program. It is home to New South Wales Waratah Phoebe Loughhead.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Tell me more, Natalie! Tell me more!

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Phoebe is someone I know the Hon. Walt Secord will be very interested to hear about—in fact, I think the Wallabies would be interested to hear from Phoebe as well. The club is also home to five women's Aon 7s players. The year 2020 will see two open-aged 15s women's sides fielded as well as junior girls' teams in every age group. The New South Wales Government understands that running a district rugby club is not an economic exercise. Maintaining the integrity of a rugby club requires hundreds of thousands of dollars every year. No club could survive let alone fund initiatives such as these, which benefit the entire State, without funds traditionally sourced from sponsors, game-day takings, player registration, supporter donations and, in this case, government grants. On 19 March 2019 the New South Wales Government saw the inspiring work of Easts Rugby and committed to support it through encouraging equality in sporting facilities.

The Government has committed to a \$1.8 million funding promise to build new women's change rooms at Easts Rugby club. Women will finally have facilities of their own. This important initiative is not just a win for women but a win for sport across the State. Women are leading the way in Australian rugby and this funding will facilitate more women playing, more women winning and ultimately more women wearing Olympic medals for rugby. While it is based in the eastern suburbs, 40 per cent of Easts' players come from outside the area. This initiative transcends geography. The facilities are often used by other organisations such as the UNSW Football Club's women's football team. The Government's decisive action will be seen and felt all across the State. This funding is a source of societal advancement with equality of opportunity and champions of the sporting arena.

I thank the president of Easts Rugby, Mr John Murray, and the secretary, Mr Sam Fay, for continuously championing equality in sport. I also thank my husband, Mr David Begg, president of Sydney Rugby Union and devoted champion of women in rugby and the Shute Shield competition. The Government is pleased to support Easts Rugby in its role of supporting women. I thank the New South Wales Government, particularly the former sport Minister, Mr Stuart Ayres, and his successor, Mr John Sidoti, under whose watch the women's sporting landscape has changed positively in recent years. Netball, Australian rules, football and cricket have had enormous success with their national women's leagues with record crowds, unprecedented broadcast deals, television audiences and digital engagement. In 2018 elite competitions were launched by rugby union, in the form of Super W, and rugby league's NRL Women's Premiership. Women's and girls' participation in non-traditional women's sports like cricket and football codes is increasing rapidly at a community level. It is imperative that we celebrate and capitalise on the opportunities that this moment in time brings.

The rapid rise in the importance, influence and value of female fans has seen a distinctive shift in the sports marketing landscape—they are seeing the dollars in it. Sporting codes are realising the commercial and social value of engaging with women and the power of female role models. While this is great news, there is a long way to go for women in sport to achieve equity with their male counterparts when it comes to pay, conditions and recognition. More work is also needed to address issues including out-of-date sporting facilities that were designed to meet the needs of men; increasing the number of women in leadership and coaching positions; and delivering sport in a way that is appealing to women and girls.

The New South Wales Government is committed to assisting female participation in sport at all levels, which is why in December 2018 the Her Sport Her Way strategy was released to address these issues. Almost 800 stakeholders, industry thought leaders and potential new partners gave input to the development of the strategy through workshops and focus groups. The vision for Her Sport Her Way is a New South Wales sports sector where women and girls are valued, recognised and have equal choices and opportunities to lead and participate. The strategy complements other initiatives, such as the T20 World Cup 2020 Cricket Legacy Fund, that will deliver up to \$6 million over three years to support facility development in local clubs as well as facilitate an increase in female participation in the sport. The fund is part of Sydney securing the opening ceremony and three out of the four men's and women's semifinals as well as tournament matches in the 2020 International Cricket Council T20 World Cup tournament. The women's tournament will be featured as a standalone event following on from the massive success of the Women's Big Bash League.

This is part of the New South Wales Government's announcement that we will bid for 10 world cups in the next 10 years. These include four combined men's and women's events and women-only events such as the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup and 2027 Netball World Cup. The New South Wales Government has also supported events such as the Women's Rugby League World Cup as well as women's surfing and the 2017-18 Women's Big Bash League regional matches. After the successful Future Matildas pilot program run in 2018—we can see the results this year—the New South Wales Government, through the NSW Institute of Sport, increased its support of the initiative to \$90,000 per year until 2020. The program is run in partnership with Football Federation Australia and Football NSW to deliver a specialised training and support program for talented footballers aged between 15 and 20 years.

On 11 July 2018 the Office of Sport signed a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Education and the Eastwood Ryde Netball Association for a new \$30 million state-of-the-art netball facility at Meadowbank. Under the 2017-18 Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund the New South Wales Government is providing \$4.95 million in funding to upgrade player and spectator facilities at the Albert Park Baseball Complex, which is home to the sports of baseball and softball in the Northern Rivers. A further \$4.2 million in funding has been provided to build the new Glen Innes regional netball facility. In addition over \$1.7 million in funding over the past two financial years has been provided to women participating in sports and to sports that identified strategies specifically targeting women. The New South Wales Government has previously invested \$27 million for the Netball Central stadium, \$200,000 towards the Rowing Australia Women's National Training Centre and \$250,000 for the upgrade of Bon Andrews Oval at North Sydney. This Government is committed to women in sport and facilities that assist them to achieve participation and leadership in sport.

The New South Wales Government is also responsible for the Active Kids program. One of the best things about being a kid is getting to play a sport or participate in a physical activity that you love. Many members will know that as parents we want to encourage our kids to play and develop a love of sport and physical activity. Members will also know that the costs of participating in organised sport can be high. No-one wants to see kids miss out. Through our Active Kids program the Government is making sports more affordable for parents and more accessible to kids right across the State. Hopefully as a result we will see future Wallabies, Wallaroos and Matildas in the kids coming through this program. Active Kids aims to increase participation in sport for all of the 1.2 million New South Wales school-enrolled children through offsetting the costs associated with registration, membership and participation fees.

Since the launch of Active Kids—which we have now doubled, with two vouchers available per child per year—more than 1.25 million vouchers have been created with almost one million redeemed through our registered providers. The system is working and kids are signing up. This is saving families around \$100 million and giving all kids an opportunity to get involved in sport. I am so excited about \$100 Active Kids vouchers. We are not just talking about traditional sport but also physical activities such as dance lessons, structured fitness programs, Scouts and multisport providers such as PCYC—as long as the program lasts eight weeks and involves a moderate to vigorous level of physical activity. People can take their pick and if they want to get involved, we will help them get there.

In conclusion, it is an honour to serve in a Government that is working hard to promote equality in sports. Again I thank the previous Minister for Sport, the Hon. Stuart Ayres, and the current sports Minister, John Sidoti,

who is doing an excellent job in this portfolio. The ongoing advocacy of these two Ministers and the entire Executive ensures that an important step for rugby and sport in New South Wales is taking place. I thank the House. I commend the motion to the House.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Taylor Martin): According to sessional order, proceedings are interrupted to permit the Minister to move the adjournment motion if desired.

The House continued to sit.

Debate adjourned.

Documents

STATE BUDGET AND ENERGY FUNDING

Production of Documents: Order

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I move:

That private members' business item No. 109 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (22:01): I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 109 outside the order of precedence by omitting "14 days" and inserting instead "21 days" and omitting paragraphs (c) and (e).

Leave granted.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Accordingly, I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 21 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents in the possession, custody or control of the Treasurer, the Treasury, the Minister for Energy and Environment or the Department of Planning and Environment:

- (a) all documents related to the 2019-2020 budget funding commitment of \$30 million for the Regional Community Energy fund to provide grants for renewable energy projects and clean backup power for emergency response sites to improve;
- (b) all documents related to the 2019-2020 budget funding commitment of \$12.5 million (\$30 million over four years) to co-fund new on-demand clean energy projects with the private sector through the Emerging Energy Program, including \$10 million to pilot initiatives to recycle and re-use materials in solar panels and battery systems;
- (c) all documents related to the 2019-2020 budget funding commitment of \$7.9 million (\$65.4 million over four years) to support the rollout of solar panels and battery systems to households across New South Wales through the Empowering Homes Program, improving energy efficiency and reducing the cost of living; and
- (d) any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order on the House.

The budget, at a time when we are having a climate emergency, saw only some \$55 million of investment in renewable energy—and that is being generous because many of the projects do not include the production of new renewable energy. The motion as presented sought all of the relevant budget documents for each of the five what could be loosely classed as renewable energy initiatives. Since placing the motion on the *Notice Paper* I have had productive conversations with the Minister. As a result of those conversations, I have agreed to extend the time because I accept the proposition put by the Minister that 21 days is needed to respond. We have also agreed not to proceed with paragraphs (c) and (e) of the original motion of which I gave notice. There is an undertaking to provide a full and thorough briefing, including much of the material sought in the Standing Order 52 in those briefings, without the necessity of putting the department to the Standing Order 52.

The rationale for seeking the material is that we were deeply disappointed by the inadequacy of the investment in renewable energy, given we have a climate crisis, and we wanted to see if you like the mettle of the small projects that were put forward. We have engaged, to the best of our endeavours in the time available, in good faith negotiations with the Government to seek to limit the compass of it and to see whether we can find other ways to obtain the information with less cost and delay.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (22:03): I take some issue with the characterisation by Mr David Shoebridge of our policies taken to the last election. This motion mentions a number of fantastic Government initiatives, such as \$30 million for the Regional Community Energy Fund to provide grants for renewable energy projects and clean backup power for emergency response sites. This will improve the reliability and affordability of energy for regional New South Wales communities. This budget allocated \$12.5 million for the Emerging Energy Program to co-fund new large-scale, on-demand clean energy projects with the private sector. There is

also the Empowering Homes program, a program that supports the rollout of up to 300,000 battery and solar-battery systems across the State over the next 10 years through the provision of interest-free loans. These are wonderful programs that will be funded and delivered by this State Government.

Let us take the Empowering Homes program, for instance. We know that our electricity grid is transitioning to cleaner and more intermittent sources of energy generation. This transition will reduce our emissions over time but will need to be carefully managed to avoid disruption of the grid as it evolves. This is evolving from a grid characterised by one directional flow—from one big generator to homes and businesses—to a system that has multiple sources of electricity generation ranging from large generators to distributed energy systems. That is where the New South Wales Government's Empowering Homes program comes in. We know that households are already taking up small-scale or rooftop solar with gusto but where the Government can really help households is with supporting these households to also install batteries.

When the Empowering Homes program is fully rolled out, these batteries will add up to 3,000 megawatt hours of storage to our electricity system. This program not only supports reliable power in New South Wales but also gives families more options to access renewable energy through zero interest loans. These loans will be available to owner-occupiers on an annual household income of up to \$180,000 and will enable households to access either a solar energy and battery storage system or a battery to complement existing rooftop solar. This program is an exciting way to deliver on our energy priorities—lower prices, reliable electricity and lower emissions. This week we opened registrations or expressions of interest on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website for those households who want to register their interest in participating.

Empowering Homes is just one of the programs in this year's budget. Members will be delighted to hear that I will not be going through all of them, but let me declare that the budget delivered by the Treasurer on Tuesday is excellent. It will bring about a golden century in New South Wales. The Government also believes in transparency and for that reason it will not oppose the motion. It requests documents under Standing Order 52 on the same terms as those related to the budget, which are passed by convention in this place. The Government is concerned about the additional pressures being placed on departmental resources, but the Government feels that it is appropriate not to oppose this motion on this occasion.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (22:06): The Opposition supports without reservation the motion moved by Mr David Shoebridge. We will not fence with the Government about the respective merits of its different programs because the purpose of this call for papers under Standing Order 52 is to get the information, not to have a second reading debate about Government policy.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (22:07): I acknowledge that the Government will not oppose this application for papers under Standing Order 52. However, I make some observations about the manner in which this Standing Order 52 request has been arrived at. It has been arrived at in circumstances where there were some negotiations about the documents sought. There was some specificity about it and an agreement in relation to timing, all entirely appropriate for the way these orders ought to be approached so that it does not have the stench of ambush about it and the stench of a fishing expedition. Notwithstanding that these orders for papers are always uncomfortable, I appreciate the way that Mr David Shoebridge has approached the obtaining of these papers.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (22:08): In reply: I appreciate the brevity of the debate. I am feeling a bit soft now in respect of my negotiations on this call for papers under Standing Order 52. I commend the motion to the House.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Taylor Martin): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

WITHDRAWAL OF BUSINESS

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I withdraw private members' business item No. 112 outside the order of precedence relating to an order for papers for funding of Restart NSW projects.

Documents

CAMPBELL'S STORES, THE ROCKS

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I move:

That private members' business item No. 101 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (22:09):** I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 21 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents in the possession, custody or control of the Minister for Customer Service, and the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation:

- (a) all documents relating to the granting of a 55-year lease by the Government for the Campbell's Stores located in The Rocks, Sydney, to the company Tallawoladah;
- (b) all documents relating to the decision not to proceed with a tender process for this sale;
- (c) all documents relating to the leasing agent for the company Place Management who manages the lease on behalf of the Government, Mr Tim Andrews, who is also reported as being the leasing agent for the developer Tallawoladah; and
- (d) any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

I intend to press for this call for papers under Standing Order 52. There have been discussions with the Government, but this issue is longstanding. The Opposition has on a number of occasions sought information from the Government and the relevant Ministers, of which there has been a trail over time on this issue. The motion raises three questions of public policy. First, it deals with the tender process that unfolded for the 55-year lease of the Campbell's Stores located at The Rocks. Secondly, it deals with reports that the manager who operated the lease for the Government was also the manager for the property developer. Thirdly, the Opposition has questions about public investment close to this property. They are the three issues that have driven concern around the Campbell's Stores.

There has been repeated media commentary on the issue and the Government has not been able to answer questions in public. It is not clear what is going on and I am not making any specific allegations. But it is very unclear whether the deal was above board. I will deal with the three issues. Firstly, a lease was provided for 55 years and in return a company is investing private money to redevelop the property at The Rocks. A suggestion was made that it was a direct deal unlike almost any other heritage property transaction. The question is: Why was it a direct deal, rather than a tender process? A suggestion was made that the property is generating up to \$4 million and there may be a \$20 million to \$50 million profit. Again, I am relying on reports; I am not making any allegations. But those suggestions require some public scrutiny and this order for papers will deliver it.

Secondly, we are concerned that it has been reported that the same individual who worked as the leasing agent for Property NSW was also the leasing agent for the developer. We have concerns about that and we want those questions answered. Thirdly, this issue has been subject to Government Information (Public Access) Act applications. At least one of those applications was rejected by one of the parties. That request related to the political donations aspect of this issue. Those are the reports. We all know that maintaining public confidence is essential in these processes. It has been unusual. We do not use the Standing Order 52 process lightly, but we do believe it is appropriate in this instance.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (22:13): The Government opposes the motion because the transaction has been through a rigorous probity and procurement process. As the Hon. John Graham indicated, this has been a long process. Consideration about the future use of the historic Campbell's Stores at The Rocks and the potential for an agreement through a direct deal with existing tenants started back in 2008 under the previous Labor Government. Following the November 2008 mini-budget a cross-departmental committee was established to identify opportunities to renegotiate current leases in The Rocks in return for upfront payments or capital contributions. The committee endorsed that the former Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority [SHFA] complete a scoping study to identify opportunities to renegotiate current leases. In 2009, with the endorsement of the committee, SHFA developed the Rocks Lease Re-negotiation Policy to ensure a consistent approach with all existing landholders. In June 2009 existing tenants received a briefing which set out the process for direct dealings in accordance with ICAC guidelines for managing risk in direct negotiation and which sought expressions of interest.

In June 2010 the SHFA board approved to proceed with lease renegotiation for the four restaurants at Campbell's Stores. The four original leases expired on 30 June 2015. In November 2012 the holders of the four existing leases of Campbell's Stores set up Tallawoladah Pty Ltd, a special purpose entity for the purpose of managing and delivering the restoration of Campbell's Stores. Over the next two years, given the significant heritage nature of the stores, a substantial amount of design work was undertaken by Tallawoladah in order to ensure that the final design would be approved by the Heritage Council of NSW. During the next 12 months commercial negotiations were entered into between SHFA and Tallawoladah. In that transaction the New South Wales Government received a substantial investment in the restoration and preservation of Campbell's Stores, in

addition to an annual commercial rental return over the life of the lease. As such, the value for money, cost of the work and financial feasibility of the redevelopment were significant considerations in the negotiations.

In September 2014 the Government received a final probity report that the negotiation process was in compliance with the policy, Treasury guidelines—including value for money—and the ICAC guidelines. The report was reviewed and endorsed by the Hon. Jerrold Cripps, QC, the former ICAC commissioner. In November 2014 SHFA entered into an agreement for lease with Tallawoladah and in September 2015 SHFA provided landowner consent for the redevelopment proposal. In August 2017 the redevelopment works commenced. At all times the Government has sought to get the best possible outcome for the taxpayers of New South Wales. In so doing, it sought appropriate probity advice in relation to direct dealings that were necessary to bring about this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to restore the iconic site.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (22:16): The Government opposes this motion because the transaction has been through a rigorous probity and procurement process already. Built in 1839, Campbell's Stores was the hub of commerce and shipping in The Rocks until the late nineteenth century. In 2017 the Government secured a \$32 million upgrade of Campbell's Stores by the private sector that would otherwise have been incurred by the Government, breathing new life into one of Australia's best locations. They are the only surviving warehouses of their type on the foreshore of Sydney Cove. The restoration and fit-out by private hospitality company Tallawoladah, the company behind Dockside Group, has preserved and maintained the iconic warehouses for future generations. The refurbishment addressed deterioration in the roof, windows and parapets as well as stone decay.

The rejuvenated Campbell's Stores will feature world-class restaurants, cafes and bars. The first of the new restaurants will open this month, and the entire precinct will open by spring 2019. The refurbishment of Campbell's Stores will be complemented by a \$15 million Government-funded restoration of the foreshore at Campbell's Cove. The upgrade includes levelling and widening of the existing promenade, an amphitheatre for public events and enhanced connections to the new Overseas Passenger Terminal wharf extension. The Rocks attracts more than 15.4 million visitors each year. The refurbished Campbell's Stores and Campbell's Cove will create one of the world's most iconic dining and entertainment precincts. The first Campbell's Stores restaurant opened this month and the remainder will open in the next few months. I am sure the Deputy President is looking forward to it just as much as I am.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (22:18): In reply: I first put it on the record that I am not opposed to these sorts of direct dealings where they bring some real public benefit. I think there are times when that is important for governments. However, they are and should be held to a higher threshold of public scrutiny and they require public confidence if they are to operate properly. That is what we are seeking to secure here.

I note the assurances that have been provided by the Government in relation to one of the four points I raised and I hope that the Government is right. I take those assurances at face value and I expect that the documents will show that. I note that the Government has not referred to my three other concerns: first, that there has been nearby public expenditure in the forecourt of that area that has presumably brought some private benefit to it; secondly, that information sought on political donations has been refused through the appropriate Government Information (Public Access) Act process, which is why we are having this debate; and thirdly, and most concerning, that the agent for Property NSW is also the agent for the developer. That underlines our concerns and is the reason I have brought this motion today.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Niall Blair): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes22
Noes15
Majority.....7

AYES

Banasiak, Mr M
Buttigieg, Mr M
Faehrmann, Ms C
Hurst, Ms E
Moriarty, Ms T

Primrose, Mr P
Secord, Mr W

Borsak, Mr R
D'Adam, Mr A
Field, Mr J
Jackson, Ms R
Moselmane, Mr S
(teller)
Roberts, Mr R
Sharpe, Ms P

Boyd, Ms A
Donnelly, Mr G (teller)
Graham, Mr J
Latham, Mr M
Pearson, Mr M

Searle, Mr A
Shoebridge, Mr D

AYES

Veitch, Mr M

NOES

Amato, Mr L
Farlow, Mr S
Khan, Mr TCusack, Ms C
Franklin, Mr B
Maclaren-Jones, Mrs
(teller)
Mason-Cox, Mr M
Taylor, MrsFang, Mr W (teller)
Harwin, Mr D
Mallard, Mr S

Mitchell, Mrs
Tudehope, Mr D

PAIRS

Houssos, Mrs C
Mookhey, Mr DBlair, Mr
Ward, Mrs N**Motion agreed to.***Motions***SURF LIFE SAVING SYDNEY BRANCH AWARDS****The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (22:28):** I move:

1. That this House notes that:

- (a) on 25 May 2019, Surf Life Saving Sydney Branch held the 2019 Awards of Excellence at ICC Sydney;
- (b) the awards recognise members of the 15 surf life saving clubs and support operations that have excelled at branch level in junior development, surf life saving, education, surf sports and support operations;
- (c) the following awards were presented:
 - (i) Surf Lifesaver of the Year: Mathew Harper, Maroubra SLSC;
 - (ii) Volunteer of the Year: Doug Hawkins, Coogee SLSC;
 - (iii) Youth Surf Lifesaver of the Year: Jasmine Georgas, Maroubra SLSC;
 - (iv) Young Volunteer of the Year: Thomas Small, Clovelly SLSC;
 - (v) U15 Lifesaver of the Year: Tom Hetherington, Clovelly SLSC;
 - (vi) Branch member of the Year: Matt Spooner, Coogee SLSC;
 - (vii) Club of the Year: Wanda SLSC;
 - (viii) Champion Club of the Year: Burning Palms SLSC;
 - (ix) Administrator of the Year: Patricia Dillon, Garie SLSC;
 - (x) Community Education Program of the Year: Maroubra Marlins, Maroubra SLSC;
 - (xi) Innovation of the Year: Mental Health Initiative Bondi, Chaplain Martin Nezval, Bondi SBLSC;
 - (xii) Trainer of the Year: Nicole Krite, South Maroubra SLSC;
 - (xiii) Assessor of the Year: Michael Fernandez, South Maroubra SLSC;
 - (xiv) Facilitator of the Year: Glen Clarke, Clovelly SLSC;
 - (xv) Patrol of the Year: Meagher Patrol Team, Bondi SBLSC;
 - (xvi) Patrol Captain of the Year: Jayden Wilde, Wanda SLSC;
 - (xvii) Rescue of the Year: North Cronulla mass rescue conducted 17 February 2019, North Cronulla SLSC;
 - (xviii) Most awards per operational area: Burning Palms SLSC (Royal National Park), North Cronulla SLSC (Cronulla/Sutherland), Coogee SLSC (Randwick) and Bondi SBLSC (Waverley);
 - (xix) Patrol efficiency per operational area: Burning Palms SLSC (Royal National Park), Wanda, Elouera, North Cronulla SLSCs (Cronulla/Sutherland), South Maroubra SLSC (Randwick) and Bronte SLSC (Waverley);
 - (xx) Gear Inspection Winner: (joint winners) Burning Palms and Era SLSCs;

- (xxi) ORB Member of the Year: Jake McDonald, Maroubra SLSC;
 - (xxii) RWC Member of the Year: Chris Chambers, Cronulla SLSC;
 - (xxiii) Support Operations Member of the Year: Jackson Towns, Elouera SLSC;
 - (xxiv) Services Team of the Year: Bondi Education Team, Bondi SBLSC;
 - (xxv) Surf Sports Athlete of the Year: Ali Najem, Wanda SLSC;
 - (xxvi) Surf Sports Youth Athlete of the Year: Michael Hanna, Elouera SLSC;
 - (xxvii) Surf Sports U15 Athlete of the Year: (joint winners) Peter Thoroughgood, Elouera SLSC; and Lily Finati, North Bondi SLSC;
 - (xxviii) Surf Sports Masters Athlete of the Year: Dori Miller, Bondi SBLSC;
 - (xxix) Surf Sports Team of the Year: Open Men's Board Rescue Team Hayden Allum and Nathan Smith, Wanda SLSC;
 - (xxx) Surf Sports Coach of the Year: Chris Davis, Elouera SLSC;
 - (xxxi) Surf Sports Tony Hughes Official of the Year: Carlo Villanti, Cronulla SLSC;
 - (xxxii) Director of Surf Sports Award: Michael Day, North Cronulla SLSC;
 - (xxxiii) 2019 Branch Open Championship Pointscore: Wanda SLSC;
 - (xxxiv) 2019 Branch Age Championships Pointscore: Elouera SLSC;
 - (xxxv) 2019 Branch Masters Championship Pointscore: Bondi SBLSC;
 - (xxxvi) JD Female Lifesaver of the Year: Sarah Teitler, South Maroubra SLSC;
 - (xxxvii) JD Male Lifesaver of the Year: Thomas McFarland, Bondi SBLSC;
 - (xxxviii) JD Athlete of the Year 9-10 years: Ashton Briffa, South Maroubra SLSC;
 - (xxxix) JD Athlete of the Year 11-12 years: Fred Carmody, North Bondi SLSC;
 - (xl) JD Athlete of the Year 13-14 years: JD Team of the Year Zara Lammers, Wanda SLSC;
 - (xli) JD Age Manager of the Year: Justin Ingram, Cronulla SLSC; and
 - (xlii) JD Team of the Year: U13 Male and Female Beach Teams, Coogee SLSC.
- (d) those who attended as guests included:
- (i) the Hon. Taylor Martin, MLC;
 - (ii) Dr Marjorie O'Neill, MP, member for Coogee;
 - (iii) George Shales, President of Surf Life Saving Sydney and Surf Life Saving Sydney office bearers;
 - (iv) Mr Steven Pearce, AFSM, CEO, Surf Life Saving New South Wales;
 - (v) Mr Graham Ford, President Surf Life Saving Australia;
 - (vi) Mr Ernest Stephens, Patron Surf Life Saving Sydney;
 - (vii) Surf Life Saving Sydney Life members; and
 - (viii) Surf Life Saving Sydney Club Presidents.

2. That this House congratulates:

- (a) award recipients for their dedication and commitment to the community of Sydney and the safety of its beaches; and
- (b) Surf Life Sydney Branch and its member clubs for a successful 2018-19 season. Surf lifesaving is a vital part of our community. It is part of Australian culture with a rich history going back to the New South Wales Surf Bathing Association, which became the Surf Life Saving Association of New South Wales in 1920. The red and yellow flags are ubiquitous across almost all of our popular surf beaches. The flags inspire confidence in beachgoers. Australians know when they are swimming between those red and yellow flags that they will be kept safe and that they will be watched over by dedicated surf lifesaving volunteers. Increasingly, the water safety work of surf lifesavers is expanding out beyond the flags and even beyond the beach. Surf lifesavers conduct training, education and water safety awareness, which gives people the knowledge they need to be safer in the water. This ensures that a fun day out is not marred by injury or tragedy.

On 25 May 2019, I attended the Surf Life Saving Sydney Branch's 2019 Awards of Excellence on behalf of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Mr David Elliott. Quite a number of awards were presented and I will highlight some of those tonight. The Surf Life Saving Sydney Branch is responsible for the overall management, promotion and growth of surf lifesaving within its region, which covers the coast from the Royal National Park up to the South Head of Sydney Harbour. In total, there are 15 patrolled beaches: North

Bondi, Bondi, Tamarama, Bronte, Clovelly, Coogee, Maroubra, South Maroubra, Wanda, Elouera, North Cronulla, Cronulla, Garie, Era and Burning Palms.

The prestigious Surf Life Saver of the Year award was received by Mathew Harper of Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club, where he is club captain. When one considers some of the achievements of the club since Mathew has been in that position, it is easy to see why he was awarded Surf Life Saver of the Year. The following are some of the reasons Mathew was awarded this honour: club membership has grown by 10 per cent; a record number of new bronze members; a record number of 100 per cent proficiency awards; and huge retention rates. In this past season Mathew achieved 10 years of 100 per cent patrol proficiency—that is, 10 consecutive years of 100 per cent rostered patrol attendance—which is a huge achievement for a volunteer lifesaver.

I am told Mathew liaises with other community organisations such as Curtin University, the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney about "shark attitudes" at Maroubra Beach, rock fishermen safety awareness and community education initiatives. Mathew also helped organise the relaunch of the Maroubra Marlins disabled Nippers program, which encourages disadvantaged children to participate in surf sports. Mathew is also captain of Surf Rescue 30, leading a team of between 30 and 40 lifesavers in high-risk environments. He has participated in many out-of-hours call-outs as part of the Surf Life Saving Sydney Support Operation Group, and conducted night operations with the Surf Rescue 30 team.

The award for Volunteer of the Year was won by Doug Hawkins from Coogee Surf Life Saving Club. Doug recognised that in order to reduce drownings at local beaches community education was critical. Over this season Doug has delivered eight major sessions working with Coogee Surf Life Saving Club and the Surf Life Saving NSW community education team. Doug's role within these sessions was to present the course material and organise his fellow lifesavers to attend. In total, over 300 members attended these sessions. Doug is also the lead trainer for the club and was responsible for the qualification of 84 new lifesavers—a record amount in one year for the club.

The Club of the Year is a highly contested award within all Surf Life Saving branches, and this season it was awarded to Wanda Surf Life Saving Club. The club was recognised for its strategic planning and safety culture. The Community Program of the Year went to the Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club for the Maroubra Marlins program, which ran from mid-November 2018 to mid-February 2019 on Sunday mornings from 10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. The program included beach safety, sun safety, patrol introductions, water familiarisation, surf swimming, beach games, team building activities, relays, board paddling and surfing.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Niall Blair): Order! I ask that members keep noise in the Chamber to a minimum so that Hansard can hear the contribution of the Hon. Taylor Martin.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: As I was saying, the program included beach safety, sun safety, patrol introductions, water familiarisation, surf swimming, beach games, team-building activities, relays, board paddling and surfing. The target market was children and young people ranging from six years through to 21 years of age with additional needs or of different abilities. This included participants with autism, attention deficit disorder, Down syndrome, Asperger's and intellectual and physical disabilities of all kinds. The program provided a minimum one-to-one ratio supervision and in some cases even two to one was required and was very much tailored to each child's ability.

The program engaged club members on their Surf Rescue Certificate and Bronze Medallion to assist, with one person even joining the club to assist with the program. That was an unexpected benefit for Maroubra. Chaplain Martin Nezval of Bondi Surf Bathing Life Saving Club was awarded the Innovation of the Year award for his mental health initiative. The initiative resulted in 32 members being trained in youth mental health and the course was offered to other clubs in the area. Five 30-minute talks were held at the club on Sunday afternoons from 5.00 p.m. until 5.30 p.m. and covered confronting topics such as resilience, overcoming anxiety, suicide prevention and navigating mountains and valleys throughout young people's lives. The program essentially raised awareness across the entire membership base of the availability of resources within the club and the large increase in people able to provide assistance. I am told that the club aims to continue the program and use the newly trained members to support and manage the program into the future. The club also hopes to convince other clubs to gain the mental health first aid qualifications to assist their members.

Junior Lifesaver of the Year was awarded to Sarah Teitler of South Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club and Thomas McFarland of Bondi Surf Bathing Life Saving Club. The award for Junior Lifesaver of the Year recognises two outstanding young Nippers, male and female, who have achieved their Surf Life Saving Surf Rescue Certificate. These young lifesavers are recognised for their commitment to surf lifesaving, their continued involvement across a range of areas within their club, their lifesaving skills and the presentation and application of their leadership skills. Their positive role within the wider community and their personal focus on serving others is also evident in their activities and personality.

I also highlight the Rescue of the Year, which was awarded to participants in the mass rescue on 17 February at North Cronulla when a sandbar collapsed and 40 people were swept into the sea. Just before 2.00 p.m. the tide began to rise and water flowed across the sandbank; people swimming in the waves lost their footing and were pulled rapidly out to sea with the rip. One member of the public described diving under a wave and then not being able to touch the bottom after the wave had passed. Despite swimming between the flags, he had been swept north of the flags along with 40 others.

Almost immediately a mass rescue was underway. The red and yellow flags were dropped to indicate a closed beach, while 12 rescue boards, six swimmers with rescue tubes, an inflatable rescue boat [IRB] and a jet ski made their way out to the group. Realising the enormity and severity of the incident, surrounding surf clubs raced to assist with an additional two rubber duckies and three jetskis. Eloura club also sent six lifesavers to assist with potentially required medical assistance. The patrol estimated that up to 2,000 beachgoers were on the beach at North Cronulla at the time of the rescue. They were witness to one of the biggest, collaborative mass rescues conducted by Surf Life Saving in New South Wales. The North Cronulla Club president, Geoff Budd, said:

It could have turned really bad very fast [but] everyone just fell into place with what needed to be executed. The rescue was so successful in its response that not a single injury was recorded. As a surf lifesaver myself at Terrigal Beach on the Central Coast, I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to improving rescue resources and facilities for each of the surf life saving clubs and volunteers throughout New South Wales. Over the last three years this Government provided the \$4 million for the enhanced rescue capability grant that provided new iPads, jetskis and other rescue equipment for clubs up and down our coast. The grant helped to make improvements to the Surf Life Saving NSW radio network and State Operations Centre. We have committed to providing even more funding—\$16 million, in fact—over the next four years to Surf Life Saving NSW to deliver new community engagement officers in east Ballina, Warriewood, Nowra, Tathra and Tighes Hill. These staff will work in the community and run programs to help educate people about beach safety. The funding will mean 10 new emergency response beacons at coastal black spots. The funding will provide major operational support to Surf Life Saving NSW's 129 clubs, including jetskis, vehicles, wetsuits, lifejackets, helmets for jetski operators and increased training.

We are trialling a beach wi-fi system to better educate and communicate with swimmers, particularly international visitors. This will involve real-time safety alerts translated into seven different languages. The Government is funding the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter to enable its continued collaboration with Surf Life Saving NSW for coastal surveillance patrols alongside its work with other emergency service agencies, as I am sure the Hon. Wes Fang knows all about. While this motion focuses on the recipients at the Surf Life Saving Sydney Branch 2019 Awards of Excellence, each summer over 21,000 members don the iconic red and yellow uniforms at beaches across the State. Every single patrol member is trained to the highest possible standard and dedicates countless hours each session to protect their piece of coastline.

I want to highlight recipients of awards at the recent Surf Life Saving Central Coast Awards of Excellence: Umina Beach, awarded Club of the Year for the second year running; Lifesaver of the Year Gordon Smith from Copacabana; Young Lifesaver of the Year Kai Darwin from Umina Beach; Volunteer of the Year Harold Marshall from Umina Beach and Young Volunteer of the Year Cooper Smerdon from The Entrance. I want to recognise the winners of the Central Coast Junior Lifesaver of the Year awards: Ebony Rayner of Umina Beach Surf Club and Jayden Redfern of Terrigal Beach—my club. To participate in this program, nominees undertook an exam paper, a signals test and delivered a scenario prepared by the assessors. They then sat before an interview panel where they were asked a series of questions. This rigorous process enabled the branch to determine the worthy recipients of this year's Junior Lifesaver of the Year awards.

I want to thank all lifesavers across New South Wales for their dedication and commitment to the community in coastal areas following a successful 2018-19 season. Lifesavers are volunteers. Whether they are volunteering on the beach during the patrol season, or delivering water safety education or rescue training, or even participating in surf club events to keep their fitness up and their lifesaving skills sharp, they play an important role in the community.

Debate adjourned.

CONTENTIOUS LEGISLATION

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I move:

That private members' business item No. 102 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (22:43): I move:

1. That this House supports Premier Berejiklian's publicly stated goal of making "this Parliament the most modern and progressive place of debate in this country" with "less focus on process and more focus on outcomes".
2. That, in response to the Premier's request for parliamentary modernisation proposals by 30 June 2019, this House requires that:

- (a) prior to its introduction in the Legislative Council, all highly contentious government legislation be subject to a comprehensive and consultative Green and White Paper process; and
 - (b) highly contentious legislation be defined as a bill likely to substantially alter economic, employment, social, legal or environmental conditions in New South Wales and to provoke widespread public interest in the proposed changes.
3. That this House notes that private members do not have the resources to ensure that their bills are preceded by a Green and White paper process.
 4. That a modified research and deliberative process should be available for highly contentious private members' bills to ensure that the intent and possible ramifications of the draft legislation are fully explored.
 5. That, when a member who has carriage of a highly contentious private members' bill moves to refer the bill to a committee for inquiry and report, the member may also move that:
 - (a) the New South Wales Parliamentary Library prepare an Issues Paper on the bill;
 - (b) the newDemocracy Foundation be commissioned to facilitate community input into the bill, such as a citizens panel or jury, to complement the traditional forms of evidence gathering by committees, such as seeking submissions and taking oral evidence, and
 - (c) Legislative Council committees will respect the foundation's remit as an independent and non-partisan research organisation.
 6. That the House notes that the newDemocracy Foundation has offered to provide this service during 2019 and 2020 for no charge to the Parliament.

I express my appreciation for the House's consideration of the matter, which adds to the ongoing improvements to procedure and the quality of decision-making in the New South Wales Parliament. There is general recognition that this is the sort of concept—a return to green and white papers—that helps save the Government from itself.

Look at each of the contentious political matters that have not worked out so well in New South Wales in recent times—the greyhound ban, the council amalgamations, the lockout laws. I could go on and on for the finance Minister's edification if he would like me to. He seems to be hungry for a full list. There is evidence of matters that have not worked out so well when they are rushed through. I am working with the very excellent new Minister responsible for greyhounds to try to get the industry back on a viable status. I still get representations about uncoupling councils that are unhappy with amalgamations and we are still trying to unscramble the egg out of the lockout laws. There is no evidence that rushing legislation through with a command of numbers leads to good public policy and good public outcomes. I would like a return to the worthwhile green and white paper processes, as advocated in the resolution. There has been a lot of work in this area.

I pay tribute to Percy Allan, who is well known to the Chamber as a great advocate of better public policy and as a former head of NSW Treasury. He has moved around various parties of the Chamber to talk about taking a more deliberative and considered process and has advocated the 10 criteria for public policy business case put forward by Professor Ken Wiltshire. I will not go through all of the 10 steps but they stand in contrast to each of the areas where the Government has found trouble with its legislative agenda in recent years. I thank Percy Allan and the Chamber for its consideration. I know that more experienced and wiser heads than mine on the procedure front—Mr David Shoebridge and the Leader of the Opposition—will be moving amendments which I am supportive of. We need to make the green and white paper process work. There is also recognition around the Chamber that a truncated version of this process for private members—the issues paper, the newDemocracy Foundation, a citizens' jury and committee consideration—would be available on an optional or voluntary basis. I am very keen on that. We have already got committee consideration up and running with the excellent committee chaired by the Hon. Taylor Martin in relation to lifting the ban on nuclear power and uranium mining.

The Hon. Emma Hurst is keen to use that capacity for her agenda. I pay special thanks to her and the Animal Justice Party for being a consistent supporter of this motion as it has moved around the Chamber receiving amendments and helpful suggestions for amendments. The Animal Justice Party and One Nation make for somewhat of an unholy alliance in today's politics but I can assure the Animal Justice members that I am hugging my beautiful dog Leila very tightly and giving her love and care in appreciation for the way in which they have supported this resolution. You may think I am a hard bugger but deep down I love my dog. There is a lot of potential out of this resolution, particularly the deliberative democracy processes. At the moment our democracy is very shallow and public disengagement from the parliamentary processes is at a record high. Our elections involve a slogan campaign versus a scare campaign. We do not have a deepening of the democratic dialogue and information flow.

The work of the newDemocracy Foundation, headed by Iain Walker and Luca Belgiorno-Nettis, is to deepen the dialogue so that people have detailed information about contentious issues like nuclear power or animal welfare and we find out how they respond beyond the shallowness of slogans and scare campaigns. I think that is something worth trying in our politics. The disengagement cannot get any worse and public distrust cannot get

any sharper, so why not try something different? There is a proposal to be done on a trial basis to get the standing orders right but I think that by private members using this truncated process it demonstrates to other members how it can work. I thank the House for its consideration at this late hour and I welcome the amendments and further suggestions that have been raised during the debate.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (22:48): On behalf of the Labor Opposition let me briefly indicate that we welcome the proposals put by the Hon. Mark Latham as a serious contribution to debate in this place about how public policy should be made. The Opposition has met with Mr Percy Allan and, in principle, we see much to recommend the suggestions that he makes. However, we were going to propose a couple of tweaks, one to provide an escape clause for government because there may be occasions when a green and white paper process would not be appropriate, and also to provide that this be trialled. I indicate that we will be supporting Mr David Shoebridge's proposal—which he will outline shortly—referring the matter to the Procedure Committee for consideration before potentially being trialled. That is not to indicate that we wish to in any way block or delay anything but to make sure that if we are to enterprise upon a new mechanism that all the procedural aspects are there to make it as successful as possible.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (22:50): On behalf of The Greens I speak in debate on this proposal put forward by the Hon. Mark Latham. One thing that has been good about this new Parliament is the willingness to take a step back and look at how we can improve procedures. To date we have made a series of significant improvements to procedures. One improvement is the short form format motions. We are willing to engage with that. We see there is potential merit in what is presented in this motion. We have also spoken with Percy Allan and we think there is real merit in a much more considered green paper and white paper process.

Our concerns about the motion as presented are that there are no standing and sessional orders in place to make it work. There has been no consideration of what to do if the Government does not comply and how do we have a collaborative approach between the House and the Executive to make this work. The proposal about private members' motions can be trialled for a period of time. That is well within the domain of this House. We do not need to talk with the Executive about how we deal with private members' motions. A trial of that for this year and into 2020, hopefully with the help of the new Democracy Foundation and some of that deliberative process, may be fruitful. I move:

That the motion be amended by:

1. Omitting paragraphs 1 to 4 and inserting instead:
 1. That the Procedure Committee inquire into and report on the parliamentary modernisation proposals that:
 - (a) prior to its introduction in the Legislative Council, all highly contentious government legislation—defined as a bill likely to substantially alter economic, employment, social, legal or environmental conditions in New South Wales and to provoke widespread public interest in the proposed changes—be subject to a comprehensive and consultative green and white paper process; and
 - (b) a modified research and deliberative process be available for highly contentious private members' bills to ensure that the intent and possible ramifications of the draft legislation are fully explored.
2. Inserting after paragraph 5:
 6. That the operation of paragraph 5 of this resolution lapse on the last sitting day of 2020 and then stand referred to the Procedure Committee for inquiry and report.

The issues that are canvassed in paragraphs 1 to 4 will go immediately to the Procedure Committee. That inquiry can commence and in consultation with all parties we can look at what suite of measures is needed to make that work. The proposal in paragraph 5 will commence but it will have a sunset period and conclude at the end of 2020. When that concludes it too will automatically be referred to the Procedure Committee for inquiry and report. I hope those amendments take the procedure forward. We do not want reforms that have good intentions but do not have substance behind them. Hopefully this will get the substance.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (22:53): The green and white paper process dates back to 1922 and is a legacy of our Westminster system of government. It originated in the Westminster Parliament. I do not know whether it is urban myth or not but I am advised that the originator of the green and white paper process was Sir Winston Churchill. Green papers are typically open-ended documents outlining an issue, the facts surrounding the issue and alternative solutions to fixing the issue.

White papers typically take into account public responses to the green paper, the Government's preferred position and reasons for taking this position. A white paper is generally approved by Cabinet, tabled in Parliament and made available to the general public for consideration and input. The process is quite commonly used by the Commonwealth Government for contentious areas of policy making. In my experience here in this Parliament and

while I was a staff member for members of this Parliament it has not been common for us to see green and white papers, but it has been quite common for us to see discussion papers and exposure drafts, which are effectively white papers.

It is not unknown, but it has not been as common as I believe it should be, for us to have discussion papers and then exposure drafts. By the same token, whether it be a discussion paper and exposure draft, a green paper and a white paper or a reference to a committee, as frequently has been the tradition in this Parliament, we know the Legislative Council standing committees have played an outstanding role in and have been responsible for several good pieces of legislation. Nevertheless, there has been a tradition in this Parliament for that to happen. I seek leave to make a few more remarks.

Leave granted.

Has it been the tradition in this Parliament to undertake this process for every piece of highly contentious legislation? Obviously, no, it has not been. Is the Hon. Mark Latham right in saying that the Government might not have got itself into trouble on a few pieces of legislation if it had gone down this track? Almost certainly yes. However, I make this point: If the Government is silly enough to get into that sort of situation, as in my experience governments have been frequently in the 20 years that I have been here, then it is at its own peril. The position of the Government is that we do not believe the House, by way of either the passage of this motion or even by being prescriptive as may come out of the Procedure Committee inquiry, should be dictated to by sessional order as to which path it goes down—whether it be a green paper-white papers process, a discussion paper-exposure draft process or, as we did, for example, on the law of provocation, a standing committee process. All of these options are available and I believe that, on government legislation, it should be up to the Government of the day to make the choice. If it makes the wrong choice, that is at its own peril.

Mr David Shoebridge: Sometimes it is none of those processes.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am well aware of that, and I apologise for acknowledging the interjection.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Niall Blair): I have not set a time limit for your extension of time.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am aware of that and I am winding up, but I have lost my train of thought. What is clear is that the Government has been very collaborative and constructive in dealing with all of the changes that have been suggested thus far. I think I demonstrated yesterday, in the answer I gave when I was asked a question by the Hon. Greg Donnelly about modern slavery, that we plan to be very collaborative when it comes to highly contentious legislation. I think Mr David Shoebridge will be pleasantly surprised. Nevertheless, the Government sees no harm in the matter proceeding to the Procedure Committee. The Government intended to make an amendment to remove parts of the motion relating to Government legislation for the reasons I have outlined. Instead, the Government will not oppose referral to the Procedure Committee. That is appropriate.

In relation to what is suggested in the motion about private member's legislation, I make the point that the Parliamentary Library has often produced a bill digest on contentious legislation. It is a good process and I hope it continues. With those few remarks indicating the Government's position, I thank the House for its tolerance.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (23:00): I support the motion moved by the Hon. Mark Latham and thank him for his contribution to the debate, not just on the motion but in discussions that have occurred in this Chamber up to this point. I will support the amendments. Members are well served to create the best legislation possible in this Parliament. I think we are able to do that better when that legislation reflects the wishes of the community. There is a question mark about whether we have always done that as a Parliament.

The Government made two points that interest me. The making of bad legislative decisions and forcing them through the Parliament is not just at the Government's peril. That has real consequences for the environment and on the people of the State, particularly as it is not actually reflective of the majority view of the community. We can point to a few examples where that may well be the case. It is not up to the government of the day to make the choice to go down that path unless this Government believes that democracy starts and stops at the ballot box. I believe we would be better served by adopting a more deliberative approach to democracy. In the last term of Parliament, the brumbies bill would have been a really good example of how it would certainly be in the Government's interest to consult more broadly in the community and slow down the process.

I recognise that we have discussion papers and exposure drafts. I have seen that really clearly in discussions we have had on the Marine Estate Management Act and considerations around the application of the State's new marine parks. Unfortunately the Government has not liked the feedback it received. We will always have arguments when the community provides feedback about how legislation is applied. However, I think it is

in our interest to design the best system to engage the community in the development of legislation, particularly around contentious issues. I look forward to the opportunity to take advantage of the ideas that have been put forward in paragraph 5 of the motion as it relates to private members bills.

I would like to see the Wellbeing Indicators Bill 2019, of which I have given notice, have significant positive consequences on economic and social circumstances of the State. If we went through a process of exposing the public to discussion, engaged an organisation such as the newDemocracy Foundation, which has a very good set of models and has high credibility in these matters, I would love to see feedback about how wellbeing indicators could make a positive difference to the State. Hopefully that would be useful in building bipartisan support for how we design economic realities of the State. I support the motion moved by the Hon. Mark Latham.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (23:03): I state for the record that the Christian Democratic Party supports the motion moved by the Hon. Mark Latham, for which I thank him. We probably need more formality in the way we operate in this House to ensure we carefully consider issues and involve the public in feedback, whether that is by individuals or organisations. I fully support anything that can improve the quality of legislation of this place.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (23:03): In reply: I thank members who contributed to debate on the motion. I also thank members who moved amendments, which I find acceptable in the spirit of cooperation. As the process evolves, I think it will add to the quality of debate and decision-making in the Chamber. We have been able to make a lot of advancement with the new standing orders. There is more openness about the Chamber. There is a lot of interest in how debates are evolving, resolutions are made and votes taken.

In particular, I thank the leaders of the Liberal Party and the Labor Party, The Greens, the Christian Democratic Party and Mr Justin Field for their support. I was fascinated to hear that Winston Churchill was the originator of the green paper and white paper process. Obviously he needed to use that more in the case of the Dardanelles, the gold standard, Indian independence and the abdication. But, thankfully, by the end of the 1930s he had got it right, and we should all take inspiration from the great man in that respect. If I could make a personal point, having returned to parliamentary service after a 14-year gap, the question I am asked most frequently in the elevator by members of the other place is whether I am bored yet. The answer is I once served in a Chamber that had a predetermined result on every matter and one side won all the time, which was perhaps a bit boring.

The good thing about the Legislative Council is you need to work hard to get your proposition up. You need to do your homework and your research. I think the concept of adding deliberative democracy—green paper, public consultation, white paper and full resolution of all the issues—adds to the potential and reality of this Chamber, where the various interests need to work hard to get their proposition up and running. I think that is a very healthy trend for our democracy. So I am not bored; I am invigorated by the prospect of needing to do my homework and research. I have not quite got there on this proposition; I am halfway there. I think with the amendment, the improved standing orders and the trial period, this can be a very useful development for our Parliament. I look forward to that evolution over the next couple of years, starting with the nuclear proposition and others that come from private members. I think we are onto something that may be very useful indeed. I thank the Chamber.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Niall Blair): The Hon. Mark Latham has moved a motion, to which Mr David Shoebridge has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment of Mr David Shoebridge be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Niall Blair): The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Documents

TRANSPORT ASSET HOLDING ENTITY

RAILCORP

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I move:

That private members' business item No. 96 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (23:07): I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 96 outside the order of precedence by omitting "10 days" and inserting instead "21 days".

Leave granted.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Accordingly, I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 21 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents created since 1 July 2016 in the possession, custody or control of the Minister for Transport and Roads, the Premier, the Treasurer, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Treasury, Department of Transport or RailCorp:

- (a) all documents relating to the classification of Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE] as a commercial public non-financial corporation;
- (b) all documents relating to any commercial hurdle rates or rates of return for TAHE regarding its classification as a commercial public non-financial corporation;
- (c) all documents relating to the classification of TAHE as a general government entity pursuant to the general financial statistics classification;
- (d) all documents relating to the classification of RailCorp as a commercial public non-financial corporation;
- (e) all documents relating to any commercial hurdle rates or rates of return for RailCorp regarding its classification as a commercial public non-financial corporation;
- (f) all documents relating to the classification of RailCorp as a general government entity pursuant to the general financial statistics classification; and
- (g) any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

I will not labour the point. The Transport Asset Holding Entity, as I indicated in my contribution to the second reading debate earlier today, is an accounting mechanism by which the Government has improved the reported outlook in the budget to the tune of some \$7 billion. Of course, that is available to it as long as all the legal and accounting standards applicable have been adhered to. There is reason to believe that is not the case and so the Opposition seeks the documents in paragraphs (a) to (g) as outlined. This matter goes to the integrity of budget reporting and the finances of the State. It is a significant matter and I urge all honourable members to support this call for papers.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (23:08): The Government opposes the motion. However, in relation to the call for papers, the concession made by the Opposition to extend from 10 to 21 days is welcome. As indicated in a number of the standing order applications made today—it now seems so long ago—one of the chief difficulties is the amount of resources allocated to complying with the order. I am under no illusion as to why it is happening. I can understand that members of the Opposition and the crossbench wish to have whatever resources they need made available to them to prosecute budget estimates. However, to avoid the stench of abuse there should be a process in place.

Other members have said that this is the process. However, there should be some condition and precedent before we impose what in many respects is a very onerous obligation for governments to comply with. First, steps should be taken to seek the papers by whatever other means are available; secondly, there should be legitimate probative value in respect of the material sought—and I accept that in this case there is legitimate probative value in relation to the material—and, thirdly, departments and agencies must have reasonable time to comply with the order being made. Although the Government opposes this order, I understand why it has been made and I appreciate the attempt by the Leader of the Opposition to amend the period for the production of the documents.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

LANDCOM

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I move:

That private members' business item No. 106 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (23:12): I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 35 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents in the possession, custody or control of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Department of Planning and Environment, the Premier, Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Treasurer, the Treasury, the Minister for Finance and Small

Business, Department of Finance, Services and Innovation UrbanGrowth NSW Development Corporation, Greater Sydney Commission, Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation, or Landcom:

- (a) all documents created since 1 January 2017 relating to the organisational restructures of Landcom in 2017, 2018 and 2019;
- (b) all documents created since 1 July 2017 relating to Landcom's organisational culture, staff morale, performance feedback, and bullying;
- (c) the independent report into allegations of bullying made against the current Landcom Chair Suzanne Jones and former Landcom Executive Amanda Chadwick;
- (d) all documents created since 1 July 2017 relating to any governance concerns raised by Landcom staff;
- (e) all documents created since 1 July 2017 relating to Landcom's capacity to meet required State Infrastructure Contribution payments and required dividend payments to the Treasury and its plans for achieving them;
- (f) details of any consultancy commissioned since 1 July 2017 by all Landcom projects and corporate divisions and any amounts paid to each consultancy;
- (g) all documents created since 1 July 2017 relating to Landcom staff resignations, staff redundancies, including financial amounts paid, terms of any redundancy payments, and any deed of release or other binding separation document;
- (h) all correspondence and communications, including to and from mobile phone devices using SMS or any messaging application, since 1 July 2017 between the Premier and Mr John Brogden relating to Landcom; and
- (i) any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

Landcom is the Government-owned developer. It has a long and proud history of doing good work, particularly in the affordable housing space. However, a number of restructures conducted in relation to that body in 2017, 2018 and 2019 have led to a significant haemorrhaging of staff and allegations of bullying at the organisation. In recent times the part-time chairman has been employed as the full-time CEO, despite the previous work history of that person making them seem not suitably qualified for this important role. The Opposition also has serious questions about the financial management of the organisation.

The organisation has had significant downsizing of staff, losing some 35 per cent of its employees, on top of the haemorrhaging in the past few years. We think the circumstances are ripe for a close examination. We have also proposed an inquiry into Landcom and the restructures. However, before we test the strength of the House on that issue we seek documents relating to the three restructures, its organisational culture, staff morale, performance feedback, allegations of bullying and other matters covered in the fairly comprehensive call for papers. I will rest there. It goes to the integrity, the financing and the competence with which this significant State Government body is being managed. It is particularly important, given the significant cuts in public sector employment proposed by the recent budget. Although this is looking back a little way the Opposition thinks it is timely to have a close look at the matters.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (23:14): I will talk about the process. The Leader of the Opposition has provided a period of 35 days for the production of documents relating to the Standing Order 52 application. My concern is that it seeks documents relating to personal correspondence between people and allegations about them. It will require contact between the agency and the people involved to seek their attitude about the production of documents that relate to them. It is not just a matter of going to the filing cabinet, getting out the documents and bringing them to the House; there is a much more involved process in this standing order application. I seek some flexibility from the Leader of the Opposition in understanding that there may well be delays in obtaining consent from people and potentially redacting documents, depending upon objections they may have. The Government has an overriding obligation to protect people's privacy if that is what they want.

I seek acknowledgement from the Leader of the Opposition that if there are delays resulting from contacting people and obtaining their consent for the production of documents there is an opportunity to extend the time. I repeat what I have said to every other Standing Order 52 application. I understand the process but I have serious concerns about the abuse of the process where every other avenue has not been exhausted to obtain the documents. Evidence of the process, the probative value of the material and a reasonable period for the agency to comply should be demonstrated to the House. Those should be conditions precedent to moving down this path so that departments are not inundated with applications and they do not have to spend hours and hours complying with the obligation. I do not say that this obligation will take hours and hours but certainly it will take a lot of effort to ensure that people's privacy is protected. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (23:17): In reply: I address the point raised by the Minister. I indicate that if there are practical difficulties in obtaining the information and the Government comes back to the Opposition

with a reasonable explanation and request for further time, obviously that would not be unreasonably withheld. The issues of privacy relate only to paragraph (g). The Minister would not be familiar with the usual practice but when personal information is produced pursuant to an order of the House the government agency claims privilege on the basis of privacy. There is no privilege on that basis—

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Paragraphs (b) and (c).

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Conceivably it can be paragraph (b) but not paragraph (c). The usual process is to claim privilege on the basis of privacy but it is not a basis for privilege. The House then does not publish the material without redacting private details. The members are not after private details. Although they may need to see the complete and unredacted documentation in order to make the best assessment of the information, they would not use information improperly. I can give the Minister that assurance.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Motions

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: I move:

That private members' business item No. 113 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (23:20): I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 113 outside the order of precedence by omitting the word "Nationwide" in paragraph 2 (a) and inserting instead "Statewide".

Leave granted.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Accordingly, I move:

1. That this House notes that:
 - (a) research shows that the quality of care someone receives from the emergency department following a suicide attempt can influence their risk of attempting or dying by suicide in the future;
 - (b) in 2015, a comprehensive review by the NHMRC of care for those who had attempted suicide found very low levels of satisfaction with emergency department care and that low levels of satisfaction was correlated with being half as likely to disclose future suicidality;
 - (c) in 2018, the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine found that 30 percent of mental health patients wait for more than eight hours for an inpatient bed; and
 - (d) while the Government's plan to implement the recommendations of the review of seclusion, restraint and observation of consumers with a mental illness in NSW Health facilities included a deadline to plan for minor infrastructure upgrades and to review safe assessment rooms, there is no plan or deadline to upgrade any significant issues found.
2. That this House calls on the Government to improve emergency department and frontline responses to mental health emergencies in New South Wales by:
 - (a) finalising the review of the design and use of safe assessment rooms in mental health units, as per the recommendations of the review of seclusion, restraint and observation of consumers with a mental illness in NSW Health facilities, and developing a strategy to action any necessary infrastructure upgrades by 2021, funded by the Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Fund; and
 - (b) reviewing the reasons for delays for mental health patients to be admitted from emergency departments to inpatient beds, and the effectiveness of existing frontline responses to mental health incidents in the community.

This motion is about ensuring that emergency departments in hospitals are suitable for people presenting with mental health issues, particularly suicidal ideations. Suicide affects many people. It has affected my family as well and it has affected me personally. When I was 12 my brother was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and I had many years dealing with his mental illness in the 1980s in a family who were extremely affected by his diagnosis. Unfortunately in 1995 my brother committed suicide, which is why I am very passionate about ensuring that we have the right type of investment to ensure that we reduce suicide, particularly amongst young people across New South Wales.

Suicide has a devastating impact on families. I saw the impact myself, particularly on my mother. Right now in Australia statistics unfortunately show that suicide is increasing. Particularly and alarmingly it is the most

common cause of death for people aged between five and 17 years. In fact, 11 per cent of 12- to 17-year-olds in Australia have attempted self-harm at some point in their lives. It is an absolutely heartbreaking statistic. This motion is particularly about emergency departments because what people encounter when they go to emergency departments really matters. Research has found that 60 per cent of all people who present with mental health presentations are triaged as urgent or potentially life-threatening.

A review was conducted into seclusion, restraint and observation of consumers with a mental illness following the terrible, tragic death of Miriam Merten in 2014 after she was admitted to Lismore Base Hospital. She essentially died of a brain injury after falling more than 20 times whilst in a mental health care unit for hours without seeing anybody at that hospital. The Government commissioned a review and recommendation 17 of that review states that "there should be an immediate review of the design and use of safe assessment rooms", which is what Ms Merten was in, "using a co-design methodology". The review team visited 20 emergency departments and were very alarmed by what they found. They had significant concerns about the design and use of these rooms. Typically the review team was confronted by small, noisy, cold rooms with no natural light, no activities to distract, no chair to sit on, no-one to talk to, potentially only a foam mattress and blanket on the floor. So the recommendation was for an immediate review.

I turn now to look at what the Government has done. In March 2018 the Government made suggestions as to what action it was taking in relation to that recommendation. In March 2018 the Government involved consumers in reviewing the design and use of safe assessment rooms in emergency departments. Stakeholders have told me that nothing has happened. Of the \$700 million that has been allocated to the Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program, only \$14.68 million was spent last financial year and only \$22.4 million was allocated this year. This is a mental health crisis. This motion is about fast-tracking this investment and looking at the reasons why the Government has not fast-tracked this and also reviewing the reasons for delays for patients who should be admitted to inpatient beds in emergency departments.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (23:25): Mental health is a key priority for this Government. I acknowledge the need to reduce the rates of suicide in New South Wales and I am committed to tackling this immense social issue. The 2019-20 health budget includes \$19.7 million to support key initiatives to drive suicides towards zero in New South Wales, the first stage of a three-year \$87 million commitment. This is the largest commitment towards reducing suicide made by the New South Wales Government. People presenting to New South Wales health services who may be at risk of suicide must be kept as safe as possible and assessed and treated effectively.

Suicide prevention is considered to be core business for mental health services. A number of services and supports are in place including the 24-hour Mental Health Line which provides access to mental health services through triage, referral and advice; comprehensive assessment of people presenting to mental health services for risk of suicide followed by careful monitoring, treatment and support if they are at risk; continuity of care when a person with a mental health care need is transitioning from one healthcare setting to another or returning to the community; additional training for all New South Wales mental health clinicians in suicide assessment and management; and awareness of suicide prevention training within alcohol and drug services. The New South Wales Government takes a whole-of-government, system-wide approach to suicide prevention because we acknowledge that suicide is a complex issue with neither a single cause nor a simple solution. It requires governments at all levels, community-managed organisations, the private sector and communities to work together to develop suicide prevention services and activities designed to support local need.

In October 2018, the New South Wales Government released the Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention in NSW 2018-23. To support the Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention 2018-23 and New South Wales' journey towards zero suicides in 2019-20, eight new initiatives will begin to be rolled out with full implementation by 2020-21. As I mentioned, the budget commitment that was announced is \$87.085 million over three years, \$10.2 million for zero suicides in care to strengthen practices within the mental health system to eliminate suicide attempts by people in care— *[Time expired.]*

The Hon. WALT SECORD (23:28): I commend and support Ms Cate Faehrmann's motion on mental health and emergency departments in New South Wales. I also support the sentiments of the motion. I think everyone in this Chamber, or in every family, has been touched by suicide or mental illness. I acknowledge that recent studies have shown that one-third of people who report to an emergency department in Australia find that they spend more than eight hours in an emergency department. In New South Wales our emergency departments are under enormous pressure.

The most recent quarterly report from the Bureau of Health Information showed that more than 750,000 people presented to emergency departments in New South Wales. A significant number of those people presented with mental health problems and mental illness episodes. As the shadow Minister for Mental Health, I can say that the number of representations of concerns in the community has increased significantly in the past

year. Yesterday a case was brought to my attention where a person had to travel eight hours from Lightning Ridge to Orange to get mental health treatment and mental health support. That is a typical story in rural and regional areas.

Several years ago—keeping in mind the confidence of patients—my office assisted a person who needed to get into treatment. We could not find a place for them. They lived on the mid North Coast and we secured a place for them in the Central West. That put incredible pressure on their family because they had to visit them. Again, we have a health and hospital system under enormous pressure. The State Government is not supporting mental health services appropriately. Once again, I thank Ms Cate Faehrmann and commend her for bringing the matter to the attention of the House.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (23:30): In reply: I thank the Hon. Walt Secord and the Minister for their contributions. The Minister's contribution did not address why the Government does not support finalising the review of the design and use of safe assessment rooms in mental health facilities. Miriam Merten died in 2014. The recommendation was made in 2017. The review panel was very alarmed at what it saw. It stated that the use of safe assessment rooms was a significant factor in self-harm and suicidal ideations after inpatients left the hospital. There is nothing to suggest that this issue is going to be fast tracked. In fact, a question asked in the House today about the \$700 million referred to a 10-year period.

Every year in Australia 3,000 people take their own lives. This is a crisis. I urge the House to support this motion. It is not a big ask. It asks the Government to finalise the review of the design and use of safe assessment rooms in mental health units and to develop a strategy to use the State's mental health infrastructure fund for necessary upgrades by 2021. Given the state of mental health in New South Wales, 10 years is too long to wait.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PRESS FREEDOM

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I move:

That private members' business item No. 89 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (23:32): I move:

1. That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Monday 3 June 2019 News Corporation journalist Annika Smethurst's home was raided by the Australian Federal Police;
 - (b) Ms Smethurst was investigating a plan to allow the Australian Government increased surveillance powers over ordinary Australians;
 - (c) on Wednesday 5 June 2019 the Australian Broadcasting Corporation [ABC] was raided by the Australian Federal Police in relation to a story that aired in 2017;
 - (d) open and unfettered journalism is essential to keep governments to account and our democracy transparent;
 - (e) our democracy suffers when journalists are raided for reporting on the action of government; and
 - (f) the recent raids undermine the principles of open and transparent journalism and represent a threat to the democratic freedoms of all Australians.
2. That this House calls on the New South Wales Government to stand with journalists, the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance and the Parliamentary press gallery to condemn the raids of the ABC and Ms Annika Smethurst.
3. That this House calls on the Australian Government to reveal who is responsible for ordering, or approving, these coordinated raids. The statement "The recent police raids on the home of Ms Annika Smethurst of News Corporation and the ABC are an outrageous move that should concern all Australians who value their freedom in an open society" is not a politically motivated charge from me, although I agree with the sentiments. It is an almost exact quote from David Crowe, a respected Australian journalist and the President of the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery. Crowe went on to say, "No Australian should want live in a society where agencies can seek an increase in their powers, insist on secrecy and then claim a breach of national security when the press report on their plans." He is right. This is not a country I want to live in. Such a place is not the modern democratic Australia I cherish and am proud to represent. A country where journalists are intimidated for reporting unfavourably on the government and where whistleblowers have no

protection for bringing serious wrongdoing to the attention of the broader community is a dark, undemocratic place, completely inconsistent with the shared values of western liberal democracies of government accountable to the people, with equal protection under the law, civil liberties and political freedom.

Recently we have had a range of debates in the Legislative Council about freedom—we have been told about the importance of freedom of expression, freedom of religion and freedom of speech. Those are sentiments with which I firmly agree. Indeed, the Minister for Finance and Small Business set the bar high in his first speech when he described himself as a "fierce advocate of freedom" and went on to say, "Free speech in this country is under attack. Tragically, there are few remaining in public life who will stand up for it." This is an opportunity for this House to do just that, because being an advocate for freedom and free speech requires you to staunchly defend the freedom of the press from repressive interference from the apparatus of the State.

That is exactly what has happened in this circumstance. The laws under which the raids were authorised were designed to combat terrorism and serious cybercrime such as online paedophile networks and major international hacking operations. The use of those laws to prosecute whistleblowers and target Australian journalists is a major departure from their intended and proper use and raises questions about whether the laws are in fact appropriate in a modern liberal democratic nation like Australia. The raids referred to in the motion relate to stories published at least a year ago—two years ago in relation to the ABC broadcasts. They refer in the instance of Ms Smethurst to proposals for new powers for the Australian Signals Directorate to monitor Australian citizens and in the instance of the ABC to alleged incidents of Australian troops killing unarmed men and children in Afghanistan. Broadcaster Ben Fordham has also revealed that he has been contacted by government agencies in relation to his reporting of asylum seeker vessel arrivals.

The publication of these stories is clearly in the public interest. There can be no doubt of their importance and concern to the Australian public. They do not represent a release of any major national security secrets. Their publication does not put Australia's national security or the safety of any Australian nationals at risk. The only seemingly consistent theme in the stories is that they are embarrassing for the Government, a fact which makes the Australian Federal Police's aggressive pursuit of them particularly concerning. We cannot allow the practice of police raiding Australian journalists to become normalised. We are required to call it out and challenge its place in Australian society when it occurs. This motion is an attempt to do just that—for this Chamber of this Parliament to put on record its concern about the practice of intimidating and harassing journalists and, indeed, our staunch and unwavering commitment to freedom.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (23:37): As Deputy Leader of the Opposition and shadow Minister for the Arts, I speak on the motion moved by my colleague the Hon. Rose Jackson on the Australian Federal Police [AFP] raids on journalists' homes and offices on 3 June. The ABC office raids followed a series of 2017 stories known as *The Afghan Files*, which aired serious allegations against Australian forces. Raids on the home of a News Corporation journalist followed a story on plans by security agencies to monitor Australian citizens. Both stories are demonstrably in the public interest in any reasonable democratic context.

I say this as a member of Parliament, as a former journalist at a daily newspaper in Canada and at a weekly newspaper in Australia and as a longstanding member of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance and its forerunner, the Australian Journalists Association. This is a worrying development in Australian public and political life because it is a deliberate erosion of freedom of the press. The two high profile raids on back-to-back days were clear in their intent. They were "clearly designed to intimidate". Those are not my words; they are the words of the ABC Chair, hand-picked by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Ita Buttrose. Even people with conservative leanings know these actions are about deterring public interest journalism. They are about intimidating journalists and whistleblowers who dare to expose government secrets and wrongdoings. They are designed to send a direct and clear message to all journalists and their contacts that if they dare speak out, question or expose questionable activities of the government of the day then they will be harassed, targeted, arrested or imprisoned.

But let us be clear: While at this time no charges have been laid against the journalists in question, the Acts that the AFP operated under make prison terms a real possibility. Imagine if this happened in another country. Imagine we read of some other nation where a national broadcaster raised serious and credible allegations of misconduct, only to be raided by federal police armed with the threat of prison terms. We would roll our eyes to heaven and say, "Well, that would never happen in Australia"—but it has. The conservative Federal Government has chipped away at our rights and freedoms and we have tacitly allowed it under the promise that the laws would be used only for national security. Those laws were meant to be used to fight terrorism—not journalism at home. I support the motion.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (23:39): On behalf of The Greens I speak in support of this timely motion. It is a pity that this debate is not happening in the Federal Parliament, where we fundamentally need to change the

laws to ensure that we protect whistleblowers. It is clear that the two Australian Federal Police [AFP] raids were an effort to intimidate and cause fear in journalists and others seeking to hold the Government to account. In fact, though, the journalists were not the real targets of those raids. The real targets were whistleblowers because if whistleblowers cannot rely upon the protection of journalists with integrity, then they will stop coming forward.

Up until now whistleblowers have gone to journalists who they believe have integrity and who have promised to protect the confidentiality of their sources. If such a journalist was pressed or asked questions in court, they relied upon journalists' privilege and refused to answer. However, the AFP now has the ability to enter a journalist's workplace and house and then go further and access by warrant their emails, hard drives, social media accounts and records. That is the kind of activity and the kind of state oppression that means whistleblowers can no longer rely upon the promises and the good word of journalists. It will put fear into whistleblowers and dry up whistleblowing activity across the country. That was the clear intent of the raids. I very much support the motion. This debate needs to happen in the Federal Parliament, where we need laws to protect whistleblowers and journalists from this kind of gross overreach by the AFP.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (23:42): I take note of paragraph 3 of the motion, which contains a comment about the ordering of the Australian Federal Police investigation and raids. I think the Australian Federal Police would say that their investigations are carried out completely independently of Executive Government and I am sure that my colleagues in Canberra would want me to place that on record. Nevertheless, I direct my brief remarks to paragraph 2, which contains a call from the mover of the motion for the New South Wales Government to stand with those who are taking a position on the raids. The Government's response is this: Freedom of the press is vital to our democracy. The New South Wales Government is absolutely committed to the freedom of the press.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (23:43): I will not delay the House, but I will put this matter in context. We have talked about the closures of the WIN newsrooms. We know that news is under pressure around the world, including here in New South Wales. That makes these developments doubly concerning. I support the motion and I am glad that my colleague the Hon. Rose Jackson has moved it. I share the concerns of news chiefs from the BBC and CNN, of Reporters Without Borders and of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

POLITICAL BELIEFS

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I move:

That private members' business item No. 105 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (23:44): I move:

1. That this House notes that:
 - (a) all companies operating in New South Wales should respect our democratic processes, ensuring that all employees, no matter their political beliefs, can run for elected office without suffering employment penalties; and
 - (b) the fundamental right of all workers to be able to run for elected office in their private time, without workplace consequences.
2. That this House condemns the overseas-owned Goldwind company for sacking the Pauline Hanson's One Nation candidate in Miranda and Cook, Gaye Cameron, because of her political opinion and the energy policies she advocated at the recent New South Wales and Federal elections.

It is true that the deep state threatens our democratic freedoms but so too the excessive use of corporate power. It is a major concern in the context of people being thrown out of sporting codes for their religious beliefs and, in the case of Gaye Cameron, sacked by an overseas-owned company for her political beliefs. This is what happened to Gaye Cameron, the One Nation candidate in the seat of Cook. The evening before the Federal election she received a letter from the general manager of corporate services at Goldwind Australia, a wind power company owned by Chinese interests. The letter raised a dispute, admittedly about three to five days of unpaid leave being taken; however, that seemed to be the minor matter compared to the sacking of Gaye Cameron for her political beliefs. The letter is very clear and reads, "You are standing in the seat of Cook as the candidate for Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party. Your campaign material and the policy platform of One Nation contain

matters which go to the heart of Goldwind's business—namely, one, the rejection of support for taxpayer subsidies for renewable sources of energy."

Our democracy should not work that way. You should be able to keep your job even if you are not out there arguing for more taxpayers' money for the company. If you are arguing for the saving of taxpayers' money you should be able to go back to your job and maintain your employment. It is important to note that Gaye Cameron was not working in corporate affairs, nor was she going to the source of the energy which was the wind power. She was a risk management officer, working in health and safety to ensure that workers were not injured and that there were no fatalities on this dangerous worksite. She was doing her job for the protection of other workers. Her role was not at all political, but in running as a candidate for Cook she received this "show cause" letter and was ultimately sacked by the company.

The second point was, "doubting the ability of renewable energies to provide baseload power." All sensible people doubt that ability because when the sun does not shine there is no solar power and when the wind does not blow there is no wind power, so what is the argument there? The third point was "building new low-emission coal-fired power stations." That is in competition with the company, but competition in our free market economy should not be a sin and, of course, building those low-emission coal-fired power stations helps keep the lights on in New South Wales and beyond.

The fourth point was "a problem with foreign-owned multinational companies and a proposal to implement a separate tax system to foreign-owned companies which would see tax increase." Well, hello? This was a proposal for multinationals to pay increased taxes that the Labor Party and the Coalition supported in the Federal election campaign. It had bipartisan agreement, yet they have singled out Gaye Cameron for a sacking offence for advancing that political view. The final point was "demonstrated antagonism towards Chinese interests and influence in Australia." Again, both sides of politics have expressed concern about the telecommunications influence of the Chinese in Australia and have passed some laws about foreign influence in our political system, so this is not an unusual proposition. But the basic point of our democracy is that you can advance your views as a citizen, run for free elections and not expect an employment penalty when you go back to your job.

To be sacked for these views in these circumstances, working for the safety of your fellow workers, is quite an atrocity. My motion calls on the Chamber to acknowledge the employment rights of our citizens to run for elected office without suffering employment penalties and the fundamental right of all workers to be able to run for democratic office in their private time without workplace consequences. Some people here might say, "Oh, well, this is just One Nation. We'll give them a kicking. Maybe they deserved it." Other parties will cop this in due course. Unless we say no to the excessive use of corporate power, it will come your way in other parts of this Chamber. The equivalent here is someone from The Greens working in environmental health and safety for a mining company—people have to earn a crust, they have to earn some income—but because the company did not like their Green ideology they were out the door.

That would probably be on the front page of *The Sydney Morning Herald* as a terrible front to our democracy, as it should be. I support the right of anyone to contest elections, advance a point of view and go back to a job without being penalised in the workplace. People are not very interested in politics and it is hard to get people to staff election booths, to run for office or to be enthusiastic about democracy. So when a Chinese company rubs somebody out like this it is completely unacceptable. The company should know that although there may not be free elections in China, elections are free in Australia and our workers should be protected.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (23:49): I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting paragraph 2.

The Opposition has no issue with paragraphs 1 (a) and (b) of the motion. While I do not doubt the sincerity of the Hon. Mark Latham in the information he has presented, the Opposition does not know enough about the details of this matter to buy into the controversy. That is why we cannot support the motion if the second paragraph remains.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (23:50): The motion raises a very important matter of freedom of speech and conscience. The Government wishes to place on record its very firm support for the rights of individuals to hold differing political views. I am advised that a matter such as Ms Cameron's, given her employment in the private sector, is covered under Federal legislation—specifically the Fair Work Act—and, as such, would be dealt with by the Fair Work Commission or the Federal Court.

As the public service and employee relations Minister, let me state that the Government's position is that individuals should not be discriminated against in the workplace for their political views. In New South Wales

there is legislation governing public sector employees who intend to stand for election to Federal or State Parliament. The Government Sector Employment Act 2013 allows an employee who has resigned to contest a Federal election to be re-employed within the department. The Act provides that this must be at the same level of remuneration that they received at the date of their resignation. The legislation treats the period between resignation and reappointment as leave without pay. However, the Government has concerns about the second paragraph of this motion and for that reason we support the amendment.

Media reports on the matter, and statements by the local management of Goldwind, indicate that there is a disagreement between the parties as to the reasons why Ms Cameron was dismissed from her position. Ms Cameron has also indicated that she has engaged lawyers and intends to take her former employer to the Federal Court, having already sought interlocutory relief from the Federal Court. This matter being sub judice, it would be inappropriate for this Chamber to pre-empt or presuppose the matter as it proceeds through the legal system. Commenting on or passing motions in this House on a matter before the courts, or a matter that is clearly intended to be litigated, would prejudice the rights of the parties and may give rise to an apparent bias.

The convention on sub judice is limited. But it is not limited based purely on a matter being before the courts, rather on the reasonable likelihood that such a matter may come before the courts in the foreseeable future. Given Ms Cameron's engagement of solicitors it would be prudent for this Chamber to refrain from making any comment. The amendment is appropriate. However, the Government supports the very important sentiments outlined in the first paragraph of the motion.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (23:52): I support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Government has indicated that the Government will also support it. That is a sensible way to proceed. The principle of freedom of speech only matters when the speech is being given by people one disagrees with. I do not want to reflect on the individual circumstances here without knowing more about them, but I indicate to the House that I am totally opposed to the platform this One Nation candidate would have put to the electorate. For that reason I think it is doubly important to support this principle. Freedom of speech is crucial to all of us. I accept the point that the Hon. Mark Latham made—that if a matter like this is not dealt with when it first arises it will come to affect others—and I think he was right to bring the matter to the attention of the Chamber. I disagree with the platform on which his candidate stood but I absolutely support the principle he is asserting.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (23:54): In reply: I will close the debate so we can vote on the motion before midnight.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mark Latham has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Adam Searle has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment of the Hon. Adam Searle be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes34
Noes5
Majority.....29

AYES

Amato, Mr L
Buttigieg, Mr M
Donnelly, Mr G
Farlow, Mr S
Graham, Mr J
Jackson, Ms R

Mallard, Mr S
Mitchell, Mrs

Pearson, Mr M
Secord, Mr W
Taylor, Mrs
Ward, Mrs N

Blair, Mr
Cusack, Ms C
Faehrmann, Ms C
Field, Mr J
Harwin, Mr D
Khan, Mr T

Martin, Mr T
Moriarty, Ms T

Primrose, Mr P
Sharpe, Ms P
Tudehope, Mr D

Boyd, Ms A
D'Adam, Mr A
Fang, Mr W
Franklin, Mr B
Hurst, Ms E
Maclaren-Jones, Mrs
(teller)
Mason-Cox, Mr M
Moselmane, Mr S
(teller)
Searle, Mr A
Shoebridge, Mr D
Veitch, Mr M

NOES

Banasiak, Mr M
Nile, Revd Mr

Borsak, Mr R (teller)
Roberts, Mr R

Latham, Mr M (teller)

Amendment agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Adjournment Debate

ADJOURNMENT

The PRESIDENT: It being midnight, according to sessional order proceedings are interrupted. I propose:

That this House do now adjourn.

BIOMETRIC TECHNOLOGY

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (00:03): In recent weeks much has been made of the assault on Australian press freedom. *The New York Times* labelled our country "the world's most secretive democracy", a place where Federal and State governments use their growing power to hide information they do not want in the public domain. Today I address an even scarier trend that is under the radar: We are all under the increasingly powerful surveillance of Australian governments. "Biometric systems" is typical jargon that governments use to disguise a worrying phenomenon. Put simply, it is the use of technology to monitor and scan our body features so that governments can identify people, collect information about us and use it how they wish.

Biometric technology has improved rapidly over the last five years and we see governments and corporations using it more and more. Airports use facial recognition technology to identify people as they enter Australia. Police use it via CCTV cameras to catch criminals on the streets. We can all now use our fingerprints and facial features to unlock our phones and log into our bank accounts. If biometric systems help us catch criminals and make our lives more convenient, why are they a problem? In late 2017 the use of this technology took a sinister turn. The Council of Australian Governments broadly agreed on the introduction of a new national facial recognition system. Under their plans, States and Territories are to provide the Federal Government with their residents' driver licences and passport photos to establish a national identification database. This, we are told, will allow for instant facial recognition when matched to State CCTV footage to assist in law enforcement.

This is a major concern to me because of two parallel trends. Australian governments have increased their use of this technology at the same time as they have eroded our individual freedom and ability to scrutinise government business. In other words, while governments do more and more to monitor our activity, they are making it increasingly harder for us to monitor them. Since the 9/11 terror attacks, our State and Federal governments have passed or amended more than 60 laws aimed at increasing secrecy, intensifying surveillance and spying on citizens. We have stripped away individual freedoms at a rate faster than any other democracy in the world. While Liberal-Nationals governments have pushed most of these reforms, they have generally done so with bipartisan support from Labor oppositions, who have simply rolled over on this issue. Our governments have used their increased power to jail whistleblowers, dodge accountability and suppress criticism. Do we really trust such governments to control a national database and use such a powerful technology in a responsible way?

We have already seen how this could all end up. For example, an abuse of biometric power is occurring in a foreign country that shares the Australian Government's contempt for press freedom: China has combined State power and technological progress by developing what is called a "social credit system". Pilot programs are already in place where the Chinese government uses biometric technology to monitor, rank and score its citizens. It is used to reward those deemed trustworthy and punish those it identifies as disobedient. China employs facial recognition technology to keep its eye on everyone. When you do the wrong thing you lose points and suffer the consequences—like being banned from public transport. Science fiction has become a terrifying reality in our northern Asian neighbour. China's social credit system should be a wake-up call to all Australians. We cannot continue to let the Liberal, Nationals and Labor parties slide us down their slippery slope of growing State power, reduced accountability and invasive use of biometric technology.

The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party was founded on the principles of freedom, fairness and individual liberty. The threat to our freedom is now the greatest it has been since we formed in 1992. Our party will fight to ensure the benefits of biometric technology are always weighed against the costs of further invasion of privacy and the risks of data abuse and misuse. I believe all New South Wales legislation aimed at either expanding biometric systems or providing our State's residents' data to the Federal Government must be subject to rigorous scrutiny by crossbench-led committees. I urge all New South Wales residents who share my concerns to express them loudly by writing to Ministers, making people aware of what is happening on social media and, if necessary, marching in the streets. I want to assure all concerned citizens you have a fierce ally in the New South

Wales Parliament. The Shooters, Fishers Farmers Party will keep a watchful eye on the major parties' pursuit of the surveillance State and will use our balance of power to keep a check on governments' growing use of biometric power.

TRIBUTE TO LYN "RAZ" BURTONWOOD

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (00:08): I honour an extraordinary individual, Ballina surf lifesaver Lyn "Raz" Burtonwood, who tragically went missing during his daily morning swim in challenging conditions near Lighthouse Beach on 16 February this year. The 69-year-old former Ballina High School teacher was known as a very strong swimmer and a 25-year veteran and patrolling member of the Ballina Lighthouse & Lismore Surf Life Saving Club. The fruitless search for Raz lasted for four long days. I commend the extraordinary efforts of Surf Life Saving NSW and the over 100 volunteers who helped in the search, along with the tireless efforts of the Marine Area Command and the Richmond District police, who scoured the air and sea during the search.

Those days at the Ballina Surf Club, when the chances of finding him grew ever slimmer, were sombre and dark and deeply, deeply sad. Then the search was called off and hope was extinguished. Raz was a true individual. He had the most extraordinary appetite for living life to the fullest, taking every opportunity and experience in his stride. One of his favourite sayings "I wouldn't be dead for quids" highlighted just how much he appreciated the awesome wonder of the world around him. He lived for the ocean. Friends described him as the soul of the sea—"the salty dog". A long-time friend of Raz, Don Opie, spoke for an entire community when he said, "A little bit of sparkle has gone out of the area."

Apart from his surf lifesaving involvement, Raz was committed to a range of other community activities including playing for the Seahorses at the Ballina Rugby Union Club. Starting in 1982, he participated in over 100 games across all grades before retiring in the mid-1990s. In 1982 and 1992 he toured New Zealand, England, Ireland and Wales with the club. The Seahorses paid tribute to one of their favourite sons, joining the broader community in mourning the loss of one of its own. Club identity and life member, Graham Steel, described him as "a free spirit, both on and off the field". He said, "It wasn't a party without Raz or his home brew."

The club continued to pay its respects in remembering Raz, announcing 4 May 2019 as the Raz Burtonwood Memorial Day in his honour. The afternoon was a wonderful opportunity for all those who knew him to share a story and a drink and remember a truly unique character. Raz was incredibly highly regarded and respected in the community through his involvement with not only rugby union, league and surf lifesaving but also water polo, outrigger canoeing, cross-country running, and for the passion and love of learning he instilled in his mathematics students over many years.

On 10 March more than 200 people gathered on the beach and 80 paddled out in honour of the much-loved local, where, in a circle of surfboards, they observed two minutes of silence, and it is said that—fittingly—dolphins surrounded the surfers. Two days later over a thousand people gathered at Ballina Seagulls Rugby League Football Club to celebrate his life at a beautiful memorial service where celebrant Phil Chapman observed:

If the number of people I see here today is an indication, it is certain that Raz touched the lives of almost everyone in our community and beyond.

He continues to be remembered throughout the community. Knockrow artist Angela Parr has created a tribute to the former high school teacher. Her work, based on photographs of Raz, was on display at Ballina's Northern Rivers Community Gallery as part of Ballina Arts and Crafts Ninth Annual Grace Cruice Memorial Exhibition. Angela knew Raz pretty well and said, "It would have somehow been a shame not to immortalise him." She also said, "He had some beautiful 'Raz-isms' that I needed to include in the portrait, like his salute, his blue car and his dog." The portrait was for sale, with Mrs Parr pledging all profits to be donated to the Ballina Lighthouse & Lismore Surf Lifesaving Club. The legend of Raz will always be remembered and live on in Ballina. As his eldest son, Che Burtonwood, said:

For me, Dad was always a man of mystery and there's something to that with him going out the way he's gone out and leaving a bit of mystery. That was the way he was and this will leave a bit of a legend behind, which will just add to the legend that was Raz.

In a beautiful statement his children wrote that they like to think their father is still out there now, catching waves, looking out for everyone. Raz Burtonwood was a devoted partner to Kim, a loving father to Che, Kye and Jemma, and a quirky, vibrant beacon of light for our community. He will never be forgotten. May he rest in peace.

WAGES POLICY

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (00:13): I speak about the Government's wages policy. It is an area where the Government thinks it is being very clever but in the long term it is a boneheaded policy. It is true that the Government has created wage cost predictability through the policy but the unintended consequence has been a dampening of wage growth in the economy at large. This is in the context of record low wage growth, a situation

that has prompted the Governor of the Reserve Bank Philip Lowe to ring the alarm bells. The lack of real wage growth in the economy is putting the brakes on overall economic growth, and as Philip Lowe has observed:

Flat real wages are diminishing our shared sense of prosperity.

In the budget this week Treasury has identified low wage growth as a risk to the budget's economic outlook. The budget papers also include the optimistic assumption that wage growth will increase to 3 per cent in the last two years of the forward estimates. I note that those forecasts are more conservative than the Federal budget.

Why does wage growth continue to be poor? Part of the answer lies in the unwillingness of orthodox economic analysis to take into account the political economy of the labour market. The assumptions around wage growth fail to accord any causation to the decline in worker bargaining power arising from the concerted effort to weaken trade unions. This has occurred at a State and at a national level. It is consistent with a global neo-liberal agenda to weaken organised labour. The wages policy with its restraint on the collective bargaining rights of public sector workers is consistent with this global agenda.

The State Government needs to take into account its impact, as the largest employer in the New South Wales economy, on the operation of the labour market. This analysis is deliberately absent from the economic analysis in the budget because it would lead to some very uncomfortable conclusions. The public sector has always been a pace setter in the economy. Its workforce tends to be higher skilled than the rest of the labour market. By containing wages at the top of the labour market, the private sector is not subject to the same level of competition for skilled labour with a consequent effect on the capacity of workers to seek higher wages.

I draw to the attention of the House a report prepared by economists Troy Henderson and Jim Stanford from the Centre for Future Work at the Australia Institute. The report is titled *False Economies, The Unintended Consequences of NSW Public Sector Wage Restraint*. Although not a recent report its observations have continuing relevance. The report highlights five unintended consequences of the Government's wage-restraint policy. First, the report contends that the policy is operating to reduce consumer spending in the State by a cumulative total of \$3.4 billion between 2011 and 2016. Secondly, it further contends Australia's GDP has been reduced by almost \$8 billion over the same period as a result of the policy. Thirdly, the report suggests the wages policy has resulted in a reduction in the New South Wales Government's own revenue by \$1.2 billion over the period of 2011-2016. Fourthly, the report argues the policy operates to suppress true productivity growth of the public sector workforce. Finally, the report argues that the policy contributes to wage stagnation in the overall state labour market.

It asserts that the New South Wales Government's wage-restraint policy is precisely the wrong approach for conditions of macro-economic stagnation. The budget papers assign a central role to boosting productivity. Stating that, "productivity is the most important determinant of improvements in living standards and underpins growth in wages and household incomes." But the wages policy actually works to impede productivity improvements. The Government's wages policy has created a rigidity in public sector industrial relations that has meant that reform in our public sector workforce has been stultified. Smart employers work with their workforce to find creative new ways of doing things better. However, under the wages policy productivity improvements are narrowly defined and must be achieved through reductions in conditions of public sector workers. Under the current policy there is little or no capacity or incentive for parties in industrial negotiations to identify improvements that may improve service quality. The result is that the Government has spent the best part of a decade with few significant improvements in public sector workforce capacity and productivity.

Having read the Centre for Future Work report, I went looking for evidence that some of the arguments canvassed in this report had been anticipated, considered and addressed by Treasury in its implementation of the policy. There is no evidence of this in the budget papers. As the wages policy is given effect through the Industrial Relations (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Regulation 2014, a regulatory impact statement is required to be produced. This is a requirement of the provisions of the Subordinate Legislation Act 1989. Under section 5 (4) of this Act a copy of the regulatory impact statement is required to be forwarded to the Legislation Review Committee within 14 days of its publication. It appears from my inquiries at the Table Office that this never occurred. I draw this to the attention of the Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, and urge the Minister to take steps to rectify this apparent oversight.

ASYLUM SEEKERS

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (00:18): In 2013 Abdul Aziz Muhamat fled Sudan in search of peace, safety and a better life. He was just 20 years old. He tried to come to Australia, but was detained on Manus Island. He was there for six years. Rather than give in to despair, Abdul organised with others detained on Manus and made his voice heard. He spoke to the media, supported his fellow detainees and used social media to tell the world about their plight. In February of this year, he was recognised for that work and named the 2019 Martin Ennals Award Laureate. However, the award ceremony was due to take place in Geneva, so how would Abdul be allowed to

attend? The Swiss Government did the decent thing and granted him a temporary visa. Then, on 8 June, the Swiss authorities went a step further. They abided by the spirit of international law and did what Australia had failed to do—they granted him permanent protection. This is what Abdul tweeted on the day: Today am so grateful to say the Swiss have granted me asylum in their beautiful country. For the first time in 6 years am free, but I won't be truly free in my heart till every one of my brother and sisters on Manus/Nauru are free and well in safe country.

Abdul reminds us that everyone deserves to be free and well in a safe country. He also reminds us that as long as just one person is detained offshore for seeking asylum, none of us is truly free. Sadly, there are hundreds of people who remain detained offshore because of the Australian Government's policies. *The Guardian* Australia reports that there were 359 people in Nauru, and between 547 and 561 in Papua New Guinea as of March this year. Of the people in Papua New Guinea, 170 are in Port Moresby for medical treatment. The most disturbing number is 26. That is the number of cases of attempted suicide or self-harm since the Federal election result was announced. They had held out some hope for a change of government. Journalist Behrouz Boochani, who also is detained on Manus Island, said:

I'm struggling to find words to describe this situation. All I can say is that it's gone out of control. I don't know what will happen. So scary time.

It is easy for me to say to the people on Manus and Nauru, "Don't give up hope. I say it not only because I know that your hope is the only thing keeping you alive, but also because I genuinely believe that the actions of our Federal Coalition politicians do not represent the views of the Australian people." I know that many ordinary people in Australia want our Government to do the right thing. Every day there are community groups working to support asylum seekers in their struggles, both in detention and in the community. On the Central Coast, where I am from, we have an amazing local community group called Central Coast for Social Justice, who have been unwavering in their commitment to raise awareness of the plight of refugees and asylum seekers. Just last weekend they again hosted an annual Welcome to Refugees picnic event, bringing together people from across the Central Coast to celebrate Refugee Week.

I believe an overwhelming majority of people want Australia to be a welcoming country. Most people want our Government to abide by international law. Most people do not want to see people seeking asylum drown at sea trying to reach our coast. Yes, there are many possible solutions to the problem of risky boat journeys. However the heavily militarised offshore detention regime created by Labor and the Coalition breaches our humanitarian and legal obligations. It is also cruel and unjust to punish one group of people to send a message to another. The Kaldor Centre at the University of New South Wales has proposed a set of reforms to ensure that Australia lives up to its legal obligations while also promoting the safety of people seeking asylum.

Firstly, Australia needs to comply with its international legal obligations. We must not send people back to danger and we must repeal the offshore processing regime. Secondly, we should process claims for asylum in Australia, not offshore. That is The Greens' position and how it works in many other countries. People should not be detained for an indefinite period of time. People seeking Australia's protection are detained for 500 days on average compared to the average length of detention being fewer than 90 days in Europe. Australia must promote family unity and the best interests of children. If we do not want people risking their lives on boats, we need to provide quicker and safer pathways. We need to increase our resettlement quota and increase funding for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Finally, Australia should make it clear to everyone who is new to this country that we welcome them and we want them to succeed in building a new life. The Greens stand with everyone seeking safety and a new life in Australia. Nobody should have to become an award winner to get the protection they deserve. Everyone, simply by being human, deserves freedom, justice and a safe place to call home.

STATE BUDGET

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (00:22): Earlier this year the Newcastle light rail opened and already it is proving to be a hit with the public. It was a promise by this Government that was delivered on time and on budget. The old heavy rail line divided the city of Newcastle and separated the CBD from the waterfront. Not only did the old train line divide the city but also it divided the Labor Party. As members know, the project was rigorously opposed by the Labor Party. In his first speech, the member for Newcastle said that he had campaigned "to retain the existing rail line into Newcastle". In this place, the Hon. Penny Sharpe described the light rail as "a second-class public transport system". The member for Wallsend moved a motion in the other place stating that "there is no evidence to support the proposition that the removal of the rail line in Newcastle will rejuvenate the city, when research indicates that it would have the opposite effect".

I am pleased to be part of a government that stuck to its guns because the outcome has been absolutely excellent. The new interchange at Wickham means that there is a seamless transfer between train and light rail services, making it particularly easy for people with disabilities who previously struggled to access services at

Wickham and Civic stations. All light rail stations and the Newcastle Interchange are fully accessible—previously there had been a lack of accessible crossings over the railway line. The light rail is now fully open, which makes it much easier for people with a disability to get around the city.

In total, in its first 2½ months of operation, the Newcastle Light Rail had 276,000 trips, which shows how successful the light rail has been. There have been other added benefits. As there are additional stops, some people's journey between their workplace and the station has halved. The citizens of Newcastle are using their Opal cards to endorse the light rail. It seems that those opposite have finally got the message. Believe it or not, they are now enthusiastic supporters of the light rail. Despite trashing it at every step—despite opposing the route, despite opposing the carriages and despite all their previous on-the-record objections—they now want to expand the light rail in Newcastle.

Believe it or not, the member for Newcastle listed starting the process of expanding the light rail as a priority on his budget wish list. I do not know what happened though, because during his budget reply the acting interim, volunteer, casual Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly did not mention expanding the Newcastle light rail at all. It seems that the priorities of the member for Newcastle and the Opposition may be different. It appears that the Newcastle light rail is dividing the Opposition in the same way that the railway used to divide Newcastle.

The success of the Newcastle Light Rail is not the only thing dividing the Labor Party, however. Labor has also been divided recently over the Adani mine in Queensland. For three years the Leader of the Federal Labor Party, Bill Shorten, flip-flopped over the Adani mine. When he was in Queensland, he had one position. When he was in Victoria, he had a totally different position. It took a near electoral wipe-out in Queensland for the Government to finally commit to supporting the approval of the Carmichael coalmine in Central Queensland. This coalmine is a job creator, and voters are well aware of the positive benefits that flow from investment in their local economy.

Labor's anti-coal agenda also resulted in its support in the electorate of Hunter collapsing to just 37.6 per cent, when they normally get more than 50 per cent of the primary vote. I note that this morning the Federal member for Hunter, Joel Fitzgibbon, called for Labor MPs to be able to express their views more freely. He also pinpointed the swing against him and against Labor across Queensland as being the result of its coal jobs policies. It is clear that Labor is more divided than ever. It is divided over the Newcastle Light Rail. It is divided over coal jobs. It is divided over who its leader will be.

In total contrast, the Coalition is building Maitland Hospital and rebuilding Wyong and John Hunter hospitals. We have major school upgrades at Ashtonfield, Belmont, Jesmond, Newcastle East, Nulkaba, Rutherford, Speers Point, Terrigal, Wamberal and Wangi Wangi, not to mention a whole host of others across New South Wales. We are boosting frontline services, with an additional 4,600 teachers, 5,000 nurses and midwives, 3,300 more health professionals and 1,500 more police. All these measures funded in this week's budget show that we are getting on with getting the job done.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (00:27): The New South Wales budget represents a missed opportunity for New South Wales. Behind the misleading headlines and fanciful boosterism of the Treasurer lies the uncomfortable and unfortunate reality that New South Wales is becoming a more unequal State. There has always been a spectrum of income and wealth, and it is nonsense to claim that it would be easy or desirable to flatten everyone's material circumstances. In the second half of the twentieth century these differences were at least tangentially linked to the amount of work someone did, how smart they were, how hard they tried. Now those things are essentially irrelevant to your capacity to get ahead.

The people of New South Wales are not becoming lazier or more stupid, they are in fact a bright, ambitious and hardworking group of people. Yet, despite this, our society is becoming more and more unequal. As wealth grows in prosperous, modern Australia, the top fifth of households increased their income by 130 per cent but for the poorest fifth it was only 50 per cent. Particularly stark is the inequality between Sydney and the rest of New South Wales. The Treasurer's boastful claims of the strong economic position of New South Wales ring completely hollow for those living in regional New South Wales. Most parts of regional New South Wales have below-average incomes. The average taxable income in inner Sydney exceeds \$75,000 per year whereas it is almost below \$50,000 in most areas 100 kilometres from the CBD.

What is particularly alarming about inequality is that it is getting worse. We are becoming a more unequal society. Someone in the top 1 per cent of income earners earns more in a fortnight than someone in the lowest 5 per cent earns in a year. And before we mislead ourselves that, "Yes, there are some very wealthy people—and indeed they are very, very wealthy—but they are very rare", Australia has the fifth highest number of people

with ultra-high wealth in the world. The thing about the economic inequality crisis is that it is not really about the very rich and the very poor; it is about the diminishing of Australia's middle class—the share of the 40 per cent below the top 10 per cent that is getting smaller and smaller.

The consequences of the shrinking New South Wales middle class are stark. Inequality of wealth today means less equality of opportunity tomorrow. Promises of education unlocking the potential of all people in New South Wales ring hollow. This is simply not the case for so many young people left behind. There are fewer incentives for innovation and productivity because people stop believing that if they work hard, have good ideas and innovate they will have the chance to get ahead. They give up hope that hard work is rewarded because they can see far too many examples of this not being the case.

The Government has a role to play in making society more equal; in fact, the Government has the role to play. What is the alternative? Leaving the task of making New South Wales more equal to the market? What a plainly ridiculous proposition, considering it is the unfettered market that got us into this position in the first place. Which brings us to the budget. Treasurer Dominic Perrottet made no mention of economic inequality in his Budget Speech. The budget papers make no reference to the rising inequality in this State and in this country. There are numerous examples of how the budget misses the opportunity to make New South Wales better, fairer and more equal, but there is one that I will mention tonight.

Community organisations in New South Wales that deal at the coalface of the economic inequality crisis will face a real funding cut as a result of this budget—community organisations that support domestic violence victims, the homeless, youth at risk, run neighbourhood centres. Those organisations, whilst non-government in nature, are substantially reliant on government funding. Often up to 90 per cent of their funding flows from State Government grants. The indexation of funding for those organisations in the budget is only 1.7 per cent. That is not nearly enough to cover the proper, ongoing funding of those organisations. The Fair Work Commission recently handed down a 3 per cent pay increase for workers in this sector, which, considering the historically low wages of the largely female workforce, is more than fair. So those are the figures: 1.7 per cent indexation for funding of those organisations and 90 per cent reliance on government funding to match a 3 per cent increase in staff wages. It just does not add up.

MUSEUM OF CHINESE IN AUSTRALIA

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE (00:32): I recently had the opportunity to meet with Daphne Lowe Kelley, a friend of many years. She was excited about a proposal to establish a Museum of Chinese in Australia in New South Wales—a project that I think is long awaited. From the first recorded Chinese free settler who arrived in New South Wales in 1818, the number of Chinese in Australia has grown and they are now a major part of modern, multicultural Australia. Two hundred years after that first settler arrived, there are now more than 1.2 million Chinese Australians—Australian born, China born and from every part of Asia and the world where Chinese people have settled over several centuries.

Theirs is a remarkable story in the history, settlement and make-up of Australia. But that story has no central repository or display in Sydney or in New South Wales. It is time that a museum of Chinese history is established to celebrate a people who have contributed so much to Australia. The Museum of Chinese in Australia [MOCA] proposes to address that omission by establishing a centre as a focus for the discovery, preservation and promotion of the history of the Chinese in Australia. I congratulate the MOCA committee: president Dr John Yu, vice-president Dr Stephen Fitzgerald, secretary Ms Ann Toy, assistant secretary Mr Peter Hack, treasurer Ms Susan Leong, members Ms Cheryl Cumines and Mr Brad Powe, and public officer Ms Daphne Lowe Kelley.

The PRESIDENT: The time for the adjournment debate has expired. The House now stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at 00:34 until Tuesday 6 August 2019 at 14:30.