

ALBURY WODONGA RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB	8174
ASHFIELD CARNIVAL OF CULTURES	8174
ASSENT TO BILLS	8133
ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY AMENDMENT BILL 2016	8104, 8156
AUSTRALIAN ENERGY REGULATOR PRICING DECISION	8122
BERNIE BANTON FOUNDATION	8192
BIOFUELS AMENDMENT BILL 2016	8104, 8156
BROADMEADOW SPORTING FACILITIES	8179
BRUSSELS TERRORIST ATTACKS	8133
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	8104, 8135
CANCER COUNCIL DANCE FOR CANCER FUNDRAISER	8187
CANCER COUNCIL STARS OF THE NORTH FUNDRAISER	8188
CARL TRAD AND GOVERNMENT GRANTS	8135, 8137, 8139
CENTENARY OF ANZAC	8158
CENTENNIAL PARKLANDS STADIUM	8146
CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE	8173
CENTRAL COAST SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING CHALLENGE	8174
CHRISTINE CLAUSEN, OATLEY ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR	8178
COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS	8171
CRIMES (DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL VIOLENCE) AMENDMENT (NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDERS RECOGNITION) BILL 2016	8104
FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL MURAL	8175
GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY	8135
GRAFTON RELAY FOR LIFE	8172
HARMONY DAY	8174
HENRY MAK CITY OF SYDNEY CHINESE NEW YEAR AMBASSADOR	8172
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION	8104
INVERELL HIGH SCHOOL FIRST XI CRICKET TEAM	8173
IRAQI CULTURAL FESTIVAL	8172
KIAMA NETBALL ASSOCIATION FUNDING	8186
KIRRAWEE HIGH SCHOOL WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE FUNDRAISER	8171
LAYNE GRANT, SWIMMER	8171
LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE	8131
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING	8154
LEN SCANLAN AND NEW SOUTH WALES ELECTORAL COMMISSION	8142
LITTLE RIPPER DRONE CHOPPER	8174
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS	8167
MALIBU BOATS	8193
MARK HICKEY BRAVERY AWARD	8171
MCDONALD'S COROWA AUSTRALIAN BILLY CART CHAMPIONSHIPS	8174
MIRANDA ELECTORATE DEVELOPMENTS	8181
MURUGAN TEMPLE CHARIOT FESTIVAL	8172
NEW SOUTH WALES REFORM	8146
NORTH COAST ICE EPIDEMIC	8178
OMBUDSMAN	8104
ORGAN TRANSPLANTS	8117
PETITIONS	8154
PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AMENDMENT (STATE OWNED CORPORATIONS) BILL 2016	8105
PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	8177
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE	8130
QUESTION TIME	8135
REBEKAH OLIVER, NATIONAL SCHOOLS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION	8178
REGIONAL INVESTMENT	8138
REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS	8133
ROSEVILLE MEMORIAL CLUB	8175
ROUSE HILL RURAL FIRE BRIGADE	8183
SESSIONAL ORDERS	8148
SHELLHARBOUR ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE	8177
SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER	8104

SOCIAL HOUSING.....	8144
ST JOSEPH'S HIGH SCHOOL, ABERDEEN, STUDENT LEADERS	8173
ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE STRATHFIELD STUDENT LEADERS.....	8173
STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE	8148
STANDING ORDERS	8152
STATE ECONOMY.....	8141
TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AMENDMENT (TAFE FUNDING GUARANTEE) BILL 2016	8106
TELOPEA COMMUNITY GROUPS.....	8180
THE HILLTOPS PHOENIX.....	8173
TIGER CORPORATION	8175
TRIBUTE TO ADRIAN PRYKE	8134
TRIBUTE TO CLARE GRUBBA	8175
TRIBUTE TO CURTIS CHENG	8129
TRIBUTE TO DON IVERSON	8176
TRIBUTE TO LADY DOROTHY CUTLER, OBE	8175
TRIBUTE TO PABLO GRANA.....	8185
TUNCURRY LONE PINE MEMORIAL PARK SECURITY LIGHTING	8184
TWEED HEADS NAVAL TRAINING UNIT	8191
VISITORS	8133
VIVIENNE MILLER, HORNSBY ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR	8176
WESTCONNEX.....	8189
WESTMEAD, WENTWORTHVILLE AND CONSTITUTION HILL FACILITIES	8191
WOODFORD ACADEMY	8171
WYONG SPECIAL AREA (PROTECTION) BILL 2015.....	8108
ZAYA TOMA LIBERAL PARTY MEMBERSHIP.....	8141

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 23 March 2016

The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 10.00 a.m.

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY AMENDMENT BILL 2016

BIOFUELS AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Messages received from the Legislative Council returning the bills with amendments.

Consideration of Legislative Council's amendments set down as orders of the day for a later hour.

CRIMES (DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL VIOLENCE) AMENDMENT (NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDERS RECOGNITION) BILL 2016

Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Report

The Speaker tabled, pursuant to section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, a report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled "Investigation into the conduct of a Mine Subsidence Board district manager", dated March 2016.

Ordered to be printed.

OMBUDSMAN

Report

The Speaker tabled, pursuant to section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, a report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled "Oversight of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994, Annual Report 2014-2015", dated March 2016.

Ordered to be printed.

SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER

Report

The Speaker tabled, pursuant to section 28 of the Small Business Commissioner Act 2013, a report of the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner for 2015.

Ordered to be printed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AMENDMENT (STATE OWNED CORPORATIONS) BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 17 March 2016.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [10.15 a.m.]: The arguments for the proposition in this bill are simple and compelling and are well put in the Privacy Commissioner's report under section 61B of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act. The NSW State Owned Corporations holds significant amounts of personal information concerning citizens of this State. Most State agencies, government departments, local councils, universities and so on are subject to the provisions of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act; however, State-owned corporations [SOCs] are exempt from this legislation. The justification for the exclusion of SOCs from the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act was to create a level playing field between other commercial operations and SOCs.

In the almost two decades since these legislative provisions were introduced things have changed. There is now a privacy regime at the Federal level, which is set out under the Commonwealth Privacy Act. Section 6F of that Act allows New South Wales SOCs to opt into the Commonwealth privacy regime; if they do not opt in they are excluded. Three New South Wales SOCs are prescribed organisations under the Act and thus covered by it. This gives rise to the anomalous position that citizens who are customers of these SOCs have the benefit of legislative protections but consumers and customers of other SOCs do not. Moreover, the SOCs claim that they are behaving in a proper and responsible manner, that is, as if they were morally bound by such privacy regimes.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Hansard will have trouble hearing the member with the call. The member for Liverpool will be heard in silence.

Mr PAUL LYNCH: I quote from the Privacy Commissioner's report:

Review of annual reports and privacy policies show that the majority of SOCs state they comply with either Commonwealth or NSW privacy legislation. A number of SOCs including Sydney Water, Water NSW and TransGrid, refer to being bound with IPPs in the PPIP Act. Other SOCs refer to being bound to the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) including TransGrid, Landcom and the Forestry Corporation although not prescribed under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

There is a significant and undesirable inconsistency between SOCs covered by the Commonwealth regime and those that are not. The Privacy Commissioner records that this discrepancy was noted in the Department of Premier and Cabinet's 2014 response to her invitation to comment on the operation of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act. The fact that SOCs say they behave as if covered by privacy legislation even though not legally bound to do so is, of course, a good thing. It also means, presumably, that there is no extra regulatory or cost burden to be imposed if this were to be made legally binding—that is, if they are doing it already it should make no difference if the legislation is extended.

Whilst the fact that SOCs proclaim their voluntary compliance is a good thing, it is not the same as being legally bound and, as the Privacy Commissioner pointed out, it does not provide the external review of complaints handling that is available under the legislation. When the legislation was initially adopted SOCs were excluded. This was argued on the basis that SOCs should not be at a disadvantage compared to other corporations that were not covered by privacy legislation. Things have evolved since then. A significant number of corporations are included within the Commonwealth scheme, based upon their size. So the argument that SOCs should not be covered by privacy legislation because the private sector is not covered does not have the strength it once did.

Additionally, expectations about SOCs have altered somewhat. As the Privacy Commissioner points out, section 3 (1) (g) of the Government Sector Employment Act specifically includes SOCs in the definition of the "government sector". They are covered under the freedom of information regime of the Government Information (Public Access) Act. I note that the Information Commissioner has recently reported a 100 per cent compliance rate by SOCs to that regime. The primary reason for extending the purview of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act is, of course, a matter of principle. To once again quote from the Privacy Commissioner:

This regulatory gap in SOCs' responsibility for the personal information they collect, use and hold results in inconsistent privacy protections for consumers. This needs to be addressed as the community has heightened concerns around the collection, storage, use, and disclosure of their personal information and expects Government to provide protections for their personal information and privacy as shown by recent research."

These issues were also considered by the review of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act which was carried out by the New South Wales Attorney-General's Department, as it then was. Paragraph 8.4 of that review states:

SOCs are specifically excluded from the ambit of the Act. The government's intention in their excluding them was originally to ensure a level playing field so that SOC's did not have to comply with privacy legislation that did not apply to their equivalent service providers in the private sector. Subsequently, the Commonwealth Privacy Act was amended to include the large companies in the private sector, however the application of the Commonwealth Act to state instrumentalities is incomplete, as they must either be incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 ... or prescribed as organizations for the purpose of the Commonwealth Privacy Act before it will apply.

The review also said in response to SOC's concerns that one of the statutory objectives for SOC's is not just to be a successful business and to operate as efficiently as possible but also to exhibit a sense of social responsibility by having regard to the interests of the community in which it operates. The review reported some disquiet by SOC's about the position. However, it referred to the fact that Sydney Water preferred to be covered by the regime. It also pointed out that some SOC's thought being included in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act would allow them to take advantage of exemptions relating to inter-agency transfer of information. This led to recommendation 12 of the review, which was that "All NSW SOC's should be subject to privacy regulation".

There has also been support provided to the position put in this bill by the New South Wales Law Reform Commission. In May 2010 the commission released report No. 127 entitled, "Protecting privacy in New South Wales". Recommendation 2.1 of the report put a position that is consistent with this bill. The commission justified its position at paragraph 2.20, to which I refer the House. The commission also adopted some of the arguments of the Australian Law Reform Commission, which pointed out that statutory corporations are covered by privacy legislation in other jurisdictions but not in New South Wales.

The commission also pointed out that State Records NSW notes that State-owned corporations are already covered by freedom of information legislation and the State Records Act. State-owned corporations should thus be included under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act to ensure consistency in the management of information. The present Government has displayed a minimal interest in the governance of State-owned corporations. The Government issued an issues paper concerning State-owned corporations in 2013, but there has been no further public comment on that.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet is telling people who contact its department inquiring about progress that the matter is "still under consideration". My own discreet inquiries reveal that the review report has been drafted. Interestingly, the review, among other things, recommends the changes that I have proposed in this bill, but the Government has taken no action on it. My questions on notice about this topic have likewise been ignored. The changes proposed by this bill are long overdue. The Government should have got on with it some time ago. Because the Government has not, the Opposition has. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Victor Dominello and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AMENDMENT (TAFE FUNDING GUARANTEE) BILL 2016

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

Second Reading

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn—Leader of the Opposition) [10.21 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Technical and Further Education Amendment (TAFE Funding Guarantee) Bill 2016. This bill represents the very best of Labor values and will ensure the future health of TAFE in New South Wales. Whilst there is a place for the private sector to provide vocational education and training, it is the role of government to ensure there is a strong, affordable and accessible public education system. This bill will cap contestable public funding for private education providers at a maximum of 30 per cent. This cap will guarantee that TAFE, the public provider, receives a guaranteed minimum of 70 per cent of public funding, and potentially more. This will ensure the future of TAFE in this State by providing certainty of funding to students and staff. I turn now to the provisions of the bill.

Clause 3 of the bill inserts in the principal Act, the Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1990, a TAFE funding guarantee. That will deliver not only the guaranteed minimum 70 per cent funding for vocational education and training to be allocated to the TAFE Commission but also it will ensure that the TAFE Commission receives in each of its regions not less than 70 per cent of the funding allocated to vocational education and training courses. The current Government has overseen the biggest cut to TAFE funding in TAFE's history. Since this Government came to office, \$1.7 billion has been ripped away from education and training. Yet the Government maintains the fiction that it "believes in TAFE". Why then has this Government sacked thousands of TAFE teachers and support staff since it came to government? Those are not the actions of a government that believes in TAFE.

Mr Michael Johnsen: It's all about the students.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: I note the interjection of the member opposite. I will get to students in a minute. Under this Government the number of TAFE courses has been cut and contact hours have been slashed. There is not much in that for the students.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Upper Hunter will cease interjecting.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: If this Government truly believes in our TAFE system why would it cut the number of courses offered to students? If this Government truly believes in the transformative power of TAFE why would it decrease the number of contact hours? Add course fee increases of up to \$4,000 a year and a very different picture to that of the Government's rhetoric emerges. Let us be clear, there are now 80,000 fewer students enrolled in TAFE today than there were in 2012. There are now 11,500 fewer students with a disability enrolled in TAFE than in 2012.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Upper Hunter will come to order. There will be no debate across the Chamber. The Leader of the Opposition will be heard in silence.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: Members opposite laugh when I make the point that there are 11,500 fewer students with a disability enrolled in TAFE today than in 2012. We on this side of the House see that as no laughing matter. It is impossible for this Government to argue that its actions have delivered a stronger TAFE system. At a time when we should be encouraging people to seek further education to upskill our workforce, the Government has tilted policy in the opposite direction. It does not make sense to make it more expensive for workers to further their education and to upgrade their skills. It does not make sense to cut funding, resources, courses and contact hours.

The real agenda of this Government lies, as ever, in its ideology. They do not like TAFE; they do not believe in it. As ever they believe government is always the problem and never the solution. The end result of this ideology being imposed on our vocational education and training sector in New South Wales will inevitably be the destruction of one of this State's great institutions: TAFE itself. That is why Labor proudly brings forward this bill, to save TAFE from the conservatives. We know that currently the Government has on its books a plan for a fire sale of campuses in places like Chullora, Epping, Belrose, Scone, Dapto, Vincentia, Maclean, Murwillumbah Corowa, Narrandera and Grenfell.

Mr Michael Johnsen: Wrong, wrong, wrong.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: The member opposite interjects. I would like him to name one of those campuses I have just named that the Government is not proposing to sell—just one.

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections will not be tolerated. I will place the member for Upper Hunter on a call to order if he continues to interject.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: At a time when our economy is changing, when it is moving away from natural resources to a services-based economy, we of course need skilled workers. So why is the Government committed to ripping away such a vital institution that gives hundreds of thousands of people the skills for employment in the new economy? Why? Once again it comes back to the ideology. They just do not like public provision; they do not believe in it. They always believe the solution lies in the invisible hand of the market rather than in any role for the State. This is an ideological attack on one of the great institutions in New South Wales.

The Government wants to continue to take money away from TAFE and give more funds to private providers. But we have seen some private providers luring students to undertake courses they do not need with the promise of free iPads and computers. That behaviour has left students and the Government carrying unnecessary debt while some private providers continue to make large profits. This week we have seen a major private training provider, Australian Careers Network, file for voluntary administration and just last week Evocca College announced the closure of seven of its campuses in our State. This follows the collapse of the Aspire College of Education. So why does the Government continue to prioritise private providers above a well-established and proven TAFE model?

It is explicable only by reference to the Government's ideological hatred of the public provision of vocational education. The Labor Party believes in a strong TAFE sector that continues to play a vital role in training and upskilling our workforce. We are giving the Government an opportunity to show that it has some belief in TAFE. The Government can repent by voting for this bill. Labor believes that in order to save TAFE from the conservatives the introduction of a TAFE funding guarantee is necessary—that is, a guaranteed minimum of 70 per cent funding for vocational education and training to be provided to one of this State's great institutions, the TAFE Commission. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Victor Dominello and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

Pursuant to sessional order General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills) proceeded with.

WYONG SPECIAL AREA (PROTECTION) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 19 November 2015.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) [10.30 a.m.]: In my earlier contribution to this debate I recalled the promise made by the then Liberal-Nationals Leader of the Opposition, Barry O'Farrell, at a rally held at Woodberry Park in Wyong on 28 January 2009. What he said was recorded by the local television station, NBN. It was a serious promise, as only a promise can be when made from the top of a picnic table. Barry O'Farrell said:

The next Liberal-Nationals Government will ensure that mining cannot occur here—

Mr Mark Coure: Were you there?

Mr DAVID MEHAN: David Harris was there.

Mr David Harris: I was there. I congratulated Barry at the time.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: Barry O'Farrell said:

The next Liberal-Nationals Government will ensure that mining cannot occur here, will ensure that mining can't occur in any water catchment area and will ensure that mining leases and mining exploration permits reflect that common sense. No ifs, no buts, a guarantee.

Mr Mark Coure: Are you sure you were there?

Mr DAVID MEHAN: It was on NBN TV.

Mr Adam Crouch: That is gold.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: It is gold.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I draw the attention of members to Standing Order 52, which states that a member will be heard in silence. I am happy to call members on both sides of the House to order. The member for The Entrance has the call. I expect him to be heard in silence.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: This bill satisfies that promise. The Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, the member for Lane Cove, has said that the Government will oppose the bill. Now that the Minister has signalled

the failure of this bill, it remains for him to tell this House how the Government will satisfy its promise to the people of the Central Coast. Perhaps this is another example of a phenomenon that I have observed in this House, which is that the Liberals care about the Central Coast only at election time. In response, the Minister said:

The Government subjects all mining proposals, including the Wallarah 2 Coal Project, to rigorous, independent planning assessment framework.

He continued:

If approved, the project will also be required to meet all the environmental security deposit and rehabilitation requirements managed by the New South Wales Division of Resources and Energy. Given the rigorous planning and environmental requirements already in place, the project, if approved, will be proceeding within tight controls.

The report on the project by the Planning Assessment Commission, delivered in June 2014, uses different language. I will let the House judge whether the project is rigorous or tight in any way. The report says:

Turning to the merits of the project as a whole, the Commission considers that, if the recommendations concerning improved strategies to avoid, mitigate or manage the predicted impacts of the project are adopted, then there is merit in allowing the project to proceed. However, if the recommendations are either not adopted, or adopted only in part, then the Commission's position would probably change in favour of a precautionary approach. This particularly applies to water-related impacts.

It does not sound like a tight or rigorous process to me. I have tremendous concerns about this project. If approved, this mine will be the first in the Central Coast water catchment area. It will also be the deepest and most southerly mine constructed to mine the Newcastle coal measures. It will be a mine operated under very different geological conditions and a very different overburden environment. The mine should proceed only after very careful consideration. The environmental impact statement process generated such a volume of material that the picture it creates does not withstand close examination. The key controversy in this project is the mechanics of the ground subsidence and whether this has an impact on the water catchment. Even though 352 boreholes were drilled, almost all were directed at one aspect only, that is, the definition of the resource to allow the mining company to do a cost analysis of the project.

Only three of the 352 boreholes were fully cored and subject to full geotechnical testing. It was from this limited amount of factual information that many assumptions were made and fed into the predictive models used to inform the environmental impact statement. The assumptions of the mine's proponents may be sound but what we do know should make us pause and ask whether we cannot do better in assessing this project. There is weak roof geology, a thick coal seam and very weak floor geology. The mining conditions and geology are very different from those found beneath the Newcastle coalfield to the north. Add the overlying alluvial floodplain, which is also part of the local water catchment, and predicted subsidence of more than two metres, according to the assessment of the proponent. We should proceed with an abundance of caution. The problem is clear enough: coalmining is becoming more, not less, destructive to the environment. Regulation has failed to control this. This House has failed to control this.

Mr Adam Crouch: Yes, your regulation is failing.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: The Government is not doing any better, member for Terrigal. The Government is defending the status quo. The State Government regulates the conduct of mining and is ultimately responsible for the consequences of mining. The mechanisation of mining has increased the rate of extraction and the environmental damage that results. The State Government can and does regulate the type of mining that can occur and the circumstances under which it may occur. For example, current regulation prohibits full extraction mining beneath electricity transmission lines.

We can and should provide more rigorous control in this industry. We can and should define areas where mining can and cannot occur. We should seek to limit subsidence effects and should push the industry to introduce better technology to reduce impacts on the environment. Industry needs a clearer framework within which to work and citizens need the certainty that their water and land will be protected. This Parliament should have the wit to deliver that. I am optimistic enough to believe that we can deliver that for the people of New South Wales. The Government must show whether it is up to the task. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [10.38 a.m.]: I speak on behalf of the Government. The Government opposes this bill, as was indicated in a speech given on the Central Coast by the incredibly bashful but very effective Minister for Industry, Energy and Resources. The Government opposes this bill as it will sterilise the development of resources in New South Wales and lead to the loss of—

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for The Entrance was given a fair go. I now give the member fair warning: If there are any more interjections, members on both sides will be called to order.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: As I said earlier, the Government opposes this bill as it will effectively sterilise the development of resources in New South Wales and lead to the loss of capital investment and jobs in regional New South Wales. Those on the other side obviously do not care about jobs in New South Wales. We have seen that time and again. They opposed the Jobs Action Plan and this bill is just another way to not increase jobs here in New South Wales. The Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2015 will halt the development of the proposed Wallarah 2 coal project located at Wyong on the Central Coast.

Ms Kathy Smith: Could you talk about water, please?

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I note the interjection from the member for Gosford. If the member for Gosford ever got out of her office she might know where Wyong is. This bill would prevent planning approval being granted for mineral prospecting and mining and for petroleum prospecting and production within the proposed Wyong special area. The bill would distort the approval of major projects not just on the Central Coast but also across New South Wales. The impacts of establishing a Wyong special area would not be limited to the Central Coast or to coalmining. The implications are statewide because this bill has the potential to impact all resource projects in New South Wales. If passed, the bill would have a negative impact on future potential investment in coal exploration in regional New South Wales, obviously including the Central Coast. The Central Coast, in particular the western portion, holds important mineral resources—a fact of which those opposite are obviously ignorant.

The development of the Department of Planning and Environment's draft Central Coast regional plan—which hopefully those opposite have taken the time to read; it has plenty of pictures in it so they might be able to understand it—highlights the need for the ongoing use of productive lands with extractive resources. The expected economic benefits of the development of the Wallarah 2 coal project are consistent with the aims of this draft plan, which I presume those opposite have not bothered to read. It emphasises that to realise its maximum growth potential, the region must provide a business and work environment that attracts investment and provides local jobs.

Those opposite failed for 16 years to deliver that in government. We saw failure after failure. We saw mining licences being handed out like tic tacs by those opposite. For those opposite to come into this House and lecture us about how we should or should not conduct business and investment on the Central Coast is absolutely hypocritical. This is of course precisely what the Wallarah 2 coal project will do: it will deliver investment and provide local jobs. Let me make it clear, this project is worth more than \$800 million in capital investment. It is huge. It is a massive investment. It also has the potential to create 750 jobs in regional New South Wales, in particular on the Central Coast. It would employ 450 people in the construction phase and 300 people during operation. I repeat: it will employ 300 people during operation.

We realise that jobs are vital on the Central Coast, especially for Wyong. Even if the member for Wyong does not realise that, we on this side of the Chamber realise that. The members representing the electorates of Wyong, Gosford and The Entrance obviously do not realise that. The reality is that in the September 2015 quarter the unemployment rate for Wyong shire was running at 8 per cent, compared to 5.7 per cent for the whole of New South Wales, yet those opposite want to deny 300 people on the Central Coast the opportunity of employment. They must be kidding. Is this Labor's way of doing business on the Central Coast? They want to stop jobs creation and opportunities for those who want to work. They come in here and lecture us on how to run the economy and the State, and yet they want to deny 300 people on the Central Coast permanent employment—and this when the unemployment rate in the electorate of Wyong is around 8 per cent.

Mr Ray Williams: Why do they hate jobs?

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Why do those opposite hate jobs? What do they have against giving people jobs? I do not understand it. Preventing this project from going ahead will also have a negative fiscal impact on the entire State. The company has noted in its environmental impact statement [EIS] that royalties to the State are projected to be around \$661 million over the life of the Wallarah 2 project. It is worth reminding those opposite that coal remains the State's largest single export.

Mr Ray Williams: The lights are still on.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Absolutely, they are. Here in Macquarie Street the lights are burning bright. At today's coal prices Wallarah 2 will generate around \$400 million per year in export revenue and, as I said earlier, 300 local jobs during its operation. According to the International Energy Agency, South-East Asia is one of the few regions in the world where coal's share of the energy mix is projected to increase over the next 10 years, from

21 per cent to 29 per cent. In volume terms the demand for coal in South-East Asia is set to triple—from 130 million tonnes in 2013 to 440 million tonnes by 2040—due to the cost advantage of coal over alternative energy sources and the need to provide electricity to the millions of people in the region without access to it.

Australia is forecast to overtake Indonesia as the region's top exporter of coal as Indonesia reduces exports in favour of servicing a growing domestic need coal. The ongoing shift to installing more efficient power stations in South-East Asia translates to increased demand, particularly for the high quality coal that is produced here in New South Wales and on the Central Coast. Countries like Japan, Korea, China and Taiwan also continue to be premium markets for New South Wales coal. North Asia receives more than 95 per cent of the coal exported from the great State of New South Wales, including the Central Coast.

Our ability to extract and ship high-quality coal to Asia cost effectively represents a major competitive advantage for New South Wales, and the Central Coast, in the global market. The Wallarah 2 coal project will also support the continuity of coal production in New South Wales, and therefore support not only more jobs but also royalty and export revenue for New South Wales, especially as the State's older coalmines are starting to close. It is clear to those of us on this side of the House that this project, like all major projects proposed in New South Wales, is subject to a robust, independent planning assessment framework.

Mr Mark Coure: It is independent.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: It is independent. Again, this is something those opposite are not clear about.

Mr Mark Coure: It wasn't approved by Ian Macdonald.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: That is exactly right, and licences are not being handed out like tic tacs. This independent framework determines whether the project should be approved based on the triple bottom line that covers social, economic and environmental factors. It is important to note that that framework is in place and that this Government sticks to it stringently. The New South Wales Minerals Industry Action Plan shows that New South Wales coal production will fall without significant investment to expand existing mines or to develop new ones. Let us look at the numbers.

According to the Centre for International Economics—and "economics" is another word that is pretty foreign to those opposite—a \$100 million decline in NSW's coal production, which is less than a 1 per cent decline in a single year, would lead to an overall decline of \$131 million in New South Wales gross State product and the loss of 472 full-time equivalent jobs. We know that those opposite do not care about jobs. This bill would lead to the sterilisation of New South Wales resources, the loss of investment and employment in regional New South Wales, in particular on the Central Coast, and reduced royalties to the State, and it almost certainly would increase perceptions of New South Wales as a jurisdiction of high sovereign risk, as was seen during the 16 years of the Labor Government. Before I finish I once again highlight the hypocrisy of those opposite. They come in here and criticise the Government, and yet the member for Wyong accepted a \$5,000 cheque from the Wallarah 2 coalmine. I seek a brief extension of time.

Question—That the member's speaking time be extended—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 48

Mr Anderson	Mr Henskens	Mr Roberts
Mr Aplin	Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Sidoti
Mr Ayres	Mr Humphries	Mrs Skinner
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Johnsen	Ms T. F. Smith
Mr Conolly	Mr Kean	Mr Speakman
Mr Constance	Dr Lee	Mr Stokes
Mr Coure	Ms Leong	Mr Taylor
Mr Crouch	Mr Maguire	Mr Toole
Mr Dominello	Mr Marshall	Ms Upton
Mr Elliott	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Ward
Mr Gee	Mr O'Dea	Mr Williams
Mr George	Mr Parker	Mrs Williams
Ms Gibbons	Mrs Pavey	
Ms Goward	Mr Perrottet	
Mr Greenwich	Ms Petinos	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Gulaptis	Mr Piper	Mr Bromhead
Mr Hazzard	Mr Provost	Mr Patterson

Noes, 29

Ms Aitchison	Mr Harris	Mr Minns
Mr Atalla	Ms Harrison	Mr Park
Mr Barr	Ms Haylen	Mr Robertson
Ms Burney	Mr Hoenig	Ms K. Smith
Ms Car	Ms Hornery	Ms Washington
Ms Catley	Mr Kamper	Ms Watson
Mr Crakanthorp	Mr Lynch	Mr Zangari
Mr Daley	Ms McKay	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Doyle	Mr Mehan	Mr Lalich
Ms Finn	Ms Mihailuk	Mr Warren

Question resolved in the affirmative.**Motion agreed to.**

Mr David Harris: Point of order: The clock had actually ticked over to zero and then the member asked for extra time.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The House has just voted on the matter. There is no point of order. The interjections of the member for Wyong this morning have been getting right up my nose.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [10.58 a.m.]: I had almost finished and now I have been generously granted another 4½ minutes. I notice that the incredibly bashful Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy is in the Chamber. Obviously those opposite have a glass jaw in relation to facts. I am pleased I have another 4½ minutes because it gives me the opportunity to reiterate some of the points that I outlined earlier. This bill will prevent planning approval being granted for mineral prospecting or mining, and for petroleum prospecting and production not just within the Wyong special area but potentially across New South Wales. This bill will distort the approval of major projects in New South Wales. The impacts of establishing a Wyong special area would not be limited to the Central Coast or to coalmining. The implications are potentially state wide because this bill has the potential to impact on all resource projects across New South Wales. I thank the bashful Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy for joining us and I remind members of his speech a week ago with regard to the seriousness of this bill and how it would effectively sterilise New South Wales.

Mr Anthony Roberts: You're inspired.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I appreciate that. The draft Central Coast Regional Plan of the Department of Planning of Environment, which probably has not been read by those opposite because the pictures were not big enough, highlights the need for the ongoing use of productive lands with extractive resources. The Central Coast has a wealth of natural resources, especially high-quality coal. The expected economic benefits of developing the Wallarah 2 Coal Project are consistent with the aims of this draft plan, which emphasises that to realise the region's maximum growth potential the region must provide a business and work environment which attracts investment and provides local jobs. As I stated earlier, this will provide in excess of 300 local jobs. I referred earlier to a fantastic image that I am happy to show and happy to table.

Mr John Sidoti: Name the people in it.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I can certainly name them.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I remind the member for Terrigal that props are not allowed.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I am happy to table it.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: The member for Terrigal has been given an additional five minutes speaking time. He is treating you and this House with contempt. It is an embarrassment.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. I have instructed the member for Terrigal to not use props.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I do not need to use the image; I can describe it. The member for Wyong's hypocrisy is legendary. He is shown in the photograph with his big Cheshire grin and incredibly bright board shorts happily accepting a cheque for \$5,000.

Mr Ray Williams: How much?

Mr ADAM CROUCH: For 5,000 big ones. The cheque clearly states it is from Wallarah 2. That shows the hypocrisy of members opposite, especially the member for Wyong. I feel sorry for the Soldiers Beach Surf Life Saving Club. The member for Wyong has potentially cut off a support system for his surf club by introducing this bill. As I said, jobs are vital on the Central Coast, especially in Wyong. The unemployment rate is still at 8 per cent in that area. The Wallarah 2 coalmine would offer 300 jobs, but members opposite would deny people those jobs, as well as the 450 people who would be employed during the construction phase of the project. Government members and the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy have made it perfectly clear why this bill should be opposed. It is not good for the Central Coast or New South Wales. It risks quarantining the entire State from mining royalties and jobs. I have really appreciated the extra five minutes members have granted me because—

Mr Mark Coure: Ask for another extension.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I am hoping they might grant me another extension of time because there will be a massive increase in the requirement for coal everywhere, including on the Central Coast. I look forward to the Central Coast having an opportunity to provide more jobs and export high-quality coal. With that, the Government obviously cannot support this bill. [*Time expired.*]

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) [11.02 a.m.]: I speak for The Greens in debate on the Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2015. I will be affectionately critical of both sides of the House. The Greens previously introduced a bill that encompassed the protection of this special area. We are pleased to see Labor bring this bill to the House, but we are disappointed that it does not go further. The Greens support the bill, but it is a watered-down version of the bill we introduced two years ago. Two years after Luke Foley voted against the Central Coast Water Catchments Protection Bill 2014, which was introduced by Jeremy Buckingham on behalf of The Greens, the Labor Party has finally brought in its heavily watered-down bill as promised. Our bill prohibited any new authorities for mining or exploration, including for petroleum, in the Central Coast's seven critical drinking water catchments.

In the past two weeks I have learned that any critical or nuanced conversation about mines turns into a polemic debate about jobs. The argument is that people who discuss mines are speaking against miners and against mining industry jobs. That is ridiculous. We are talking about being left behind in the big picture of the twenty-first century renewable boom that has basically gone offshore. I say at the outset that The Greens are not anti-jobs and certainly not anti-mining jobs. We think that a transition could have happened a long time ago, but it has not. The critical drinking water catchments that The Greens sought to protect were the Mangrove Creek Dam, Mardi Dam, Ourimbah Creek, Wyong River, Porters Creek, Mangrove Creek Weir and Mooney Mooney Dam catchment areas. This bill is limited to the Wallarah 2 mine only because Labor is a strong supporter of the expansion of the Mandalong mine, which is also in the critical Central Coast drinking water catchment area.

It is great that Labor members have admitted that the Wallarah 2 mine should not go ahead, but it is time for them to stop narrowcasting to their constituents and start taking a firm position in opposition to coal more broadly. We will make this a key election issue and will not let up on Labor's narrowcasting. What is Labor's position on the Shenhua or Carooona mines in the Liverpool Plains, or new mines in the Bylong Valley or Southern Highlands? We know that Labor supports the massive Adani mines in Queensland and is a strong supporter of expansions to existing mines in the Hunter, including the Drayton South and Mount Thorley Warkworth mines. Will Labor sign up to no longer take donations from coal companies and to get rid of subsidies to coal companies?

The bill prohibits any new authorities from mining or exploration, including for petroleum, in the areas of land covered by coal licences associated with the Wallarah 2 mine on the Central Coast. The bill does not cancel any existing licences, but does prevent the Minister from renewing or modifying them and does not allow for any new planning approvals to be given. The bill does not cover other areas of the Central Coast water catchments—for example, the area covered by the expansion of the Mandalong mine. The bill holds the Liberals to account for their 2011 election promise that the Wallarah coalmine in the Wyong drinking water catchment would not go ahead. More than 300,000 people live on the Central Coast, and the region continues to grow at one of the fastest rates in New South Wales.

The Central Coast has more residents than the Northern Territory. According to the Government's Central Coast Regional Strategy, the region's population is expected to grow by around 100,000 over the period to 2031. The South Korean Government's Korea Resource Corporation or Kores has applied to mine 5 million tonnes of coal a year for 25 years at the Wallarah 2 coalmine—with another application likely to extend the life expectancy to 38 years—in the Central Coast's drinking water catchment. The former Labor Government rejected the mine on the eve of the 2011 State election. Speaking about the mine at a campaign rally on the Central Coast on 28 February 2008, Barry O'Farrell said:

The next Liberal-National government will ensure that mining cannot occur here, will ensure that mining can't occur in any water catchment area, and will ensure that mining leases and mining exploration permits reflect that common sense. No ifs, no buts, a guarantee.

On 18 February 2014 the Department of Planning and Infrastructure released its preliminary assessment of the Wallarah 2 coalmine near Wyong, recommending its approval and stating "there were no environmental or amenity reasons that prevent the project proceeding". One wonders what happened between 2008 and 2014. This was despite the Central Coast Water Corporation saying in its submission:

Water resources on the Central Coast are extremely limited and are fully committed to meeting the water demands of a rapidly growing area. It is essential that these limited resources are protected.

The Central Coast water supply is highly dependent on the stream flows and water quality in the Wyong River and its tributary Jiliby Jiliby Creek. Any activity which puts at risk the quantity or quality of this source will have significant consequences for the community.

Those statements were not made by an environmental group but by the Central Coast Water Corporation. A technical review of the environmental impact statement [EIS] for the Wallarah 2 Coal Project undertaken by Pells Sullivan Meynink said:

There is a high level of uncertainty related to the groundwater modelling undertaken as part of the EIS.

There is a high probability that leakage losses from the alluvial lands will impact the surface water available to the water supply.

It is an absolute travesty that we would even be considering allowing longwall coalmining in the drinking water catchment for a population greater than that of the entire Northern Territory. The Government has tried to plead that the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, and the Planning Assessment Commission ensure that it is at arm's length from the assessment process and could we please, please leave it alone. The Greens and many others do not accept that this process is impartial, but we should not forget that as legislators we have a responsibility to develop an assessment framework that serves the interests of the people of New South Wales and not the interests of a Korean coalmining company or any coalmining company.

Longwall mining is a key threatening process in schedule 3 to the Threatened Species Conservation Act (NSW) that dramatically alters geology, hydrology, surface topology, surface water quality, surface water quantity, and ecological integrity. In the drinking water catchment for the people of Sydney where mining has been allowed to occur by this and previous governments, coalmining is damaging, cracking and draining rivers, creek beds and underground aquifers every day. It is for this very reason that the Sydney Catchment Authority's submission to the Government's resource significance mining SEPP called for a ban on longwall mining near major lakes and reservoirs. The Greens acknowledge the remarkable work of the community that has fought for this bill and fought to protect their drinking water catchments from the impacts of mining.

The Australian Coal Alliance, especially its spokesperson Alan Hayes, has been at the forefront of this battle, as have the Central Coast Greens and Lock the Gate. I also acknowledge the work of Wyong council, which has made extensive submissions to the Government in support of its unanimous resolutions to oppose coalmining in its water catchment areas. This work and opposition has been supported by Gosford City Council as well. It is The Greens policy to prohibit all mining or exploration, including for petroleum, in all drinking water catchments throughout New South Wales. Whilst this is not a policy position that the Government shares, it made a promise to the people of the Central Coast that in government it would protect them from mining in their drinking water catchments. Premier Baird and his Government should support this bill. The Greens commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.10 a.m.]: I oppose the Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2015.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [11.10 a.m.]: I move:

That the question be now put.

Mr Chris Patterson: Point of clarification: Can that be done during a member's speech?

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): It can.

Mr Ray Williams: To the point of clarification—

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Ring the bells.

Question—That the question be now put—put.

The House divided.

[*In division*]

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The launch of the Australian Football League [AFL] is currently taking place in the garden on level nine. I invite any member who is an AFL fan to make their way to the garden on level nine after the division.

Ayes, 35

Ms Aitchison	Mr Harris	Mr Park
Mr Atalla	Ms Harrison	Mr Parker
Mr Barr	Ms Haylen	Mr Piper
Ms Burney	Mr Hoenig	Mr Robertson
Ms Car	Ms Hornery	Ms K. Smith
Ms Catley	Mr Kamper	Ms T. F. Smith
Mr Chanthivong	Ms Leong	Ms Washington
Mr Crakanthorp	Mr Lynch	Ms Watson
Mr Daley	Ms McKay	Mr Zangari
Ms Doyle	Mr Mehan	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Finn	Ms Mihailuk	Mr Lalich
Mr Greenwich	Mr Minns	Mr Warren

Noes, 44

Mr Anderson	Mr Hazzard	Mr Roberts
Mr Aplin	Mr Henskens	Mr Sidoti
Mr Ayres	Ms Hodgkinson	Mrs Skinner
Ms Berejikian	Mr Humphries	Mr Speakman
Mr Conolly	Mr Johnsen	Mr Stokes
Mr Constance	Mr Kean	Mr Taylor
Mr Coure	Dr Lee	Mr Toole
Mr Crouch	Mr Maguire	Mr Tudehope
Mr Dominello	Mr Marshall	Ms Upton
Mr Elliott	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Ward
Mr Gee	Mr O'Dea	Mr Williams
Mr George	Mrs Pavey	Mrs Williams
Ms Gibbons	Mr Perrottet	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Goward	Ms Petinos	Mr Bromhead
Mr Gulaptis	Mr Provest	Mr Patterson

Pairs

Mr Dib	Mr Baird
Mr Foley	Mr Barilaro
Ms Hay	Mrs Davies
Dr McDermott	Mr Evans

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.17 a.m.]: I thank The Greens for taking five minutes of my time. As I started to say earlier, I oppose the Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2015. Should the Wallarah 2 project progress, it will be subject to a strict compliance and enforcement regime that supports best practice operations. Anything in planning should be based upon that; not politics. I take this opportunity to explain to the House how the compliance and enforcement regime supports best practice mining in this State. The strength of this regime means that blanket bans are not needed for mining projects—simple. This regime means that projects that proceed are only allowed to do so under strict conditions, which are continually monitored and enforced.

The critical nature of these regulatory functions is why there has been a substantial restructure within the Division of Resources and Energy. The Compliance and Enforcement Branch of the Division of Resources and Energy was established on 31 July 2014. The branch combined all compliance and enforcement personnel across the division to strengthen our compliance and enforcement capabilities. It is a separate branch, highlighting the importance we place on this function. The Compliance and Enforcement Branch has led a regulatory best practice project to implement an outcomes- and risk-based regulatory framework. This formed the basis for redefining the State's approach to compliance and enforcement policy. The division's compliance and enforcement policy has been peer reviewed and is published on the division's website. The Government is showing leadership in best practice regulation for the resources sector.

The Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2015 is not about best practice regulation, it is about economic vandalism. A Compliance Coordination Unit has been created within the Compliance and Enforcement Branch. The unit leads the development, implementation and continual improvement of systems and processes to drive consistent, transparent and measurable outcomes for compliance within the resources sector. The Compliance Coordination Unit includes an intelligence function, which collects, receives and analyses information relating to possible risks and instances of non-compliance by the regulated community. A compliance and enforcement system was implemented in March 2015.

This system captures all the compliance, enforcement and regulatory activity undertaken by the division, including any suspected non-compliance by an entity regulated by the division. The Activity, Compliance and Enforcement System [ACES] will enable the holistic monitoring and assessment of historical and emerging trends. In addition, a new draft rehabilitation and environmental management guideline has been developed that will also help empower greater rehabilitation standard adherence. The approach proposed in this bill of putting blanket bans on a project is totally unnecessary. New South Wales has in place a tight compliance and enforcement regime that negates the need for blanket bans. The House should oppose this bill.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [11.22 a.m.]: I oppose the Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2015. In the past five years this Government has implemented some of the toughest rules, regulations and protection measures for land use in relation to the resources sector. In the Tamworth electorate a number of development applications are pending. Two development applications are the Shenhua coalmine and the BHP Caroon Coal Project. The Shenhua project sits in an area around Breeza, which is just outside Gunnedah. It is in the Liverpool Plains region, not on the Liverpool Plains. The Liverpool Plains region is an expansive area that stretches pretty much from the Coolah Tops all the way to just south of Narrabri—it is a very large region.

Gunnedah is and has been the centre of mining for nearly 100 years. In fact, the township of Gunnedah has a monument to a miner, and Gunnedah's logo has a miner on its crest. So when it comes to understanding what it takes to get the balance right between mining, agriculture and land use conflict, Gunnedah is certainly well versed and across the detail in protecting our water, our farmers and our land—they know because they have been doing it for 100 years. When this Government came to power in 2011, the rules and regulations under the outgoing Labor Government were a blank sheet of paper—there were none. Exploration licences were handed out like confetti, backroom deals were done here and there. If someone wanted an exploration licence all they had to do was have a cup of coffee with someone from the Labor Party somewhere in Macquarie Street and they could have a licence.

Those rules have changed. We have put significant protections around our prime agricultural land, around our water, around our farmers, around our food production and, in particular, around the communities that embrace mining. The Shenhua project, situated on ridge country, continually gets pushed into a corner. As the member for Tamworth, it is my job to ensure that the regulations are so robust and the protection wrapped around the area of this mine so stringent that it will ensure that it does not and will not impact adversely on water or on prime agricultural land, and that it will not stop farmers from going about their daily business of making a living off the land.

Landholders have said to me that the location of the Shenhua project is in country that is bone dry. As I said, it is in the region of the Liverpool Plains, but it is not on the Liverpool Plains. Landholders who tried to work that country found it very difficult because it is dry. Curlewis, a little town in the ridge country right near the area of the Shenhua project, consistently has and will continue to have problems accessing potable water because the area is so dry. The town has to sink a bore in black soil on the Liverpool Plains to take water from the bore to the little community of Curlewis. I know that we have to ensure that we get the balance right between regional growth and economic development. Smaller communities in regional New South Wales are struggling to survive; they are contracting as the population moves towards the larger centres.

In the mid-nineties, when there was a slump in mining, Gunnedah was declining. Since the mining industry and the resources sector have kicked in, Gunnedah has grown and has seen the benefits, such as jobs creation and the opportunity for families to move to Gunnedah, not away from it. When I doorknock in Gunnedah to get a feel for what is happening, what the people want and how they feel about the conflict of land use, they tell me they want jobs, they want to be able to put their kids through school and they want services. When the population of a region grows, the people get services—police, health and better roads. The people of Gunnedah want those services and they want to live in Gunnedah, but they also want the Government to protect prime agricultural land, their farmers and their water, and they want the Government to get the balance right. People had a clear choice at the last election. One year ago I stood for election as the member for Tamworth on the platform of getting the balance right in relation to creating jobs and protecting our prime agricultural land. The other candidate was against mining and wanted to shut down the mining industry. The people of Gunnedah had a clear choice.

This was basically a referendum on getting the balance right, and 63 per cent of the population of Gunnedah, including smaller areas such as Mullaley and Tambar Springs, the soil areas that will be affected, voted at the polling booths for me to get the balance right. That has given me the mandate to continue to push for strong regulation to protect our water, farmers, prime agricultural land and food bowl. At the same time we must ensure that our regional centres like Gunnedah grow because people want jobs and they want the enjoyment of living in a regional centre the size of Gunnedah. A strong Gunnedah is good for New South Wales because it helps our economy grow and ultimately a strong New South Wales benefits the rest of the nation. Regional centres that continue to grow and prosper and to provide input into the State's economy must be good for the State overall.

Dr Geoff Lee: Good jobs.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I note the interjection of the member for Parramatta—good jobs. That is what we need in regional New South Wales. We keep talking about decentralisation and helping smaller regional communities. That is done by creating an environment that enables jobs growth, by giving the community good jobs and options. School leavers who live in a regional centre that has jobs and is growing will know they have options that will enable them to remain in the area. We must provide opportunities for young people as well. There are good opportunities in regional New South Wales but we must create an environment for young people to stay. This Government is focused on getting that balance right. As the member for Tamworth I understand its importance; I think about it all the time. That is why the Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2015 is a load of nonsense.

Pursuant to sessional order business interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

Pursuant to sessional orders Notices of Motions (General Notices) proceeded with.

ORGAN TRANSPLANTS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.32 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the medical staff who in 2015 performed the largest number of organ transplantations ever undertaken in New South Wales.
- (2) Thanks the families of the record 127 donors who enabled 379 organs to be transplanted in life saving operations.

New South Wales is committed to continuing to support a whole-of-hospital approach to organ donation. New South Wales recorded 127 deceased organ donors in 2015, surpassing the previous record of 102 donors in

2013 and exceeding the 2015 target of 116 donors. This was New South Wales' highest ever number of deceased organ donors. Last month and in September 2015, New South Wales had 15 deceased donors, the highest number recorded in any single month since 2010. These outstanding results could not have been achieved without the expert care provided by doctors and nurses in our hospital intensive care units and emergency departments.

The New South Wales Government is committed to having designated requestors in our hospitals as they have the unique skills to help families make the very difficult decision to consent to donating organs and tissues. Over 1,600 Australians are on the organ transport list at any one time but organ donation is a very rare event; only about 1 per cent of deaths occur in circumstances that allow organ donation to take place. The best way to increase organ donation is to encourage people to discuss their wishes with their loved ones. The New South Wales Government's two key priorities for 2015-16 to increase the donation rate are: increasing the consent rate for organ donation by ensuring that only specially trained clinicians conduct the family donor conversation; and supporting clinicians to increase identification of potential organ donors.

The New South Wales Government continues to encourage people to discuss their wishes with their families and record their name on the Australian Organ Donor Register. Nothing is a truer reflection of our shared humanity than to take steps to save another person's life, even more so when that person may be a total stranger. Many community groups throughout New South Wales have rallied in support of organ donation. Two such groups with which I have been involved recently are the Shrimad Rajchandra Mission and the NSW Indian Welfare Association. Last Sunday I attend the Shrimad Rajchandra Mission, led by Dr Dhaval Ghelani. The organisation was founded by Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai, a religious scholar with a large following around the world. This year the organisation celebrates 50 years.

Yesterday in this House I spoke about Deyaan Udani, the young boy from Quakers Hill who donated his organs to save four lives. In Deyaan's memory, Pujya Gurudevshri has launched a worldwide organ donation drive to increase awareness about organ donation and help families with the decision of organ donation in very difficult times. I had the privilege to attend a seminar by the NSW Indian Welfare Association to raise awareness about organ and tissue donation in the Australian Indian community. A couple of hundred Australian Indians attended that evening. I congratulate Dr Santha Sampath, President of the NSW Indian Welfare Association.

Some of the speakers at the seminar included Dr Deepak Bhonagiri, an intensive care specialist at Liverpool, Campbelltown and Macquarie University hospitals and a previous medical consultant for organ and tissue donation at the Australian Red Cross Blood Bank, who gave a wonderful presentation. Another presentation was given by a donation specialist nurse who works with hospital staff to coordinate and facilitate the process of organ and tissue donation. I commend Rosemarie and Olly Zammit, who spoke about their personal experiences. We also witnessed a play called *Life Changes*, written and directed by local artists, which is aimed at raising awareness of organ donation in a heartwarming way.

In conclusion, I highlight the efforts by the Western Sydney Local Health District [WSLHD]—Chief Executive Mr Danny O'Connor, along with his team, clinicians and allied health professionals—to improve donation rates within all facilities to support the State and Commonwealth directions in this important area. There is broad engagement of senior clinical staff in emergency departments, intensive care units and other clinical areas to continue to raise awareness of the importance of increasing donation rates. Staff are also involved in providing support and education across the district on organ and tissue donation. The team works hand in hand with the NSW Organ and Tissue Donation service. The team supports families through their challenges and decision-making when it comes to the difficult time of donating a loved one's organ or tissue.

Family donor conversation workshops continue with medical, nursing staff and allied health staff to increase awareness of the importance of organ and tissue donation. It is wonderful to see that community awareness is so strong and continues to be a vital part of their work. We are all aware of the cultural sensitivities associated with some beliefs in our multicultural communities in Western Sydney. I have attended many presentations on the topic, and my understanding is that the myths about cultural association can be dispelled when one understands what is required in an organ or tissue donation. Organ donation is a gift of life. I commend donors and their families for making that decision in difficult situations. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) [11.39 a.m.]: I speak on behalf of the Labor Opposition in support of this very important motion. I congratulate the member for Parramatta on bringing this issue before the House.

The good news is that medical science is increasingly finding more ways to save lives. Organ and tissue donation is often a difficult subject for families to discuss, particularly when they have to make a decision about a loved one. Under the previous arrangement, people would put their name on the organ donor register but family members could overrule their wishes and withdraw permission to donate organs.

In 2015 New South Wales recorded its highest number of organ donations, but it is clear that families need to continue to have discussions on this topic. We must continue to educate people about organ donation. Last year 127 people donated organs. That enabled the transplant of 379 organs and the saving of lives. In each of those cases the family made the important decision to give someone the gift of life. The member for Parramatta, in his contribution, recognised the work of doctors and nurses in this field. Organ transplantation is a very complex procedure. While doctors and nurses do a fantastic job, they have to contend with factors such as the transportation of organs over long distances. A recent news program showed a new device that is being used to transport hearts and other organs, which means that organs can last longer and be transported over longer distances. New technology helps, but without doctors and nurses transplantations could not take place.

Michael O'Leary, medical director of the NSW Organ and Tissue Donation service, commented recently that new measures were paying off. Those new measures include the abolition of the previous procedure for inclusion on the register and, more importantly, the training of specialist staff in hospitals to discuss the issue with families. Even if a person has indicated that they want to donate their organs, it can be very hard for the family to concur with those wishes when the time comes. Quite often the family withdraws permission. Education helps people to gain an understanding of what can be achieved with organ and tissue donation. Training specialist staff to enable them to have the difficult discussion with families is an important part of the initiative.

The member for Parramatta raised the significant issue of cultural sensibilities. We need to do more work in that area, but trained specialist staff will be of assistance. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that people in our communities understand the benefits of organ and tissue donation. We must sell the message as much as we can. I cannot imagine the impact on a family when a family member is waiting for an organ transplant and does not receive an organ donation. It would cause significant stress and have an impact emotionally on the family and on the health of the person awaiting the transplant. I hope and pray that I am never in that situation. If I were, I would want to know that somebody out there was willing to make a donation to help someone else.

People think that one person makes one donation, but a fit, healthy person can donate several organs. The figures for last year show that 127 people donated organs but 379 organs were transplanted. Organs that can be transplanted include not only the heart, lungs and kidneys but also the eyes. Science has achieved much in the past few decades. On behalf of the Labor Opposition, I congratulate the member for Parramatta on moving this motion. Organ donation is a significant issue. Members of Parliament should continue to highlight the great benefits of organ donation. It is the gift of life.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [11.46 a.m.]: It is with great pleasure that I speak in support of this motion. Organ donation is life giving and life changing. It is a very important issue. Organ donation, I believe, is above politics. I am happy to see that the Opposition is supporting this motion moved by the member for Parramatta. One organ and tissue donor can transform the lives of 10 or more people. Last year New South Wales saw a record number of deceased organ donors. The target was 116, with a previous high result of 102, but our amazing health professionals were able to complete 127. This equated to a 9.48 per cent increase above the target that was set and a 24.51 per cent increase above the previous high result. A lot of effort went into achieving that result, so a big thank you should be given to our health professionals, who continue to go above and beyond in their line of work. Most importantly, we thank the families of the donors whose tissue and organs assisted in saving many lives.

Becoming an organ donor takes much thought and entails a lot of discussion with family members. I am glad that in 2012 the New South Wales Government changed the laws regarding organ and tissue donation, through the Human Tissue Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. That required people to go through a process to register as a donor on the Australian organ donor register, instead of just ticking a box when obtaining a licence. This significant change encourages people to have discussions with their family about being a donor so that their wishes are carried out after they have passed away. Rather than ticking a box and never mentioning their wishes to family and friends, people now should talk to their family to help them to understand their wishes.

I am so thankful for these donors and this legislation. It means that hundreds more lives were saved last year as more donations were able to occur. Being an organ donor is something I personally believe is important. Everybody should give some thought to signing up to become an organ donor. In 2012, along with the Minister

for Health, I filled out the form in Parliament House when representatives from the Australian Organ Donor Register were here, and that is something I am very proud of. I have had a conversation with my family about it so that they know my wishes. I think we all need to have that conversation. I have spoken in this House about Paul Bourke and his marathon run from Melbourne to Chipping Norton Public School to raise awareness of organ and tissue donation. In 2010 Paul's wife, Suzette, suffered a brain aneurysm.

But Suzette was able to save six lives thanks to her commitment to being an organ donor and having had discussions with her family. Paul's run was to promote "the greatest gift"—the gift of a life-saving organ or tissue donation. Paul said that the physical challenge of the run came second to his desire to promote this cause. I was pleased to be there to see him run through the gates of Chipping Norton Public School and to see his three children greet him after his long run. His amazing feat was a great tribute to his wife and the lives that she saved. A family friend waited a very long time for a kidney transplant and I know the stress that it placed on his family. I am so pleased to see organ donation being made easier and conversations around it being promoted. I am proud to be a registered organ donor. I would once again like to thank the family members who support the wishes of their loved ones who are registered donors and all the people in our community who promote organ and tissue donation.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I recognise in the gallery this morning senior students, captains and vice captains from various schools around New South Wales. I welcome them to the Parliament this morning. They are being looked after by the Parliamentary Education Unit and I trust they will enjoy their day at Parliament House. I also welcome Mr Kyme Lavelle, the chief executive officer of Rous Water, and Robert Mustow, the chairman of Rous Water. They are visiting all the way from the North Coast and are here as guests of the member for Lismore.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [11.51 a.m.]: I too welcome the young men and women joining us in the gallery this morning. They are our current school leaders and I have no doubt they will be our future community leaders—in medicine, as we are talking this morning about organ donation, in business or in commerce. I congratulate them on their success thus far and look forward to their success in the future. I thank them for visiting us at Parliament. Organ donation is supported by the whole of Parliament. A key issue I want to touch on is that there are over 1,600 Australians on the organ transplant list at any one time yet organ donation is a very rare event. Only 1 per cent of deaths occur in circumstances that allow organ donation to take place. As I said, 1,600 Australians are waiting for an organ transplant and there are millions of people in Australia who could become a registered organ donor.

Society needs leadership on this issue because organ donation saves lives. Organ donation only comes about in extremely sad circumstances, that is, the loss of a loved one. Unfortunately, in a time of grief it is very difficult for families to make the decision to donate. Their decision is not wrong under any circumstance but the community needs to be made aware that 1,600 people are waiting for an organ transplant. Donations are needed. When we talk about organ donation we often think about the hearts, lungs and kidneys. But other organs that are needed for transplants include, for example, the eyes. A cornea transplant can make a tremendous difference to somebody in need.

I commend the member for Parramatta for bringing this motion forward and those on the other side for their bipartisan support. The motion today is about getting the message out there. We must have this conversation in the wider community. Our young leaders who are in the gallery this morning must take this issue back to their families. I am not necessarily saying they should register or get others to register but they should be discussing the issue. People must have these conversations now because often families, in a time of grief, will go against the wishes of the deceased. We understand that. Everybody is singing in unison on this motion.

I commend the Hon. Jillian Skinner, the Minister for Health, for her tremendous work on this issue. I know that she would want us to acknowledge her extremely hardworking staff. I pay tribute to Rebecca Williams; Katherine Thompson, the organ donation adviser; Michael Evangelidis; Kathryn Steinweiss; Liz Hannan; Blake Hardy; Gail Hodges; Sabina Greco; Rohan Ely; Chris Williams; Meredith O'Rourke; James Bolster, who is sitting in the attendant's gallery and who is an outstanding young man; and Professor Les White, a paediatrician who has been instrumental in this area. I thank them all for their efforts. They all do a great job.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [11.55 a.m.]: I support this great motion moved by the member for Parramatta. I also acknowledge the young leaders who have joined us at Parliament this morning. The motion congratulates the medical staff who in 2015 performed the largest number of organ transplantations ever undertaken in New South Wales and thanks the families of the record 127 donors who enabled 379 organs to be

transplanted in life-saving operations. Previously, most members in this House would have ticked the little box on their licences to become an organ donor. In 2012 there was a significant change to the legislation and people had to register their wish to become an organ donor on the national Australian Organ Donor Register.

In recent years I have been made aware that the relatives or next of kin of a deceased person can make a decision to go against a person's wishes to be an organ donor. Unfortunately, that has happened in a number of cases. So even with the good intention of ticking the box or registering on the national register, the next of kin can make a decision to override a person's wishes. The message coming out of that is when people register they have to have a discussion with their family and loved ones. The greatest gift that anyone can give another in this world is the gift of life. Through unfortunate circumstances where a person has lost his or her life, that person can give this gift to a number of people. It is one of the greatest things one can do. The Parliamentary Lions, of which I have been a member and the Deputy-Speaker the president, raised a considerable amount for the Sydney Eye Hospital, which is located just next door.

Along with the Deputy-Speaker, I went on a tour of the hospital. I was amazed at what could be done with eyes that had been donated. Some of the eyes had been kept for more than eight or nine years. Tiny slivers are shaved off the eyeball to regrow corneas and other parts. It is amazing that one donated eyeball has already helped well over 200 people see again. It is important to have a discussion to create awareness of organ donation in our communities. Anyone requiring a transplant lives on a knife edge day in, day out waiting, which causes a tremendous amount of grief and worry. We should have that discussion with our loved ones and close family who can technically override one's decision. I know the Minister for Health, Mrs Jillian Skinner, has been a great advocate of organ donation and I thank James Bolster from her office who wants to spread the good word about organ donation to make sure that the gift of life is given to others.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [11.59 a.m.]: I acknowledge the great work of the member for Parramatta and commend him for moving this motion on organ donation. This is a small part in a bigger picture and we need to start the conversation about the importance of organ donation with family and friends around the kitchen table. I acknowledge the great work of this Government, in particular the Minister for Health, Mrs Jillian Skinner, and her staff members who I will not name individually. I also acknowledge the great work of the Organ and Tissue Authority [OTA] which works with States and Territories, clinicians and the community sector in delivering a national reform program to improve access to life transplants for all Australians.

New South Wales has seen a huge boost with 127 deceased organ donors enabling 379 organs to be transplanted. There was also an increase in tissue donations in New South Wales in 2015, including 669 corneal transplants to restore sight as well as heart valve transplants to correct malformations, bone and tendon donations, and spinal fusions and treatments after cancer trauma and sports injuries. Last year was remarkable for organ and tissue donations. At a time of immense grief and distress a record number of New South Wales families chose to give the gift of life to someone in need. The importance of organ donation is certainly a delicate issue to discuss around the kitchen table but one that I have raised with my friends and family.

Donate Life Week will be held this year from 31 July to 7 August when on social media and through our local paper I will talk about the importance of organ donation. New South Wales is committed to continuing to support a whole-of-hospital approach to organ donation. New South Wales recorded the highest ever number of deceased organ donors in 2015. At the beginning of the year New South Wales had 15 deceased donors—the highest number recorded in any month since 2010. These outstanding results could not have been achieved without the expert care provided by doctors and nurses in our hospital intensive care units and emergency departments across New South Wales. The New South Wales Government is committed to this approach across our local hospitals, as they have the unique skills to help families make the difficult decision to consent to donating organs and tissues. I thank all families that have participated in this program. I look forward to supporting it in the future.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.03 p.m.], by leave: I commend the member for Parramatta for moving this important motion on organ donation. I am particularly fond of speaking about organ donation because our society needs to understand the issue and put up its hand to donate organs to help people in the future. Some people might shudder at the thought of allowing someone to remove their organs when they have passed away. When someone is lying in a bed in hospital waiting for a heart, lung, liver or other organ transplants to keep them alive they would not hesitate in the future to put up their hand to donate.

This was never more apparent to me than in 2015 when Michael and Kylie Gremmo lost their son, Nathan. Nathan was a wonderful 13-year-old boy and the life of that family even though they also have two

beautiful daughters. Sadly at 4.20 p.m. on Thursday 30 April 2015 Nathan said to his mother, "Love you, mum", climbed out of a car and was hit by a passing car and never recovered. Without a shadow of a doubt the Gremmo family is one of the most supportive families in the Hills. They are the owners of Gremmo Homes, which has been a good housing and development business. The family give back to our community in spades. There is never a charitable event that one of the boys of the Gremmo family would not support. They have donated many hundreds of thousands of dollars to worthy causes across the Hills.

The family was torn by the loss of their 13-year-old son and it shattered our community. When the funeral took place there were no fewer than 5,500 people at Oakhill College. The Minister for Corrections and member for Baulkham Hills, the Federal member for Mitchell, Alex Hawke, and I attended together with the mayor and other representatives of the Hills shire and various service clubs. Michael Gremmo and his wife, together with their daughters, decided to donate Nathan's organs. I say quite fairly that people are walking around our society today who inherited Nathan's heart and other organs because of the generous donation of the Gremmo family following the sad loss of their son. I experienced this personally and I do not think anything speaks to us more than when a dear family friend suffers a sudden loss of a child and gives the gift of life to others. I have no doubt that all members of this House will commend the motion.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.08 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Wyong, the member for Camden, the member for Holsworthy, the member for Tweed and the member for Oatley for contributing in a bipartisan fashion to debate on this motion. We all agree that we need to increase the rate of organ donation. It is important that we have the discussion with our families because, as we have heard, whilst one can consent and register one's desire to donate one's organs on the national register the family of the deceased can veto that decision. As many members have said, it is important for everyone to have a genuine discussion with their family and loved ones about their intention. If the difficult time comes for those family and loved ones to consent to a donation they can do so in the full understanding that the donor wanted to give life to other people. A single donor can help up to eight or 10 people through the donation of organs and tissue.

The member for Wyong clearly articulated that it can be a hard decision for family and loved ones to give permission for donation. He indicated that there are approximately 1,600 people on the organ donation waiting list at any time, and so the need to increase the rate of donation cannot be understated. The member for Camden also spoke about the need for people to have a conversation with their families about organ donation. He then outlined the great work of Minister Skinner and her team in the Ministry of Health in campaigning for and introducing legislation in 2012 to change to a national organ donation register. That has increased donation rates, which has helped save lives. I note that James Bolster, who is a member of Jillian Skinner's team, is in the gallery today. His great interest in organ donation is evident. I commend him for his work.

Members on both sides of Parliament support this motion. The member for Tweed spoke about the visit his Lions Club made to the Sydney Eye Hospital to see the wonderful work being done with tissue donations. Mr Deputy-Speaker, as president of that Lions Club, also took part in that visit. As usual, the member for Holsworthy spoke concisely and clearly in support of this motion. She spoke about the move to a national register in 2012 and encouraged people to fill out the forms and make their wishes known. She also spoke about the great work of Paul Bourke in raising awareness about the need for organ donation. The member for Oatley made a great contribution about the need for people to involve their families in their decision to donate their organs. Finally, the member for Castle Hill made a touching contribution by telling the story of the Gremmo family and informing the House of its work. I have met members of the Gremmo family. They have a fantastic reputation. Through the generous donation of their son's organs they have given people new life and ensured that their son's legacy will be carried on well into the future.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

AUSTRALIAN ENERGY REGULATOR PRICING DECISION

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [12.14 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Considers the decision of the Australian Energy Regulator [AER] in regard to pricing is not a viable proposition for investors.

- (2) Notes that Networks NSW is fighting the AER decision which sets its revenue at \$5.7 billion, or 25 per cent, below what the networks requested for the period 2014 to 2019.
- (3) Urges the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy to reconsider his decision to sell long-term leases in the power networks.

"The Australian Energy Regulator is about getting the balance, reliability and a safe electricity network," said the Electrical Trades Union [ETU]. When it came to this decision, the AER got it wrong. Networks NSW warned the decision "would not be a viable proposition for investors who would be asked to commit new funds to an operation generating low or negative equity returns". The Networks NSW complaint essentially comes down to this: If they cannot charge the people of New South Wales as much as they want for electricity, why would a private investor purchase the network? That cuts to the heart of why I am so opposed to the privatisation of services, particularly essential services such as electricity. It is never about delivering the best outcome for citizens. Instead, privatisation is entirely about turning citizens into consumers or customers to deliver the highest possible profits to the private operator.

The Australian Competition Tribunal ruled in February that there were flaws in the modelling and assumptions used to set New South Wales power prices and sent the ruling back to the AER, calling on it to conduct the process again. This is an important issue for my electorate. Ausgrid's headquarters are located in Wallsend and many of my constituents are its employees. They are facing a downgrade in pay and conditions as the privatisation rolls on. In recent years employee numbers have gone from 6,067 to 4,613. The ETU has urged the regulator to strike a better balance between affordability, reliability and safety. ETU secretary Steve Butler has said:

The people of New South Wales don't just need an affordable energy supply, they need one that is reliable, well-maintained and safe. Unsustainably slashing the money spent on maintaining, repairing and operating the network simply leads to inadequate infrastructure that may spark bushfires, fail in periods of extreme weather, or result in a growing number of blackouts and service disruptions.

He is right. The argument of the ETU is simply that the ruling by the AER would negatively impact on service delivery and network reliability. The rising cost of living is putting the squeeze on families and businesses in Wallsend. On the surface, it might seem like this ruling would have provided some relief. That is not the case. After discussions with the New South Wales branch of the ETU, I have been told:

Nowhere in the AER determination, there is no guarantee that retail prices will be lowered. AER does not govern retail electricity providers and cannot force them to lower prices.

For the Baird Government, this is all about fattening the calf. Steve Butler from the ETU has also said:

Thousands of proposed job cuts being pursued by the publicly-owned electricity companies Essential Energy, Ausgrid and Endeavour Energy, were based on the flawed AER determination and should now be abandoned.

The loss of loyal, highly-skilled workers across the state is short-sighted and will inevitably impact on consumers through poorer services in the future.

As I said, this is especially important for my electorate. I must emphasise that the AER serves an important purpose by providing a balance for consumers in the face of voracious commercial instincts. This ruling may have been flawed, but as this Government forces this State towards privatisation it will become more and more important. When it comes to the provision of essential services such as electricity and water, the idea of market competition is a smokescreen. People need these services and, when it comes to the natural monopoly of power distribution, they will inevitably find themselves over a barrel. That is why the AER is so important and this is why, despite the legitimate criticisms of the ruling made by the ETU, I am hesitant to trust the Baird Government's reasoning.

Striking a balance between price, safety and reliability is paramount; it should remain so. How are we to know that a private operator, putting profit above all else, will not cut thousands of jobs and slash repair and maintenance funding in the name of an all-important bottom line? Who is to say that we will not see inadequate infrastructure causing havoc in the poles and wires that have been sold? By privatising electricity distribution this Government is sacrificing long-term safety and security to the whims of the profit motive. I urge this Government to halt the sell-off, to more closely examine these sorts of impacts, and to empower regulators to ensure that adequate repair and maintenance budgets are maintained in the future.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.21 p.m.]: Mr Deputy-Speaker—

Mr John Robertson: Put him on the frontbench.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: For the first time I welcome the interjection of the member for Blacktown.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Drummoyne does not need any support or encouragement.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: I oppose this motion. I state at the outset that I do not believe the member for Wallsend has moved this motion for any bad reason. She is a genuinely good member who cares about her community. But Labor has no credibility whatsoever on the issue of electricity prices. Let us be clear on Labor's record on this. Electricity prices rose by more than 60 per cent over five years because of the flawed decision-making process of those opposite.

Mr John Robertson: Have you got to read this? You are not on the front bench because you cannot ad lib; you have to read speeches.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: I welcome the interjection by Captain Solar. I am glad he is in the Chamber—

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Drummoyne will refer to members by their correct title.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: The member for Blacktown has that responsibility as the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr John Robertson: I was the Minister for Energy at the time, thank you.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: The Minister for Energy at the time. He can pin that on his chest for as long as he lives. But do not take my word for it, and do not take the word of the member for Blacktown. In 2012 a Federal Labor Government inquiry found gold plating under New South Wales Labor was the key reason for electricity price hikes. It all goes back to their genetics and their DNA—the very fabric that makes them—namely, their links to the union. Those opposite look after their mates because they were the guys who got them here in the first place. At that time the Duffy-Parry report found a series of Labor Government decisions led to a \$3 billion blowout in power companies' spending and revenue raising. It is little wonder we saw electricity prices go through the roof. It is great to see new members sitting on the opposition benches. Those new members have an excuse—they were not here to listen to it—but they should learn from the past. I can assure them that if they do not learn, it will hit them in the future—some great member told me that this morning.

Mr John Robertson: Who was it?

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: I do not know. This is a very serious motion, but the hypocrisy of those opposite is laughable. In moving this motion those opposite are trying to pretend that they had nothing to do with the price of electricity when, in fact, they were the masterminds. Not only do those on the other side have the hypocrisy to talk about electricity prices; they also mounted their own AER appeal in 2009—the same appeal process they are currently criticising business for undertaking. They cannot have it on this hand and also on the other hand—they are becoming like the jugglers at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Soon after that, the New South Wales electricity transmission and network operators appealed, arguing for an increase in the revenues for TransGrid, Country Energy, Energy Australia and Integral Energy.

What happened in the Labor Government appeal process? The decision generated more than \$1.9 billion in additional revenue for government electricity companies and in the period from the determination to the appeal none of the relevant Ministers spoke out against it: Ian Macdonald, Joe Tripodi, Eric Roozendaal and, behold, the member for Blacktown—at least he is here to face the music. Other members have a habit of forgetting and usually leave by the side doors. This Government has a great record. We put a stop to Labor's mismanagement of the electricity networks and the result has meant lower bills for households and businesses.

This has put downward pressure on prices, ending the disastrous Solar Bonus Scheme, which the member for Blacktown knows about only too well; deregulating the retail electricity market to drive greater retail competition; reforming network reliability standards to stop gold plating for Labor's mates in the union movement; and increasing electricity rebates to ensure affordability. The business decision to appeal the

AER decision considered the safety and reliability of electricity networks in New South Wales. It considered the merits of the AER determination and whether national electricity rules designed to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to 3.3 million electricity consumers in New South Wales were followed.

Mr John Robertson: Look up and tell me again how many it was.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: The answer is 3.3 million. On 26 February 2016 the Australian Competition Tribunal ruled in favour of the appeal, vindicating the businesses' decision to appeal. The Australian Competition Tribunal said:

It is in the long term interests of consumers of electricity and gas to set aside the AER's decisions and have the AER make them again.

I reiterate: We had high electricity prices in the first place because those opposite failed to deliver for the people of New South Wales when they were in office. They are now introducing motions to give their constituents comfort that they had no responsibility for what we are currently experiencing.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) [12.28 p.m.]: I speak in support of the motion of the member for Wallsend. It is a worthy, apt and true motion. The Australian Energy Regulator [AER] regulates energy markets and networks under national energy market legislation and rules. In April last year the AER issued a final decision on the revenue proposals submitted by Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales electricity distribution and transmission businesses for the period commencing on 1 July 2015. After an exhaustive and detailed investigation, the independent arbiter confirmed the obvious—that the people of New South Wales have been paying too much for electricity.

The decision set revenue at \$5.7 billion, or 25 per cent below what the network requested for the period 2014 to 2019. Finally, under the AER, there was to be a correction to exorbitantly high power prices in New South Wales. Households were estimated to save \$313 per annum on their power bills, providing real benefit to households and families across the State. It would have benefits not only for households but also for local businesses and local communities because households would have higher disposable incomes. Small businesses were estimated to save \$528 on their energy costs. Electricity is a significant cost for every business across the State. A cut to power prices would mean a reduction in the cost of running a business and would promote job creation.

Currently, network prices in New South Wales are double those of Victoria. In other words, it costs end users twice as much to get electricity from a power station in New South Wales to their power point than it does in Victoria. One would think the Premier would want to rectify that. Instead, the Premier pushed ahead with a desire to see higher power prices and he took expensive legal action, paid for by the taxpayers of New South Wales, to appeal the AER's decisions. The Baird Government took this legal action to fatten the cow for market, as the member for Wallsend said, rather than to allow savings for the households and businesses of New South Wales.

The Australian Competition Tribunal had to determine whether consumers and businesses should save substantially on their electricity bill or whether electricity companies should receive higher revenue. Again, let us be clear: The Baird Government's commitment to selling the New South Wales electricity distribution businesses—or leasing them for 99 years; whatever one wants to call it—means that it wants the transaction to be as profitable as possible, even at the expense of individual households and businesses across this State. Even the Australian Competition Tribunal, when it brought down its judgement to uphold the appeal, said:

Obviously, from the price perspective, the present issues raised by Networks New South Wales are not intended to reduce the price for the provision of electricity.

The Baird Government continues not to act in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. It is a Government that time and again seeks to avoid representing the people of New South Wales. It is a Government that thinks only about developers, privatisation and making a quick buck. Already, families in my electorate of Charlestown are paying \$1,000 a year more for electricity and gas than they were before the Liberals and The Nationals came to power in 2011. Privatising electricity permanently deprives the New South Wales budget of an annual revenue stream of up to \$1.7 billion each year. For those reasons, I stand firmly with the member for Wallsend and members on this side of the House to urge the Minister to reconsider the privatisation of electricity.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [12.32 p.m.]: I welcome the opportunity to speak in debate on this motion. One of the fundamental aspects of the operation of the Westminster system is that agencies make

decisions and we have the capacity to appeal those decisions. If an agency makes a decision that is wrong, there should be a mechanism for correcting that error. As soon as the Australian Energy Regulator made its decision some of the observations that were made about that decision included that consumers would not be the winners in the end and that there would be a loss for consumers. Energy Networks Association head John Bradley said that the "unsustainable" spending cuts could compromise reliability, safety and efficiency outcomes for customers. That is clearly something that must be taken into account in coming to any price for the provision of electricity services. He went on to say:

Consumers end up paying more under this kind of "roller-coaster" regulation where underspending is followed by higher cost catch-up spending and political intervention.

That is exactly what this State has been subjected to as a result of the inactivity of successive Labor governments, which I will come to shortly. Mr Bradley continued:

The Electrical Trades Union and United Services Union also joined the chorus of protest, saying the AER's proposal would increase blackouts, reduce safety and lead to extensive job losses.

"Blackouts will be more likely on the hottest and coldest days, as power demand surges, reconnections will be slower following natural disasters, bushfire risks are likely to increase, and the safety of workers and the public will be put at risk," ETU NSW secretary Steve Butler said.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! The member for Blacktown will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: In the event that the AER gets it wrong, the Government is duty-bound to make application in relation to correcting the error made in its determination. In fact, that is exactly what has occurred. The Australian Competition Tribunal considered the decision and in February this year referred it back to the AER for determination, which should take into account things that should have been taken into account in the original application. The last part of the motion states:

... urges the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy to reconsider its decision to sell long-term leases in the power networks.

I wonder whether the member for Wallsend was in this place when we passed legislation to do that. The legislation has been considered by the Parliament and the Parliament has decided that this is in the best interests of New South Wales. We will not reconsider it; there is no application to repeal the legislation. The fact is that it was a bill approved by the Parliament and we went to the last election with a Rebuilding NSW strategy, which we undertake to deliver to this State, predicated on that sale, and we will deliver it for the benefit of the people of this State.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) [12.36 p.m.]: I speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Wallsend and I congratulate her on bringing it to the House. Just for the record, I declare that I am a life member of the Electrical Trades Union—a very proud member. This motion deals specifically with electricity pricing. I have listened to the contributions of those opposite, and I am sorry the member for Drummoyne has left the Chamber because I was intrigued by his contribution when he talked about the Government putting downward pressure on prices. What I find most intriguing about the rhetoric of those opposite is that one of the Government's actions was to remove the retail price cap. If the Government was serious about putting downward pressure on electricity prices delivered to consumers, the last thing it would do is remove the retail price cap.

In fact, the only conclusion that we can draw from a government that removes the retail price cap is that it does not want a cap put on prices; it wants the market to decide what prices will be charged. I think that is an important point. We have seen this Government's attitude towards the electricity network, the power stations and the like, and we have seen what it wants to do: The Government wants to sell off power stations and sell off the regulated network because of its ideology that the private sector can do it better. Unfortunately that ideological position does not always have a true and correct effect. By selling off the electricity network those opposite are putting consumers in this State in a precarious position. They sell it off to private providers and they argue that a regulator will set prices when it comes to electricity network costs. What they do not tell consumers is that when monopolies are sold off to the private sector, the private sector has deep pockets and it is prepared to challenge regulated determinations when it comes to prices for electricity network costs.

We have already seen a demonstration that the Government is so keen to fatten the pig for market that it appealed the determinations made by the Australian Energy Regulator [AER]; so keen to fatten the pig for

market that it is prepared for consumers to pay more for electricity costs. What we do know is that once the private sector is in control of our electricity network, it will appeal these decisions too; the private sector will pay millions of dollars to appeal the decisions because it knows that if those decisions are overturned it will increase its rate of return on the money it outlays for these networks. Dividends that the private sector makes will go into the pockets of big businesses.

Currently we have a network that delivers dividends to our budget, and our budget is the beneficiary of that, which means that the people of New South Wales are the beneficiaries of those dividends. What this Government fails to explain—and must explain at some point—is how it will fill the budget black hole that will be created by the sale of the electricity networks. The money that comes into the budget that goes towards putting police on our streets, nurses in our hospitals and teachers in our schools disappears. Government members can talk all they like about this great boom in building—roads, schools and hospitals—but what they cannot explain is where the money will come from to put teachers in the schools, nurses in the hospitals and maintenance for our roads.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) [12.40 p.m.]: I concur with the succinct contribution of the member for Blacktown. He is a proud tradesman, a bloke who worked in this very building as an electrician. It is pleasing to see him contributing to debate in this House. He stated that he is a proud trade unionist, as am I, along with many of our union brothers and sisters. What I will not stand for are the draconian speeches from members opposite against the trade union movement. They can say what they like about trade unions—and I agree that they have their faults in certain areas—but there can be no mistake that the strong foundation enjoyed by workers in this country, the mums and dads, uncles and aunts of members opposite, was laid by the trade union movement. Not one Government member should forget that.

Government members are in a delusional state that defies every simple business theory to sell off an asset that provides revenue. In this case it is revenue, as stated by the member for Blacktown, to pay for our nurses, our educational resources and special treatment for those with disabilities. It is an ideological argument because it simply does not make economic sense to flog off an asset for a quick cash grab and for a photo opportunity. That photo opportunity will last a couple of paper runs then that will be it; we will lose that revenue forever. When I say "we", I speak of every man, woman and child in this State who seek to obtain a good education or who need to go to hospital to get the emergency treatment they deserve.

Any mum who wants to take her daughter to the emergency department has to sit there for more than four hours; indeed, 42 per cent of people at Campbelltown Hospital waited more than four hours for emergency care as a consequence of the cuts imposed by the Government. As the member for Blacktown rightly asked: How will the Government fill this black hole? The revenue from stamp duty will not last forever. I know that is a newsflash to members opposite; they just do not get it. The consequences of their decision will be paid for by every man, woman and child in this State, yet they want to correct trade unions and throw stones at any lobby group that campaigns for State-owned assets—assets of the taxpayers of this State. Government members were the ones who flogged it off. Make no mistake: We will not let anyone forget it. Indeed, they will be reminded of it every time they go to school or when they go to their hospital to try to get some treatment.

It is a rhetorical statement that we continue to hear from those opposite. They think there are no consequences. Even worse, they sing the praises of their decision. They shamelessly gloat about a decision that will see the slashing of services in health, education, police, fire and ambulance—the very fabric of our society—services that provide what we need. The Government took a scalpel to our hospitals and a sledgehammer to TAFE. The Government has failed in its economic decision. It has failed in its decision-making process. It has failed the families and communities of New South Wales. Government members should hang their heads in shame. I congratulate my union brother on standing up and stating the facts, and I commend the member for Wallsend for moving the motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! The member for Oatley will come to order.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [12.44 p.m.], in reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Drummoyne, Charlestown, Epping, Blacktown and Campbelltown for their contributions. The motion is about privatisation and what it breeds. Those of us who have been around since 2007 know what it is like. Government members said that my decision was hypocritical. I remind members that a number of us did say publicly that we would cross the floor to oppose the privatisation of electricity, but that did not occur

because of the strength of people like the member for Blacktown and me. I vehemently opposed privatisation then and I continue to vehemently oppose it. I am not a hypocrite at all because I have been consistent, whether in government or in opposition.

As a person who was elected in government and who is now in opposition, I understand what it is like. However, it is a lot harder to be in government and have the strength to oppose one's own government than it is to be in opposition and to say that everything is wrong about the Government. It is a lot harder being an oppositionist when in government, so I am proud of my decision to oppose privatisation. All of the comments were interesting. I would like to say something great about the comments of the member for Drummoyne, who is usually quite articulate, but today I have no comment to make about what he said. The member for Charlestown made some excellent points and in the end she talked—

Mr Geoff Provest: In the end; she took a while to get there.

Ms SONIA HORNER: No, she talked throughout. The member for Tweed is being mean.

Mr Geoff Provest: I withdraw that comment.

Ms SONIA HORNER: She made the good point that I am making, that cuts to power prices have occurred since the O'Farrell and Baird governments were elected. So it is a bit of a furphy for the Government to say that it has provided the solution when it has not. People are paying more for electricity and gas than they were previously. The Government has not provided the solution when it should have. The member for Epping spoke well, but he spoke about the AER determination. However, he did not mention the reason for the Government opposing the AER determination. That was simply because the AER did not allow the power companies to put up the prices as much as they would have wanted, which would have meant that investors would not have been able to make the profit from the community that they would have liked.

The member for Blacktown was extremely eloquent. As a life member of the Electrical Trades Union he has a deep understanding of this issue. The motion refers to pricing. The Government wants to be able to affect the retail price cap. Why would it want to do that? We all know the reason for that. It is that the Government wants prices to be higher to give distributors a reason for charging communities more. I hope the Government reconsiders its decision to sell off the long-term leases. I would love to see electricity network ownership back in public hands so that we can reap the benefits of electricity revenue. I urge members to support this wonderful motion and to support the people of New South Wales.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! Is the member for Prospect aware of Standing Order 54? It requires members to be seated unless entering or exiting the Chamber.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

[*In division*]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! I acknowledge Nancy Lee, mother of the member for Parramatta, and her friend Helen Russell, both of whom are in the gallery. Welcome. Enjoy your lunch, courtesy of the member for Parramatta, and do not hold back on the ordering.

Ayes, 37

Ms Aitchison	Mr Harris	Mr Park
Mr Atalla	Ms Harrison	Mr Parker
Mr Barr	Ms Haylen	Mr Piper
Ms Burney	Mr Hoenig	Mr Robertson
Ms Car	Ms Horner	Ms K. Smith
Ms Catley	Mr Kamper	Ms T. F. Smith
Mr Chanthivong	Ms Leong	Ms Washington
Mr Crakanthorp	Mr Lynch	Ms Watson
Mr Daley	Dr McDermott	Mr Zangari
Mr Dib	Ms McKay	
Ms Doyle	Mr Mehan	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Finn	Ms Mihailuk	Mr Lalich
Mr Greenwich	Mr Minns	Mr Warren

Noes, 43

Mr Anderson	Ms Goward	Mr Sidoti
Mr Aplin	Mr Gulaptis	Mrs Skinner
Mr Ayres	Mr Henskens	Mr Speakman
Mr Baird	Mr Humphries	Mr Stokes
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Johnsen	Mr Taylor
Mr Conolly	Mr Kean	Mr Toole
Mr Constance	Dr Lee	Mr Tudehope
Mr Coure	Mr Maguire	Ms Upton
Mr Crouch	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Ward
Mr Dominello	Mr O'Dea	Mr Williams
Mr Elliott	Mrs Pavey	Mrs Williams
Mr Fraser	Mr Perrottet	
Mr Gee	Ms Petinos	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr George	Mr Provest	Mr Bromhead
Ms Gibbons	Mr Roberts	Mr Patterson

Pairs

Mr Foley	Mr Barilaro
Ms Hay	Mr Rowell

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

TRIBUTE TO CURTIS CHENG

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.57 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Pays tribute to Curtis Cheng, an admired and respected member of the NSW Police Force, and sends sincere condolences to his wife, children and family, friends and colleagues.
- (2) Recognises the NSW Police Force for its service, courage and dedication to ensuring a safe and harmonious community.
- (3) Condemns all extremist views, acts and behaviour.
- (4) Recognises that, despite this terrorist act, the city of Parramatta remains a strong, welcoming and resilient multicultural community.

Today the world condemns the terrorist acts in Brussels. New South Wales stands in solidarity with the people of Belgium at this terrible time. Last year New South Wales also faced a terrorist attack, in my electorate of Parramatta. On 2 October 2015 Mr Curtis Cheng, a NSW Police Force employee, was murdered outside his place of work, police headquarters in Parramatta, in an act of terrorism. Mr Cheng was a highly regarded employee of the NSW Police Force. For 17 years he lent his skills and expertise to his job. He has been described as a go-to person, admired and respected by colleagues. He was a gentle and positive man.

He was a man who valued spending quality time with his family. As a Buddhist he believed that making a small difference in people's lives every day could be a powerful force for good. On 17 October, 1,500 family, friends, colleagues and members of the public joined a service to remember Mr Cheng and celebrate his life. Originally from Hong Kong, Mr Cheng also lived in the United Kingdom before choosing to come to Australia. He graduated from Bath University in England before returning to Hong Kong, where he lectured in economics. In Hong Kong he worked two jobs. He was committed to working hard to save enough money to come to Australia with his family.

In Australia, Mr Cheng was a member of Certified Practising Accountants [CPA] Australia. The story of Mr Cheng's emigration to Australia is an exemplar of what multiculturalism can be and is. Mr Cheng spoke two languages: his native Cantonese and English. He raised a wonderful and prosperous family. Mr Cheng left behind two children, Alpha and Zilvia, and his wife, Selina. Our hearts go out to them, both now and in the

future. Mr Cheng's son, Alpha Cheng, has shown much strength and maturity under such difficult circumstances. He was quick to call for calm and stood up against gun violence when attending a rally in Sydney late last year. Alpha called on mourners to honour his father by following his example. He said:

Dad did everything in his own, quiet, little way. We need to do the little things for the people around us. If we all do that little bit more, as Dad did in his life, I believe we can live in a more gentle and harmonious world.

The multicultural community has also paid tribute to Mr Cheng. Last year I joined the Multicultural Communities Council of New South Wales at a candlelight vigil in remembrance of Mr Curtis Cheng outside Police headquarters at Parramatta. The multicultural community leaders came together to pay tribute to Mr Cheng to demonstrate a united front against terrorism. I joined Superintendent Wayne Cox at this moving vigil—the commander is a champion for harmony in the community. This murder has been described by Commissioner of Police Andrew Scipione as a "politically motivated act of terrorism". Multiple arrests have been made in regard to this callous terrorist act.

Police acted swiftly and are to be commended for tracking down the alleged supplier of the gun used in this attack and an 18-year-old accomplice, as well as another who was charged with allegedly participating in a criminal group. One of the most shocking factors of this crime is that Mr Cheng was randomly targeted by a local 15-year-old boy who was subsequently shot and killed by special constables. That someone so young can carry out such an act is truly disturbing. The community does not tolerate terrorist incidents such as this. We stand together to solve hideous crimes such as the murder of Curtis Cheng. Our community will not be divided by such acts.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! It being 1.00 p.m. debate is interrupted to enable the House to deal with Committee reports. Given the important nature of this motion, with the leave of the House, I will put the question on the motion, otherwise the motion will lapse.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Pursuant to sessional order Orders of the Day (Committee Reports) proceeded with.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Report: Examination of the Auditor-General's performance audit reports September 2013-July 2014

Question—That the House take note of the report—proposed.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [1.03 p.m.]: I speak today on the Public Accounts Committee report "Examination of the Auditor-General's performance audit reports September 2013-July 2014" which was tabled on 15 March 2016. This is the first report of the Public Accounts Committee's performance audit review program to be tabled in the Fifty-sixth Parliament. Performance audits are conducted by the Auditor-General to review whether New South Wales government agencies spend taxpayers' money efficiently, effectively, economically and in accordance with the law.

One of the ways the Public Accounts Committee exercises its oversight role is to follow up on the recommendations made by the Auditor-General in its performance audit reports to ensure that agencies have responded appropriately. As part of this follow-up, the committee questions agencies on measures they have taken and, if required, conducts public hearings to gather additional information by examining agency representatives. The process has proven to be an effective means of testing action taken on performance audits and maintaining a high level of scrutiny of the agencies under review.

The 11 performance audits examined by the committee during this inquiry were: Managing Contaminated Sites; Making the Most of Government Purchasing Power—Telecommunications; Use of Purchasing Cards and Electronic Payment Methods; Effectiveness of the New Death and Disability Scheme; Regional Road Funding—Block Grant and REPAIR Programs; NSW State Emergency Service Management of Volunteers; Fitness of Firefighters; Improving Legal and Safe Driving Among Aboriginal People; Management of Casual Teachers; Government Advertising 2012-13; and Cost of Alcohol Abuse to the NSW Government.

The committee conducted a more detailed examination of four of the audits by way of a public hearing held in November 2015. The audits examined at that hearing were: Management of Casual Teachers; Improving Legal and Safe Driving Among Aboriginal People; Regional Road Funding—Block Grant and REPAIR Programs; and Managing Contaminated Sites. The committee found that in the majority of cases the responsible agencies had implemented the Auditor-General's recommendations.

In relation to two of the performance audits, Improving the Performance of Casual Teachers and Improving Legal and Safe Driving Among Aboriginal People, the committee has made four recommendations. The first set of recommendations urges schools to improve the way they identify and respond to casual teachers with performance issues and to provide feedback on the performance of casual teachers. The committee, in the second set of recommendations, wants to see an increase in the number of Aboriginal people with an unrestricted driver licence by the end of this year.

The committee believes that the recommendations will improve the ability of the Department of Education and Communities to identify and respond to casual teachers with performance issues and improve whole-of-government measures to improve legal and safe driving among Aboriginal people. I thank the Acting Auditor-General, Mr Tony Whitfield, and the Audit Office for their assistance in this inquiry. I also thank my fellow committee members and committee staff for their assistance during the inquiry process and in the preparation of this report. I commend the report to the House.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [1.07 p.m.]: It is a pleasure to support the chair of the Public Accounts Committee in this take-note debate. As the member indicated, the committee has a well-established process of reviewing performance audits conducted by the Auditor-General in order to follow up on action taken by agencies in response to the Auditor-General's recommendations. The chair referred to one recommendation of the committee, which is:

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW and the Department of Justice, as a matter of priority, complete implementation of the Auditor-General's recommendations relating to the inter-agency group focussing on increasing the number of Aboriginal people with an unrestricted driver licence.

That matter goes to the heart of my background and experience, having spent a number of years travelling around western New South Wales as a circuit prosecutor. I experienced and developed an understanding of the issues that affected Aboriginal communities and the obtaining of a driver licence was one issue that commonly evolved into other incidents within the justice system. So that certainly is a matter of which I have experience. The Public Accounts Committee held hearings examining the implementation of the recommendations of the Auditor-General's report. In relation to the recommendation to which I have referred, I encourage the agencies to talk to each other and do everything within their powers to improve this problem that has been identified so that hopefully it will be rectified.

Question—That the House take note of the report—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 16/56

Question—That the House take note of the report—proposed.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) [1.10 p.m.]: I thank the House for the opportunity to speak about the sixteenth digest of the Legislation Review Committee for this current Parliament. Five bills were introduced in the sitting week commencing 15 March 2016. Of those five bills, the committee made comments on three with regard to specific factors contained in section 8A of the Legislation Review Act. I will address those comments now. The first bill I will address is the Biofuels Amendment Bill 2016. The Biofuels Amendment Bill seeks to, amongst other things, extend the category of retailers of petrol or diesel fuel who must comply with minimum biofuel requirements. The committee commented that a key element of what defines a retailer that must comply with the biofuels mandate will be set by the regulations. The committee noted also that matters that are central to the operation of a new regime should ideally be provided for in the principal Act and not by regulation.

The committee referred to the comments made by Minister Dominello in the second reading speech to the bill. The Minister commented that this policy setting will be subject to the regulatory impact statement process, which will provide an opportunity for consultation with relevant stakeholders. The committee noted also that pursuant to section 41 of the Interpretation Act 1987 the regulation will be subject to disallowance by either House of Parliament. As such, the committee made no further comment on this issue. Continuing with the Biofuels Amendment Bill, the committee highlighted that the bill is to commence on a day or days to be appointed by proclamation. The committee noted its preference for legislation to commence on assent or a fixed date. However, it was also noted that a key element for the operation of the bill depends on the collection of data to assist with setting appropriate thresholds. Given these circumstances the committee made no further comment.

I turn now to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (National Domestic Violence Orders Recognition) Bill 2016. The object of this bill is to give effect to the New South Wales component of a national recognition scheme for domestic violence orders. Under the scheme, domestic violence orders will be automatically recognised and enforceable in any State or Territory. Domestic violence orders from New Zealand can also be registered as part of the scheme. New South Wales is the first State to introduce the model laws through this bill. The committee highlighted two retrospectivity issues in relation to the bill. Firstly, the committee noted that the bill will allow an individual to apply to the registrar of a court for a declaration that their existing domestic violence order be subject to the national recognition scheme.

The relevant domestic violence order may have existed prior to the commencement of the bill. Secondly, the bill will apply to certain domestic violence orders from participating jurisdictions that were made or varied before the commencement of the bill. The committee noted the retrospective effect of these provisions. However, it also noted that a nationally recognised order will only be enforceable against the defendant in New South Wales once it is declared, which will not occur until after the bill commences. The Committee also referred to the aims of the bill being to the benefit of domestic violence victims. As such, the committee made no further comment.

The final bill I wish to address is the Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016. The bill provides that the Act commences three months after the date of assent, unless commenced sooner by proclamation. The committee noted that while the bill provides for the Act to commence within a set time frame, there is scope for the Act to commence earlier by proclamation. The committee noted its preference for legislation to commence on a fixed date or on assent. However, it made no further comment on the basis that those affected by the bill still have certainty that the Act will commence sometime within three months of assent. That concludes my remarks on this digest. I thank the committee staff and members for their input and I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) [1.14 p.m.]: On behalf of the Opposition, I comment on the sixteenth digest which records the deliberations of the Legislation Review Committee. The committee's meeting on Monday 21 March 2016 was notable for a number of reasons. I think it was the longest meeting the committee had ever had although it started late. It was a productive meeting but did not have the usual number of members because some Government members could not attend. Nevertheless, anarchy did not prevail, the House will be glad to hear. The chair conducted himself in his usual professional way and the committee made a number of important decisions by consensus, two of which I will touch on and were not addressed by the chair in his remarks. The committee dealt with two private members' bills before the House. In relation to the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Sniffer Dogs—Repeal of Powers) Bill 2016 the committee noted:

This Bill supports the principles and advances the human rights referenced in section 8A of the *Legislation Review Act 1987*.

In relation to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (State Owned Corporations) Bill 2016, which was introduced by the shadow Attorney General, the member for Liverpool, the committee noted:

The expansion of the State's well-regarded privacy laws to state-owned corporations is consistent with the principles and objects contained in section 8A of the *Legislation Review Act 1987* with regard to human rights.

Given the positive referencing of those two private members' bills, I look forward to the Government supporting them in this House when they are returned for further debate. The committee also saw fit to re-agitate its consideration of the Inclosed Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Interference) Bill 2016. Information from the Law Society of New South Wales and the New South Wales Bar Association was tabled. In relation to this bill, the Law Society noted:

The Law Society considers this right an important aspect of a democratic state. These amendments appear to again expand police powers, without the safeguard of judicial oversight. They may also interfere with the right against arbitrary deprivation of property.

In relation to this bill, the Bar Association noted:

The Association considers that the Bill must not be enacted in its present form because ...

The association summarised a number of reasons why, in its view, it was a bad bill. The committee also noted that amendments were made in the Legislative Council to the bill. The committee, by agreement, referred the bill back to the Minister for comment on the two submissions by the Bar Association and the Law Society. I look forward to the Minister's response to those submissions when the bill is next before the House. I thank the secretariat and staff that supports the committee and other committee members and I thank the chair for the manner in which he conducts himself at these meetings. I commend the digest to the House.

Question—That the House take note of the report—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Report noted.

[Temporary Speaker (Mr Adam Marshall) left the chair at 1.18 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery Rebecca Cameron and Jan Gregory, my friends from Ulladulla. I also welcome Gary and Christine Somers of Parkes in the Orange electorate, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier and Regional Roads, and member for Orange. I welcome students and teachers from Fort Street High School, guests of the member for Newtown. I also welcome 40 members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, guests of the member for Londonderry and the member for Blacktown.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I advise members that the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following bills was reported:

Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Drug Exhibits) Bill 2016
Inclosed Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Interference) Bill 2016

BRUSSELS TERRORIST ATTACKS

Ministerial Statement

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [2.20 p.m.]: The world woke today to news of another attack in the heart of a city—another attack targeted at the heart of our humanity. We mourn with the people of Belgium today and for the many days that will follow. Based on the information we have from the NSW Police Force we understand that the attacks at the airport in Brussels killed at least 11 people and the attack near the metro station killed at least 20 people. Many others were seriously injured. The world is as small as it has ever been. Although we are thousands of kilometres away we can see the footage and photographs and feel the terror, shock, sadness and grief. We grieve for those lost and for a city much loved. We remember attacks on our own soil in which loved ones have died in the name of hatred and horror. We remember and also mourn for the many families and friends of those who have recently died in Istanbul, Jakarta, the Ivory Coast and too many other places around the globe. We condemn these cowardly atrocities and the hateful motivation behind them.

The Commonwealth has advised that Australia's terror threat should remain unchanged. Nevertheless, an attack of this kind reminds us that we need to be ever vigilant. I have spoken to the Commissioner of Police this morning and he has advised that these events do not increase the threat or risk to us in New South Wales, but they are a reminder to all of us of how lucky we are to have those men and women in the police force and security agencies working in a professional way to keep all of us safe. I have spoken to the Belgian ambassador to convey the thoughts, prayers and support not just from me and the Government, but from every single person in New South Wales. Today the Belgium flag flies at the New South Wales Parliament marking our respect and solidarity. Today we, and indeed the rest of the world, stand together with Brussels and Belgium.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn—Leader of the Opposition) [2.23 p.m.]: On behalf of the Labor Opposition I express our condolences to all those affected by the tragic events in Brussels overnight. As the Premier said, more than 30 people have been killed and hundreds injured in Belgium. Yesterday's violence, like all acts of terror, was perpetrated against innocent people who were going about their everyday lives: people waiting for a train or looking to board a plane, with the anticipation that often brings; many were simply looking forward to Easter, but none expected to be confronted with the chaos, injury and death that results from such terrorist actions. Indeed, no-one deserves to have their life destroyed by a cowardly, calculated and callous terrorist attack.

Yesterday's violence was an attack aimed at the heart of Europe. Maelbeek metro station, where one of the attacks occurred, is within walking distance from the European Parliament. This week in Sydney, through the coronial inquiry, we heard of the bravery and resilience of those who were caught up in the Martin Place siege. We have been reminded this week that terrorism is a threat for us at home and for so many abroad. While we mourn for those in Brussels, we also remember those lost in recent months in terrorist attacks outside of Western Europe.

Every human life is possessed of innate dignity, and whether you are a Turkish Muslim or a citizen of Western Europe every life has equal value. This year 79 lives have been lost in Istanbul and Ankara. A member of my staff lost his uncle, a member of the Turkish military, in the 17 February terrorist attack in Ankara that killed 29 people. The world is confronted once again with acts of indiscriminate brutality. We are reminded that a very small, but extremely violent, minority seeks to destroy the solidarity we share with each other as members of the human race. Once again, as the Premier said, we must respond with common purpose for the common good of our humanity.

TRIBUTE TO ADRIAN PRYKE

Ministerial Statement

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) [2.25 p.m.]: Today I recognise and thank an exceptional member of my staff, Mr Adrian Pryke, who has made an outstanding and lasting contribution to this place. A few months ago, Adrian notified me of his desire to seek a new challenge in his career, and whilst he will be with my office for a few more weeks, today marks the last sitting day that he serves as my senior adviser and assistant in managing House business. During my time as Leader of the House, Adrian has been instrumental in ensuring the seamless management of government business. He has a deep understanding and appreciation for the machinery of government and the effective operation of this House. He has conducted himself with diligence and professionalism and is widely respected by parliamentary, Government and Opposition staff and members alike.

The smooth operation of the House is no small feat, and pays testament to the hard work and diligence Adrian has given to the job. He has a mastery of standing orders, unmatched by few, and a wealth of insight that we have come to rely on. He has also served as an exceptional policy adviser, helping me take carriage of many important pieces of legislation—most notably his involvement in the 2015 New South Wales Gas Plan. Mate, it has been an exceptional ride and you will be sorely missed, but it is with great joy that we know you will go on to achieve amazing things for this great State and country. I commend Adrian to the House and thank him for many years of exceptional service to this place.

The SPEAKER: Adrian will be sorely missed. He has a great ability to communicate with the Speaker's office and coordinate things when they need to happen quickly. On behalf of the Speaker's office I wish him all the best.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [2.27 p.m.]: Members know that despite the adversarial nature of this place, there are officeholders who meet behind-the-scenes and have very good working relationships. The respective leaders talk from time to time about important things; the Leader of the House and I have that sort of relationship, and so do the Whips. But that aside, one of the most valuable resources that we all have in this place is our staff. In this respect I agree with the Leader of the House and wish Adrian well. He is a fine young man. He has always treated us very fairly, even when his boss did not. I know that Adrian, along with Dylan Parker from my office, who is equally exceptional, has done much to contribute to the efficient despatch of business in this House. On behalf of the Opposition I wish Adrian well.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Notices of Motions**

Private Members' Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.28 p.m.]

CARL TRAD AND GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Premier. When the Premier awarded government grants to a person convicted of stealing \$340,000 while supplying a kilogram of heroin and 76 kilograms of cannabis, namely Mr Carl Trad—

Mr Adrian Piccoli: Point of order: The question is completely out of order. There is an assertion at the beginning of the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is an imputation, but I will hear the rest of the question before I rule on it. The Premier may wish to answer the question, but I will hear the question first.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: When the Premier awarded government grants to a person convicted of stealing \$340,000 while supplying a kilogram of heroin and 76 kilograms of cannabis, namely Mr Carl Trad, was the Premier merely rewarding the representations of the member for East Hills?

The SPEAKER: Order! That is a clear imputation and a reflection on the character of the Premier. The question is out of order.

GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY

Mr MARK TAYLOR: My question is addressed to the Premier. How has the New South Wales Government delivered for the people of this great State?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: What an absolute ripper. One of the many things that this Government has delivered for the people of New South Wales is the member for Seven Hills—what a great member he is; he is doing a fantastic job. He is a very good batsman, Mark Taylor.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. The member for Keira will cease interjecting and shouting in an offensive manner.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: As it comes up to five years since this Government was elected, it is an opportune time to reflect on what we have done. I wondered how on earth we could look at everything we have done over the past five years, including the past 12 months, and I thought what we could do was have a top 10 of some of the things that the Government has delivered. In relation to economic growth, we have created the fastest growing economy in the country. That is a big tick and it is number one—what a little ripper.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Number two: we have created 300,000 new jobs in New South Wales. On and on we go.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: More jobs have been created here in New South Wales than in just about every other State except Western Australia.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: What have we done with the budget but, importantly, what have we done with debt?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Where does debt go under Labor? It goes to the sky. Where does debt go under this Government? It goes down. This great Treasurer is delivering for the people of New South Wales. What a story in housing. The planning Minister and many Ministers have played an important role in housing. Housing approvals are more than 50 per cent higher than they were in the former Labor Government's last five years in government. In health what we have delivered under this great Minister for Health is unbelievable—more than 6,000 additional frontline staff. What a little ripper; we thank the Minister for doing that for the State. In education we have a great Minister for Education doing a great job for the people of New South Wales in looking after all of our schools.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He was the first education Minister to sign up to the Gonski agreement on behalf of all of us.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn Opposition members that the level of interjection is unacceptable. I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Every member of the Cabinet made decisions when we found savings to ensure that we could prioritise education. Those opposite are not going to like number seven, public transport, because they hate public transport. They are the APT—the anti-public transport party. The good news for the people of this State—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 73. When all those young people from Maitland are in the gallery we need to make it clear—

The SPEAKER: Order! There were no individual imputations against any individual.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: But it is against the party, and I am definitely not anti-transport.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no standing order in relation to a party, only individuals. There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is great to have students from Maitland here today. They will be very pleased to know that in public transport this Government has delivered 14,300 more public transport services a week.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: In roads, everywhere one turns a new road is coming. We are building roads, and it is about time. Indeed, this financial year almost 1,700 kilometres of bitumen is going to be laid. That is the distance equivalent of going from Melbourne to Brisbane. In relation to police, we continue to support our police and we are very proud that since coming to government we have delivered 873 additional police officers to look after our streets and to keep us safe.

We are very proud to have signed up to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. That is important because it means that another 50,000 people with disability will be looked after. We are also very proud to be looking after our caseworkers who do an incredible job in the Family and Community Services area. Those are just some of the things we have done for this great State. We are very proud of what we are doing. Unfortunately, it takes Labor a long time to get a top 10—in fact, it really cannot get a top 10. I tried to think of one thing Labor has done and all I could think of was that Labor has fought to keep the socialist objective.

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

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I tried to get the top 10 together for Labor, but it is very hard. We know that those opposite are against public transport—they try to stop every project. Every time a public transport project is

proposed those opposite are against it. They are an amazing group of people. The Leader of the Opposition is against public transport, the shadow transport Minister is against public transport, the member for Maitland is against public transport, the member for Newcastle is against public transport—everywhere one turns—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: It is Standing Order 73. That was clearly an imputation against me.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member has taken offence at that remark personally she can make a personal explanation about her views on public transport rather than take a point of order. I do not believe it was a personal imputation, but there is an opportunity for the member to make a personal explanation at the end of question time.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Can I try taking a point of order under Standing Order 59, tedious repetition?

The SPEAKER: Order! No, you cannot. The member will resume her seat.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Those opposite want to stop WestConnex and for some reason they do not want the M4 and the M5 improved and enhanced. The Opposition undertook a world-record reshuffle—the only reshuffle in the history of the world where the leader and the deputy were demoted; an unbelievable effort. The Opposition put forward some smart ideas, not the least of which was the member for Summer Hill wanting to introduce a pill-testing regime. This side of the House is very proud to be looking after the people of New South Wales, whether it is more jobs, more hospitals, more schools, more roads or more public transport. We are driving this economy forward, we are driving this State forward and we are very proud to be doing it.

CARL TRAD AND GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Premier. Why did the Government award a Community Building Partnership grant in the East Hills electorate to a person convicted of stealing \$340,000 in the course of supplying a kilogram of heroin and 76 kilograms of cannabis?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Corrections will come to order. The Premier does not need his help.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Leader of the Opposition knows there is a process for the Community Building Partnership grants. We have acknowledged the need to improve and enhance the probity in relation to the delivery of those grants. I believe all members in this House would acknowledge the benefits that those grants provide across their electorates. It is very telling that this is the last week of these sittings and the Leader of the Opposition does not come in here with any policy at all. In fact, I think for the whole of this year he might have asked one potentially policy question.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 73. Here is a policy: don't give grants to heroin traffickers.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. There is no a point of order. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. Government members will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Leader of the Opposition should know that when he speaks he should not turn his back to the Chamber.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: He's worried about his back.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He has to worry about his back. As we know, the Deputy Leader has been demoted and he has much more capability and form than the Leader of the Opposition. We saw that in his speech; it had a bit of humour and it was interesting and considered.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The level of interjection in the Chamber is unacceptable. I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time. Opposition members will remain silent.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is Standing Order 129. Obviously this is an important question about the Community Building Partnership grant. Every member in this House would like to know what happened in East Hills.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is no wonder that the Leader of the Opposition is being tested, it is no wonder he has not got support in his caucus and it is no wonder that the dream team did not survive, on the back of that effort by the member for Strathfield. We are determined to continue do what matters to the people of New South Wales, that is, the creation of more jobs in New South Wales, more than just about every other State across the country, and building more infrastructure. The Opposition should go and talk to their communities about the schools, hospitals, roads and public transport infrastructure that are being built. It is about time New South Wales had a government that was interested in delivering for the people. That is what this Government is doing. We are delivering for the State and we will continue to deliver. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to continue to smear, he can do it all year—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

Mr MIKE BAIRD: —but we will focus on the people of New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! Has the Premier completed his answer?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Yes.

REGIONAL INVESTMENT

Mr ANDREW FRASER: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. In the 12 months since the election, how is the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government ensuring that regional New South Wales is at the heart of government?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Cessnock to order for the second time. There are far too many interjections.

Mr TROY GRANT: I thank the member for Coffs Harbour, a member who has represented the people of Coffs Harbour for over 25 years.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no need for Government members to make respond to that comment.

Mr TROY GRANT: His 25 years in this place is significant because he has witnessed, more than the majority of members, the impact of good and bad governments on the regional communities of New South Wales. He has been an advocate for regional New South Wales and he has had the conviction to fight for equity for his community. He has seen the policies and heard the promises, and he has felt the heartbreak caused to his electorate by failed governments. He is able to compare and contrast past results to those being achieved by a good government now.

The member's witnessing of the shameful neglect of the Coffs Harbour electorate for 16 years is important in instructing this Government how not to make the mistakes that were made by those opposite and how to get the policy settings and investments right. One of the significant investments in his electorate is the Pacific Highway. The member for Coffs Harbour has seen the journey the Pacific Highway has taken and the exponential growth and investment that have occurred over the last five years, particularly in the last 12 months. Along with his North Coast brothers and sister, he is now making sure that not only the State Government but also the Commonwealth Government are making this very important highway on the North Coast, which has claimed too many lives, a priority.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: As we lead into the Easter period, it becomes even more relevant and important to understand the contribution that the member for Coffs Harbour has made to saving lives on this very dangerous part of the highway. As the member for Coffs Harbour and others can attest, the Government is proud to talk about its investment in roads, schools, hospitals and police stations. One of the celebrated achievements

of the member for Coffs Harbour was the investment in the magnificent police station, which he proudly opened not long ago in his community. More important than those tangible things, in my view, is the intangible measure of how our communities are responding. I would love to hear the view of the member for Coffs Harbour.

Communities in regional New South Wales now trust their Government. Communities in regional New South Wales know that when this Government makes a commitment to them we keep it. It does not matter what portfolio the community is seeking support from, all regional members know that if this Government made a commitment we have honoured it, and we will honour the ones in the future. The community has had its heart broken time after time with failed promises from those opposite.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr TROY GRANT: Communities can now trust the Government. Another intangible thing that is important for those who represent regional communities is that regional communities now have confidence. This Government believes that the success of regional New South Wales will not be because of this or any government; it will be because of the people—doctors, nurses, teachers, small business people, tradies, plumbers, mums and dads—who make up the heart and soul of regional communities. If the people have confidence and trust, their community will succeed.

People in the bush go the extra mile, whether it is serving on committees or volunteering. Regional New South Wales has the highest volunteerism rates. This Government is building and will continue to build the infrastructure that is needed, but the greatest gift the Government can give is to continue to invest in the people of regional New South Wales, to maintain their trust and confidence and to increase their capacity to achieve, as they have been doing for the past years, over the remaining term of this Government and hopefully for many more years to follow.

The SPEAKER: Order! The behaviour of members is ridiculous. It is the same behaviour that I witnessed in the classroom for 27 years on the last day before holidays. The member for Rockdale will come to order.

CARL TRAD AND GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Justice and Police. What action will the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Justice and Police take to prevent the Government awarding even more public money to Carl Trad, a person who has been convicted of stealing and money laundering in the course of trafficking heroin?

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

Mr TROY GRANT: What a ridiculous question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will come to order. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. I remind the member for Keira that he is on three calls to order. The member for Bankstown will come to order.

Mr TROY GRANT: It is now becoming clear to me why Labor failed this State for 16 years.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: Labor has absolutely no clue as to how government works.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Cessnock to order for the third time. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the second time. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

Mr TROY GRANT: Their lack of understanding about government processes, funding grants and the like is astonishing.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the member for Port Stephens several times about interjecting. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time.

Mr TROY GRANT: The member for Bankstown proposes in her question that the New South Wales Government check every individual's criminal history, antecedents and intelligence for every transaction that occurs between Government—

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. I am happy to re-read the question to clarify that it asks what action the Minister for Justice and Police will take to make sure that people like Carl Trad are not awarded public money.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier has been relevant. There is no point of order. The member will resume her seat. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the third time. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr TROY GRANT: I am astonished at the lack of understanding of the member for Bankstown and all Opposition members about how government works.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: The member is proposing that, as police Minister, I task the NSW Police Force to check every transaction that occurs between the community and the New South Wales Government for criminal antecedents and criminal intelligence. It is astonishing. Regardless of the obvious neglect, stupidity and misunderstanding of government displayed by the member for Bankstown—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on the point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: The question sought information. Seventy-seven kilos of cannabis would fill half this Chamber.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is a vexatious point of order. It is an opportunity for the member to repeat parts of the question. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time.

Mr TROY GRANT: With regard to the awarding of funds to the person Labor alluded to, the Premier is already on the record as saying—and I could not agree with him more—that if there are ways that we can make the system stronger and better we absolutely will. We on this side believe in transparency and integrity, which is a significant contrast to—

Mr John Robertson: You in particular, mate. You are very transparent.

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

Mr John Robertson: We can see through you.

Mr TROY GRANT: That is enough out of you, Curly. Wherever there are opportunities for this Government to improve government processes it will undertake to do that. That is our commitment. What the member is proposing to me as Minister for Justice and Police is preposterous. It is unachievable. It demonstrates that the member and her mates will never be fit for government.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Bankstown that she is on three calls to order. The Serjeant-at-Arms will escort the member for Bankstown from the Chamber under Standing Order 249.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Bankstown left the Chamber at 2.54 p.m. accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that four other members are on three calls to order. In the past two weeks I have warned members of the consequences of their continuing to interject and being called to order three times.

ZAYA TOMA LIBERAL PARTY MEMBERSHIP

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: My question is directed to the Premier. What action has the Premier taken to throw Zaya Toma out of the Liberal Party, given that the Civil and Administrative Tribunal found that he used a parliamentary computer system to hack into the emails of Fairfield councillors when a staffer in this Government?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Liberal Party will deal with Liberal Party matters.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn members that if they continue to interject they will follow the member for Bankstown out of the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I ask the member for Prospect why Labor is spending all its time on attacking its own Federal shadow Treasurer. What does the Labor Party have against Chris Bowen? Why is Labor spending all its time on attacking and stacking the branch against Chris Bowen?

Dr Hugh McDermott: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. This is about Zaya Toma hacking into computers. I asked what the Premier was going to do about it.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I remind the member for Prospect that one of his staffers was suspended from the Labor Party for six months for serious misconduct. What action did he take?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I know that the member, as a faceless man, loves to go about smearing people's reputations. The Government is getting on with looking after the people of New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Prospect has asked the question. He cannot ask it four or five times.

Mr Ray Williams: Madam Speaker, may I ask you a question?

The SPEAKER: No, you may not. Members may take a point of order, but they cannot ask me a question.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: My question is addressed to the Treasurer. In the 12 months since the election, what has the Government achieved in economic performance, in meeting its commitment to raise vital funds on behalf of infrastructure and in other important reforms?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for his question. I also thank him for organising a very successful business forum in north-western Sydney. More than 300 businesses turned up to give us their feedback on how the region is growing and how our strong economy and strong budget position are supporting economic growth in the fastest-growing parts of greater Sydney.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It was a pleasure to receive their feedback directly. Since the election 12 months ago the Government has been working hard to make New South Wales not only number one but the economic powerhouse of the nation. According to the most recent figures, New South Wales contributed \$4.1 billion to the nation's \$4.2 billion growth. We are so pleased that in this State the unemployment rate is at 5.3 per cent, well below the national average. In the 12 months to February we created more than 143,000 jobs. This is not just about Sydney; it is about regional New South Wales. Jobs growth in regional New South Wales represents two-thirds of the regional jobs growth in the entire nation. That is something we are very proud of. This is how it is done. When we came to government five years ago, Labor had left us with four deficits. What do we have now? We have four surpluses in the forward estimates. As the Premier said, Labor left us with debt growing. I was able to say at the half-yearly review that net debt in the general government sector is down to virtually zero.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock should be very careful.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: How many Governments can actually claim to have surpluses forecast in the forward estimates, a net debt position close to zero in the general government sector, the lowest unemployment rate in the nation and the fastest growing economy in the nation? This Government is spending more on infrastructure than this State has ever seen—\$68 million. Thanks to the decision of the community to support our Premier and our Government 12 months ago we now have \$20 billion for extra infrastructure. I am very pleased to update the House—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am very pleased to update the House that we have already completed one out of the three transactions in relation to poles and wires. It reaped gross proceeds in excess of \$10 billion. The second and third transactions are underway. This is a Government which is committed to delivering what people want. What the good people of this State want are more quality services and more infrastructure, and that is exactly what a strong economy and a strong budget will continue to deliver. I was also pleased to recently see some figures about retail growth. Our retail growth is the strongest in the nation, which means that consumer sentiment is positive.

We are still the only State in the nation that has more optimists than pessimists. We know where all the pessimists are; they are sitting opposite. We see the member for Blacktown over there. He is an optimist. The member for Blacktown is very happy with the performance of the current Leader of the Opposition. He is probably the happiest person on the other side. He is adding to our optimism numbers. I like the member for Cessnock but I think he is feeling a bit down because I think he would have liked to get a guernsey as the shadow Treasurer. He is the only one over there who reads the budget papers.

We know that on that side of the House the number of pessimists is growing but out in the community the number of optimists is increasing, because they have a Government in town delivering what matters to them. What matters to people are better health, education and transport services. What matters to people is more infrastructure. What matters to people is job security—people want to know that they live in a community which is getting stronger because it is the fastest growing economy in the nation. I give a commitment to the people of this great State. We appreciate the mandate we got at the last election to keep building New South Wales and the money that we reap from those transactions will go into that vital infrastructure for not just today and tomorrow but also for future generations.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In conclusion, I remind the House that the Government has been busy looking at opportunities through which it can make our tax system fairer. I announced some months ago that we would be making reforms in the area of the emergency services levy and I look forward to introducing legislation later this year in that regard. The Government has also managed to get through legislation regarding Boxing Day trading reforms—again making our laws more consistent. This Government will never cease to make those decisions that make our community stronger, that allow business to flourish and that not only provide job security but also give business confidence to invest in this State.

When this Government announces a project, people know that it will be built. When this Government announces extra services, people know that they will be delivered. That is the key difference between us and those opposite. We saw what those opposite delivered in terms of economic stability when in government. People can see the difference. I say to the people of New South Wales, "You gave us your trust 12 months ago. We will continue to honour that trust by delivering on your behalf."

LEN SCANLAN AND NEW SOUTH WALES ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier act to ensure that Mr Len Scanlan takes no part in the NSW Electoral Commission's deliberations about giving the Liberal Party \$4 million in public funding, given his extensive history of paid consultancy to the Liberal Party?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: For heaven's sake. That is it—that is all they have got. I think everyone can see in that question everything about this Opposition. It is an absolute disgrace. It is a rabble. Those opposite are doing

everything in their own interest. The person who they are trying to attack is a former auditor-general of Queensland who was backed in by the Beattie Government. They were very happy to support him. Those opposite have decided to attack him because it suits their political purposes right now.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra takes a point of order. The Premier is being relevant to the question. I cannot imagine what the point of order will be.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. It is called conflict of interest.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have just ruled on relevance. The Premier is being relevant. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time. Next time the member for Maroubra will be out of the Chamber because he is already on three calls to order. I was very tolerant on that occasion.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: So I would have thought that the electoral commissioner can consider those issues if the electorate commissioner wants to. But honestly I would expect better from the member for Maroubra. We on this side have defended him. He was promoted to deputy leader. In he came one day thinking, "Oh, you little ripper. I'm the deputy leader." Then he was told, "Out you go, mate. We didn't mean it. It just helped our little factional deals here and there."

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on relevance. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. There is no point of order. When I ask a member to resume their seat, I mean immediately, not after a tirade.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Strathfield knew the deputy leader position was up and she was on the phone. She was having calendar shoots and saying, "Who wants me?"

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Kiama to order for the second time. Members will come to order. If they do not they will be placed on calls to order.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled that the Premier is being relevant.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: There he is. What a dream team. He is the only member who decided he would not vote for himself in a deputy leader contest.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba takes a point of order. If it is on relevance then he will be removed from the Chamber because I have just ruled that the Premier is being relevant. Does the member for Lakemba have another point of order?

Mr Jihad Dib: I will consider that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba should think about it.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Lakemba is a good member. I think the Leader of the Opposition, the deputy leader and all those opposite could learn from the approach of the member for Lakemba. He is a member who is actually interested in policy in this State. He is a member who is actually interested in making a difference in this State, and that is what we on this side are interested in. If those opposite want to continue making smears and have their leadership contest which goes back and forth—whatever happened to Robbo, by the way?

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: The Premier is obliged to refer to the member for Blacktown by his proper title.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The member for Blacktown should be referred to by his correct title.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: When you are having a reshuffle and you are going through the list and you see the member for Liverpool there then what are you going to do? It is a chance for a reshuffle.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 59. This is tedious repetition.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I remind the member for Keira of my previous ruling on interjections. This is his final warning.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: As I said, this question time strategy by those opposite says it all. We have seen it again and again. I think the people of New South Wales deserve much better than what those opposite are doing here in this Chamber. The Government is very proud of what it is doing, whether in health, education, family and community services, the economy, roads, rail or whatever it is. We are making a difference for the people of New South Wales and we are very proud to be doing that.

The SPEAKER: Order! I again warn members that several of them are on three calls to order. If they interject once more then they will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day and they will not be able to return to their offices until tomorrow.

SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: My question is addressed to the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing. In the 12 months since the election how has the Government improved social housing communities and assisted the State's most vulnerable?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I thank the member for Riverstone for his question and appreciate that on the occasions that I have met him at Riverstone I have noted his real commitment to ensuring that the people in his electorate are extremely well looked after and those who need assistance get it every time, so well done. It behoves me to start by saying that we need to look at where we started. When we were elected to government Labor left us a disaster. The Premier said this Opposition is against public transport. In fact, it is against just about everything to do with delivery for the public, and it is very much against public housing.

[Interruption]

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is a shame. The former Labor Government left us with a \$300 million backlog of maintenance across the public housing properties. It left us with a legacy of a reduction of about 900 houses a year.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The former Government removed 900 public houses per year on average over its last 10 years.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: They showed no interest whatsoever in actually increasing the amount of public housing. When we came to government they also left us with the worst economy in the country.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. The question was specifically about actions taken by the Government in regard to housing.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being entirely relevant to the question.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: As the Premier often reminds us, we can only do great things if we have a great government. New South Wales has a great government that has turned around the economic malaise that was left us by Labor. They left us on the bottom of the economic pile on all economic indicators and we now lead the country on economic indicators. As a result, we can do a lot for people who require our assistance through public housing and in a host of other areas. Today I was with the Launchpad group that has just

announced a new program for young homeless people in Sydney. The program will be funded by the State Government to the extent of \$1.7 million; it is not a lot of money but it is a very significant amount. I met some of the young people at Launchpad and they are very excited that this Government is assisting them with rental subsidies—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale will stop wandering around the Chamber and pouring water. He has a glass of water. I have told members that we cannot afford this endless supply of water. That is it! The member should bring his own water next time.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: That is the small picture.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members who approach the table to get a drink of water do so simply so that they can wander around.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The big picture is that in the past few months we launched Future Directions, which is potentially a \$22 billion input into our economy. It is looking at providing at least 23,000 new and renewal social housing dwellings. That is the base case. This Government intends to do far more. Of course, we also launched the \$1 billion Social and Affordable Housing Fund. In 16 long years Labor did not put one extra cent into public housing. We have established a \$1 billion fund which in its first stages will provide 3,000 additional social housing dwellings.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. Stop the clock. Opposition members think they are funny. Their antics are on display today—pouring the water and wandering around so that they can be seen. The next member to do it will be placed on a call to order. If members are genuinely thirsty they should do something about it after question time. It is not as though any of them has been speaking for 10 minutes and addressing the House in a sensible way. The member for Campbelltown and the member for Rockdale may think it is funny to behave in that manner, but I am sure the visitors in the gallery do not think that way. It is very embarrassing. Start the clock.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is not just Future Directions, the \$22 billion worth of housing that is coming down the line towards assisting those in need or the \$1 billion Social and Affordable Housing Fund but it is also the \$20 million over three years for the Social Housing Community Improvement Fund.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I remind members that they should encourage their communities to apply to that fund. The benefit of a good economy is that we can find additional funds to support those in the local community. The first round has just been announced and those funds will range across 120 different projects across the State that will be funded to the tune of \$4.2 million.

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

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: In addition to the \$4.2 million, approximately \$3.4 million in benefits will come back to the community as a direct result of those government funds. Local community groups can apply to the fund to do good things to support people in social housing in their local electorate. Across the State there have been many projects, including Light Up Kerrie Close in Maitland, a security upgrade that involves updating lighting to the complex to improve the safety and security for tenants and community; Yarrum Avenue Sharing in the Shade in Wallsend, updating landscaping as well as in-built shade and barbeque facilities to the tune of \$35,000; the Dreamtime Reconciliation Park at Charlestown, creating community outdoor spaces servicing the local Aboriginal people and social housing community to the tune of \$45,000; and Freedom of Play, Ruprecht Park, an Aboriginal themed playground with prefabricated playground equipment and Aboriginal carvings, effectively creating a shaded outdoor sitting area for the community to come together to the tune of \$50,000.

Money is going to Tamworth, Northern Tablelands, Charlestown, Upper Hunter, Barwon, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Tamworth, Wollongong—the member for Wollongong is not even here to hear about it—and Shellharbour. Members should encourage their local communities to apply for stage two that opens in

April. It is a great opportunity for them to support their social housing tenants by simply alerting them to the fact that money is available to do good work. I encourage all members of this place to take it seriously. Obviously some members did not know about it—I say that in a neutral sense—but I ask them to make sure their communities know about it and apply for the next round that opens in April.

CENTENNIAL PARKLANDS STADIUM

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Government commit to no further encroachment or development on Moore Park land so this vital public open space is protected for current and future generations?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is great to have policy questions from the Independents and members of The Greens and I commend them for it. This Government has made a commitment to upgrade stadiums across this great city. It is about time because we do not want to just compete against the rest of the country; we want to compete against the rest of the world. Let us get the best stadiums we possibly can. We remain committed to plans to redevelop a new stadium at the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust lands. I also note that the light rail will pass Moore Park so we are improving public transport. I know the member for Sydney supports light rail. Do members of The Greens support light rail?

Ms Jenny Leong: Yes, but we were asking about parks.

The SPEAKER: Order! That question was not to the member for Newtown.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It was a little bit.

The SPEAKER: Order! No, it was not. It was a rhetorical question. Surely it did not require an interjection or an answer.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I do know The Greens more broadly are happier as a general principle with public transport than the Labor Party. I think that is a pretty clear principle. We are very proud to be delivering on our commitment. As the member said, that is part of Rebuilding NSW. We are proud of what we are doing because that is exactly what this Government is doing. We are rebuilding New South Wales, not just with stadiums and roads but also rail, schools and hospitals across this great State and we are very proud to be doing it. We think New South Wales deserves the best and that is what we are about; trying to deliver the best possible things to the people of this State including the best possible stadiums we can.

NEW SOUTH WALES REFORM

Mr MATT KEAN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. In the 12 months since the election how has the Government reformed New South Wales? Is the Minister aware of any alternative policy approaches?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members who are thinking about interjecting should leave the Chamber now.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Never before has New South Wales seen more reform than under the Baird-Grant Government. As we approach Easter it is appropriate to recognise that the Liberal-Nationals have resurrected this State. We have brought it back from the dead after it spent 16 long years in purgatory. In the portfolio of Finance, Services and Property it has been all reform all the time. We have reformed ServiceFirst, using the best of the business community. We have reformed procurement, saving hundreds of millions of dollars. We have reformed Public Works and fixed its drain on the budget.

We have reformed StateFleet, saving more than \$1 billion over four years. We have reformed Government Property and the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority to make our assets start to work for the people of this State. We have reformed service delivery by rolling out the award-winning Service NSW. We have also reformed workers compensation, creating an insurance provider with a commercial mind and a social heart that is born from the care, concern and compassion of the Baird-Grant Government.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In fact, nothing better describes the Baird-Grant Government than to say it has a commercial mind and a social heart. That is the secret behind our success.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Maitland that if she continues to interject, she will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day. This is her last warning.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: What a record of success it has been. It has been great this week listening to Minister after Minister tell us about their achievements. We have rebuilt this State from the ground up and got New South Wales moving. There are hundreds more nurses, teachers and police on the front lines and thousands of new transport services across the State.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: There are thousands of new social housing places for those in need. We have allocated millions to fight domestic violence, improve mental health and support palliative care. We have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in new hospitals, schools and community facilities. We have allocated billions to infrastructure projects such as the M4, M5, NorthConnex, WestConnex, Sydney Metro and the light rail. Those are the credentials of a proudly reformist government. We are the Government that builds things. We are building convention centres, stadiums, heavy rail, harbour crossings, housing and Barangaroo. We are building everything.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Premier could not name any policies of members opposite, but I have gone through their program of reform over the past 12 months. The member for Summer Hill is supporting the illegal drug trade.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister is required to stay within the parameters of his portfolio unless he is raising matters of public interest. Most of the matters he is referring to do not fall within the purview of his portfolio.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Members in the upper House have banned trips to Israel. The member for Auburn is running xenophobic campaigns against the leasing of the poles and wires.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point order is taken under Standing Order 73. The Minister is making imputations against members of this place.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. If members take offence to what the Minister has said they can ask the Minister to withdraw the comments. They were not directed towards the member for Lakemba.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I withdraw the comment.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has withdrawn the comment.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Our favourite policy this week was from the member for Strathfield, who wanted to send naughty drivers off to re-education courses. That is typical of their socialist background, so it is no surprise. The member for Maroubra wants to increase taxes. No wonder he was demoted. The member for Keira is opposed to every transport initiative. That is why he has been promoted.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 73, which relates to improper motives and personal reflections.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister withdrew the earlier comments. I do not consider that comment to be an imputation.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Newcastle and Opposition members from elsewhere in the Hunter have opposed any new infrastructure in their regions. My favourites are the member for Gosford and the member for Swansea, who want to ban Service NSW across the State.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The biggest achievement of members opposite has been increasing the size of government—in opposition—with the largest shadow ministry in history. But we are happy they have sent the member for Canterbury to Canberra. We all appreciate that. Their number one achievement has been to set the record for the least questions on policy in 12 months. We know that Labor members are the merchants of muckraking. They are the peddlers of putrid propaganda. They are the dealers—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: It is Standing Order 73 again. The Minister is making personal reflections.

The SPEAKER: Against whom?

Mr Greg Warren: Against members.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is making general comments. There is no point of order at this stage.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Members opposite are the dealers of dirt and division. That is why they are consigned to opposition. They follow the politics of smear and innuendo. We have had to put up with it for the past 12 months.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: If the member for Swansea's point of order is about personal reflections, I have ruled on that.

Ms Yasmin Catley: No, it is not.

The SPEAKER: What is the member's point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: The Minister is inciting argument from Opposition members, and that relates to Standing Order 74 (2).

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order, as the member well knows. The member for Swansea will resume her seat. I do not remember a standing order relating to inciting arguments. If there were none of us would be here.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: While they are dithering, we are delivering. While they are conniving, we are constructing. While they are whining, we are winning. That is why in 12 months the Baird-Grant Government has made New South Wales great again.

Question time concluded at 3.27 p.m.

STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

Report

The Speaker tabled the report of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee entitled "Changes to the Routine of Business and consequential changes to the Sessional Orders", Report No. 3/56, dated March 2016.

Ordered to be printed.

SESSIONAL ORDERS

Motion, by leave, by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:

That this House:

- (1) Agrees to the proposed amendments to the sessional orders as follows -

BELLS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 35 shall read as follows:

35. The timing for bells is as follows:

Tuesday

Bells are rung at 11.45 a.m. for 20 seconds and at 11.58 a.m. for 60 seconds.

Wednesday

Bells are rung at 9.45 a.m. for 20 seconds and at 9.58 a.m. for 60 seconds.

Thursday

Bells are rung at 9.45 a.m. for 20 seconds and at 9.58 a.m. for 60 seconds.

After lunch

Bells are rung at 2.00 p.m. for 20 seconds and at 2.13 p.m. for 60 seconds.

Division

First bell 10 seconds, pause 10 seconds; second bell 10 seconds, pause 10 seconds; third bell 20 seconds. The doors are locked four minutes after the bells are first rung.

Quorum

One long continuous bell (for up to four minutes until a quorum is present in the Chamber).

House adjournment

Two short bells.

One long bell

A continuous bell rung at the discretion of the Chair.

RESTRICTION ON QUORUM CALLS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 45 shall read as follows:

45. Members shall not be permitted to call attention to the want of a quorum:

- (1) During Private Members' Statements or Community Recognition Statements;
- (2) During Matters of Public Importance or the Discussion on a Petition signed by 10,000 or more persons;
- (3) During the establishment of and debate on a Motion Accorded Priority;
- (4) During the take note debate on reports from committees;
- (5) Before 10.30 a.m. on any sitting day, other than Thursday when a quorum call cannot be made before 10.10 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT WITHOUT MOTION

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 46 shall read as follows:

46. Unless otherwise ordered, the House shall be adjourned without motion moved at 10.00 p.m. or at the conclusion of Private Members' Statements on Tuesday, at 10.00 p.m. or at the conclusion of the Matter of Public Importance on Wednesday, and at the conclusion of Private Members' Statements on Thursday.

ROUTINE OF BUSINESS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 97 shall read as follows:

97. The House shall conduct its business in the following routine:

Tuesdays

1. At 12.00 noon the Speaker takes the Chair
2. Giving of General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices)
3. Private Members' Statements, then the Speaker leaves the Chair
4. At 2.15 p.m. the Speaker resumes the Chair
5. Ministerial Statements
6. Giving of Notices of Motions (Government Business, Bills, Business with Precedence under Standing Order 118)
7. Giving of Notices of Motion to be Accorded Priority
8. Question Time
9. Ministerial Statements
10. Papers
11. Committees – Tabling of reports and announcements
12. Petitions
13. Placing or Disposal of Business
14. Motion Accorded Priority
15. Business with Precedence under Standing Order 118, if any
16. Government Business
17. Private Members' Statements
18. Adjournment at 10.00 p.m. or at the conclusion of Private Members' Statements, if concluded before 10.00 p.m.

Wednesdays

1. At 10.00 a.m. the Speaker takes the Chair
2. Giving of General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices)
3. Government Business
4. At 1.15 p.m. Community Recognition Statements for up to 20 minutes, then the Speaker leaves the Chair
5. At 2.15 p.m. the Speaker resumes the Chair
6. Ministerial Statements
7. Giving of Notices of Motions (Government Business, Bills, Business with Precedence under Standing Order 118, and General Business Notices of Motion to be the subject of a motion to re-order later in the sitting)
8. Giving of Notices of Motion to be Accorded Priority

9. Question Time
10. Ministerial Statements
11. Papers
12. Committees – Tabling of reports and announcements
13. Petitions
14. Placing or Disposal of Business
15. Re-ordering of General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills) and General Business (Notices of Motions)
16. Motion Accorded Priority
17. Business with Precedence under Standing Order 118, if any
18. Government Business
19. Private Members' Statements
20. Matter of Public Importance
21. Adjournment at 10.00 p.m. or at the conclusion of the Matter of Public Importance, if concluded before 10.00 p.m.

Thursdays

1. At 10.00 a.m. the Speaker takes the Chair
2. Giving of General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices)
3. Government Business for up to 30 minutes
4. General Business Notices of Motions for Bills for up to 20 minutes
5. General Business Orders of the Day for Bills for up to 60 minutes
6. General Business Notices of Motions or Orders of the Day (not being Bills) up to 1.30 p.m., then the Speaker leaves the Chair
7. At 2.15 p.m. the Speaker resumes the Chair
8. Ministerial Statements
9. Giving of Notices of Motions (Government Business, Bills, Business with Precedence under Standing Order 118)
10. Question Time
11. Ministerial Statements
12. Papers
13. Committees – Tabling of reports and announcements
14. Petitions
15. Placing or Disposal of Business
16. Business with Precedence under Standing Order 118, if any
17. Committees Reports - take note debates for a period of up to 30 minutes
18. Matter of Public Importance
19. Community Recognition Statements
20. At 4.30 p.m., Business of the House – Petitions
21. Community Recognition Statements (if not completed)
22. Private Members' Statements, after which the House shall adjourn without motion until the next sitting day.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 108 shall read as follows:

108. The procedure for Private Members' Statements is as follows:

- (1) In accordance with the Routine of Business, the Speaker shall ask if there are any Private Members' Statements.
- (2) Up to 47 Private Members' Statements may be made over any one sitting week, within the time allocated in the Routine of Business, for up to 5 minutes each and replies by Ministers shall be limited to 1 minute each.
- (3) Private Members' Statements may be taken between items of business with the leave of the House for a specified period or a specified number of Members or until certain business is to be conducted as notified by the Minister in charge of the House at that time.
- (4) A division on any question or quorum call shall not be permitted during Private Members' Statements.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, the sessional order on community recognition statements be amended to read as follows:

108A. The procedure for Community Recognition Statements is as follows:

- (1) In accordance with the Routine of Business, the Speaker will ask if there are any Community Recognition Statements.
- (2) Members may make Community Recognition Statements for up to 1 minute each, for a total of 20 minutes on Wednesday and 30 minutes on Thursday.
- (3) Members may not give consecutive Community Recognition Statements.
- (4) Community Recognition Statements may be taken between items of business with the leave of the House for a specified period or a specified number of Members or until certain business is to be conducted as notified by the Minister in charge of the House at that time.
- (5) Community Recognition Statements must not contain:
 - (a) Matters of policy;
 - (b) Requests for the Government or the House, or another body to take some form of action or not; or
 - (c) Criticisms or negative reflections on any person, including Members, Office Holders, the Government, the Opposition or a third party.
- (6) A division on any question or quorum call shall not be permitted during Community Recognition Statements.

MOTIONS ACCORDED PRIORITY

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 109 shall read as follows:

109. The procedure for consideration of Motions Accorded Priority shall be as follows:

- (1) Prior to Question Time on Tuesday and Wednesday, the Speaker shall ask if there are any written notices of motions to be accorded priority over the other business of the House.
- (2) No more than two notices shall be accepted at any one sitting of the House.
- (3) The notices shall be set down for consideration later in the sitting in accordance with the Routine of Business.
- (4)
 - (a) The Members giving the notices shall each be permitted to make statements of up to 3 minutes as to why their notice should be accorded priority. No points of order regarding the scope or substance of the notice, or a quorum call will be entertained during the 3 minutes provided for the statement.
 - (b) At the conclusion of the 3 minute statements the Speaker shall put the question on the first notice **"That the motion of the Member for ... be accorded priority"**.
 - (c) If the motion to accord priority is carried the Member may proceed to move their motion.
 - (d) If the first motion to accord priority is not carried, the Speaker will then put the question on the second motion **"That the motion of the Member for ... be accorded priority"**.
- (5) When the motion for priority is determined and the motion is moved, the following time limits shall apply:

Mover	– 5 minutes
Member next speaking	– 5 minutes
Two other Members	– 3 minutes
Reply	– 3 minutes
Total	– 19 minutes
- (6) No quorum call will be permitted during the time set aside for a Motion Accorded Priority.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 110 shall read as follows:

110. The procedure for Matters of Public Importance within the daily Routine of Business, is as follows:

- (1) The matter, which must be definite, shall be handed in writing to the Speaker no later than 12.00 noon and immediately published.
- (2) The Speaker shall determine whether the matter is in order. In the event that more than one matter is submitted, the Speaker shall determine which matter is of the greatest public importance.
- (3) There shall be no dissent from the ruling of the Speaker in relation to the operation of this Standing Order.
- (4) At least 30 minutes prior to the time for Question Time –
 - (a) The Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the responsible Minister in the House, Members submitting matters and the Independent Members shall be informed in writing of the matter determined by the Speaker to be discussed.
 - (b) The Speaker, by placing a notice on notice boards, shall inform Members of the matter.
- (5) As provided in the Routine of Business the Speaker shall call the Member concerned to proceed with the matter. The matter cannot be amended.
- (6) The following time limits shall apply:

Member submitting matter	– 5 minutes
Member next speaking	– 5 minutes
One other Member	– 3 minutes
Reply	– 3 minutes
Total	– 16 minutes
- (7) At the conclusion of the discussion no question shall be put.
- (8) A division on any question or quorum call shall not be permitted during Matters of Public Importance.

RESTRICTION ON DIVISIONS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 187 shall read as follows:

187. The House shall not conduct a division on any question before 10.30 a.m. on days when the House meets at an earlier time, or before 10.10 a.m. on Thursday, during Private Members' Statements, Community Recognition Statements, Matters of Public Importance, or the discussion on a petition signed by 10,000 or more persons. If a division is called prior to 10.30 a.m. on such days, the division shall be deferred and conducted at 10.30 a.m. and any business then before the House shall be interrupted and recommenced after the division(s).

COMMITTEE REPORTS, TABLING IN THE HOUSE AND DEBATE

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 306 shall read as follows:

306.

- (1) The report and associated documents of any committee (not being a legislation committee or the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee) shall be presented at the time provided in the Routine of Business, or at any other time with the leave of the House.
- (2) The Member presenting the report may move **"That the document be printed"**. This question shall be decided without debate or amendment.

- (3) Reports from committees (not being reports of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee) shall stand in the order in which they are presented (or reported by the Clerk when received during an adjournment) as Orders of the Day "**That the House take note of the Report**".
 - (4) Such Orders of the Day may be considered at the time allocated in the Routine of Business on Thursday for a period of up to 30 minutes. Any interrupted item of business shall stand as an Order of the Day for tomorrow.
 - (5) Debate on an Order of the Day may be adjourned and the resumption of the debate set down as an Order of the Day for tomorrow.
 - (6) When the Order of the Day is called on and not proceeded with, consideration of the report shall be postponed until the next Thursday sitting when reports are considered. If the Order of the Day is called on at that subsequent sitting and is not proceeded with, the question shall be put.
 - (7) If a committee has more than one report on the Business Paper, the Chair or Member who tabled the report may move a motion without notice, amendment or debate to facilitate the consideration of two or more of the committee's reports together.
 - (8) The Member tabling the report may speak for up to 6 minutes and any other Member may speak for up to 4 minutes to the question "**That the House take note of the Report**" with the question being put after 22 minutes. No reply is permitted.
- (2) Agrees to the proposed changes to the sessional orders coming into force on and from 3 May 2016.

STANDING ORDERS

Motion, by leave, by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:

That:

- (1) The following standing orders be amended to read as follows –

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

10.

- (1) The Speaker shall be elected on the first sitting day of a new Parliament or whenever the office becomes vacant.
- (2) The election of Speaker shall be in accordance with section 31B of the *Constitution Act 1902*.
- (3) In addition to the provisions in the above mentioned section, the following procedure shall apply:
 - (a) At least one week before the scheduled sitting the Clerk shall invite all Members to submit their nominations for the vacant office by 9.00 am on the day of the election; and shall publish the names of the nominees.
 - (b) At the prescribed time on the first day of sitting the Clerk will:
 - (i) announce the number of nominations received.
 - (ii) if there is one valid nomination, declare that Member to be elected.
 - (iii) if there is more than one valid nomination, announce the fact that a ballot will be required.
 - (iv) have ballot papers prepared and initialled.
 - (v) order that the bells be rung as prescribed for the taking of a ballot.
 - (vi) call each Member by order of electorate, with Members proceeding to the Table to collect a ballot paper. The names of Members issued with ballot papers will be crossed off a list.
 - (c) Having received a ballot paper Members will cast their vote in secret:
 - (d) The Clerk will then declare the ballot closed.
 - (e) The votes will be counted by the Clerks and the Clerk will declare a Member to be elected.

Note: At no time during these proceedings will the Chamber be locked or the sitting suspended.

ROUTINE OF BUSINESS

97. The House shall conduct its business in the following routine:

Tuesdays

1. At 1.00 p.m. (Speaker takes Chair)
2. General Business Notices of Motions and Private Members' Statements
3. At 2.15 p.m. (Speaker resumes Chair)
4. Ministerial Statements
5. Notices of Motions (Government Business, Bills, Business with Precedence)
6. Notices of Motions to be Accorded Priority
7. Question Time
8. Ministerial Statements
9. Papers
10. Committee Reports – Tabling of reports and notification of inquiries
11. Petitions
12. Announcement of Matter of Public Importance
13. Placing or Disposal of Business
14. Motion Accorded Priority
15. Business with Precedence
16. Government Business
17. At 7.00 p.m. Business before the House is interrupted for the Matter of Public Importance. Any interrupted item of Government Business shall stand as an order of the day for tomorrow. If at the time of interruption a division is in progress, that division shall be completed.
18. Adjournment at 7.30 p.m. or at the conclusion of the Matter of Public Importance, if concluded before 7.30 p.m.

Wednesdays

1. At 10.00 a.m. (Speaker takes Chair)
2. General Business Notices of Motions
3. Government Business concluding at 1.30 p.m. Any interrupted item of Government Business shall stand as an order of the day for a later hour of the day. If at the time of interruption a division is in progress, that division shall be completed.
4. At 2.15 p.m. (Speaker resumes Chair)
5. Ministerial Statements
6. Notices of Motions (Government Business, Bills, Business with Precedence and notices to be the subject of a motion to re-order later in the sitting)
7. Notices of Motions to be Accorded Priority
8. Question Time
9. Ministerial Statements
10. Papers
11. Committee Reports – Tabling of reports and notification of inquiries
12. Petitions
13. Announcement of Matter of Public Importance
14. Re-ordering of General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills) and General Business (Notices of Motions)
15. Placing or Disposal of Business
16. Motion Accorded Priority
17. Business with Precedence
18. Government Business
19. At 5.45 p.m. Business before the House is interrupted for Private Members' Statements. Any interrupted item of Government Business shall stand as an order of the day for tomorrow. If at the time of interruption a division is in progress, that division shall be completed.
20. At 7.00 p.m. Business before the House is interrupted for the Matter of Public Importance.
21. Adjournment at 7.30 p.m. or at the conclusion of the Matter of Public Importance, if concluded before 7.30 p.m.

Thursdays

1. At 10.00 a.m. (Speaker takes Chair)
2. General Business Notices of Motions
3. Government Business until 11.45 a.m. Any interrupted item of Government Business shall stand as an order of the day for tomorrow. If at the time of interruption a division is in progress, that division shall be completed.
4. General Business Notices of Motions or Orders of the Day (not being Bills) concluding at 1.30 p.m. Any interrupted business shall stand as an order of the day for tomorrow with precedence of other General Business (not for Bills). If at the time of interruption a division is in progress that division and any other division(s) to determine the matter shall be completed.
5. At 2.15 p.m. (Speaker resumes the Chair)
6. Ministerial Statements
7. Notices of Motions (Government Business, Bills, Business with Precedence)
8. Notices of Motions to be Accorded Priority
9. Question Time
10. Ministerial Statements
11. Papers
12. Committee Reports –Tabling of reports and notification of inquiries
13. Petitions
14. Placing or Disposal of Business
15. Motion Accorded Priority
16. Business with Precedence
17. At 4.30 p.m. Business before the House is interrupted for General Business Orders of the Day for Bills. Any interrupted business lapses except when the House is considering Business with Precedence which will stand as an order of the day for tomorrow.
18. At 5.30 p.m. Private Members' Statements. Any interrupted business shall stand as an order of the day for tomorrow with precedence of other General Business Orders of the Day for Bills.
19. Adjournment at 6.30 p.m. or at the conclusion of Private Members' Statements, if before 6.30 p.m.

MOTIONS ACCORDED PRIORITY

109. The procedure for consideration of Motions Accorded Priority shall be as follows:

- (1) Prior to Question Time, the Speaker shall ask if there are any written notices of motions to be accorded priority over the other business of the House.
- (2) No more than two notices shall be accepted at any one sitting of the House.
- (3) The notices shall be set down for consideration later in the sitting in accordance with the routine of business.
- (4)
 - (a) The Members giving the notices shall each be permitted to make statements of up to 5 minutes as to why their notice should be accorded priority.
 - (b) At the conclusion of the 5 minute statements the Speaker shall put the question on the first notice **"That the motion of the Member for ... be accorded priority"**.
 - (c) If this motion is carried the Member may proceed.
 - (d) If the motion is not carried the question **"That the motion of the Member for ... be accorded priority"** is then put on the next motion.
- (5) When the motion for priority is determined and the motion is moved, the following time limits shall apply:

Mover	- 7 minutes
Member next speaking	- 7 minutes
Other Members (limited to two)	- 5 minutes
Reply	- 5 minutes
Total	- 29 minutes

COMMITTEE REPORTS, TABLING IN THE HOUSE AND DEBATE

306.

- (1) The report and associated documents of any committee (not being a legislation committee, or the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee) shall be presented at the time provided in the routine of business, or at any other time with the leave of the House.
- (2) The Member presenting the report may move "**That the document be printed**". This question shall be decided without debate or amendment.
- (3) Reports from committees (not being reports of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee) shall stand in the order in which they are presented (or reported by the Clerk when received during an adjournment) as Orders of the Day "**That the House take note of the Report**".
- (4) Such Orders of the Day may be considered between 1.00 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. on Fridays. Any interrupted item of business shall stand as an Order of the Day for tomorrow.
- (5) Debate on an Order of the Day may be adjourned and the resumption of the debate set down as an Order of the Day for tomorrow.
- (6) When the Order of the Day is called on and not proceeded with, consideration of the report shall be postponed until the next Friday sitting when reports are considered. If the Order of the Day is called on at that subsequent sitting and is not proceeded with, the question shall be put.
- (7) If a committee has more than one report on the Business Paper, the Chair or Member who tabled the report may move a motion without notice, amendment or debate to facilitate the consideration of two or more of the committee's reports together.
- (8) The Member tabling the report may speak for up to 10 minutes and any other Member may speak for up to 5 minutes to the question "**That the House take note of the Report**" with the question being put after 30 minutes. No reply is permitted.
- (9) Orders of the Day not commenced or not completed 12 months from the date of tabling shall lapse.
- (2) The amendments be forwarded by the Speaker to His Excellency the Governor for approval.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

Chair and Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that, pursuant to standing Order 282 (2), on 23 March 2016 Mark Joseph Coure was elected Chair and Geoffrey Keith Provest was elected Deputy Chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning.

PETITIONS

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

Petition requesting the retention of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo and the expansion of museum services to other parts of New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

South Coast Rail Services

Petition requesting an hourly service from Kiama to Bomaderry station connecting with trains to Sydney, received from **Mr Gareth Ward**.

Surry Hills Light Rail Station

Petition calling on the Government to build a second light rail station in Surry Hills at the Wimbo Park-Olivia Gardens site, using appropriate landscaping to minimise visual and noise impacts and provide a quality park for the local community, received from **Ms Jenny Leong**.

Inner-city Social Housing

Petition requesting the retention and proper maintenance of inner-city public housing stock, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Low-cost Housing and Homelessness

Petition requesting increased funding for low-cost housing and homelessness services, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Same-sex Marriage

Petition supporting same-sex marriage, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Local Government Amalgamations

Petition opposing the proposed amalgamation of the Shellharbour local government area with Wollongong City Council, received from **Mr Gareth Ward**.

Local Government Amalgamations

Petition opposing the forced amalgamation of the Kiama local government area with any other local government area, received from **Mr Gareth Ward**.

Pet Shops

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

Duck Hunting

Petition requesting retention of the longstanding ban on duck hunting, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Container Deposit Levy

Petition requesting the Government introduce a container deposit levy to reduce litter and increase recycling rates of drink containers, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Plastic Bags Ban

Petition calling on the Government to introduce legislation to ban single-use lightweight plastic bags at retail points of sale in New South Wales to reduce waste and environmental degradation, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

The Clerk announced that the following petitions signed by more than 500 persons were lodged for presentation:

Sydney Cruise Ship Terminals

Petition requesting the implementation of shore power at Sydney cruise ship terminals and that cruise ships be required to use shore power whilst berthed, received from **Mr Jamie Parker**.

Lewisham Railway Station

Petition requesting the upgrade of Lewisham railway station to ensure access for all residents, and to stop flooding of the station, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Local Government Amalgamations

Petition requesting that the proposed merger of Newcastle City Council and Port Stephens Council not proceed, received from **Ms Kate Washington**.

Wind Farms

Petition requesting a ban on the construction and development of wind farms on the Southern Tablelands and south-west slopes, received from **Ms Pru Goward**.

The Clerk announced that the following Ministers had lodged responses to petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Surry Hills Light Rail Station—lodged 17 February 2016 (Ms Jenny Leong)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—School Student Transport Scheme—lodged 18 February 2016 (Mr Jamie Parker)

Pursuant to sessional order Government business proceeded with.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendment.

Schedule of the amendment referred to in message of 22 March 2016

No. 1 **CDP No. 1 [c2016-026]**

Page 12, Schedule 1. Insert after line 11:

[20] Section 74

Omit the section. Insert instead:

74 Review of Part 3A

- (1) The Minister is to review Part 3A to determine whether that Part achieves the objects set out in section 41R.
- (2) The review is to be undertaken as soon as possible after the period of 12 months from the commencement of that Part.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the end of the period of 12 months.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) [3.52 p.m.]: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendment.

I thank the Opposition, Christian Democratic Party and The Greens for their considered debate and amendments to this bill in the other place, as well as supporting the Government's original bill. Assisted reproductive technology is a sensitive issue. It involves a balancing of the different interests and views of the various stakeholders, which at times differ from one another and it can then be difficult to find common ground. However, this bill seeks to achieve a fair balance in this sensitive area. I thank all members for their contributions.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Legislative Council amendment agreed to.

Message sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution.

BIOFUELS AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of the amendments referred to in message of 22 March 2016

No. 1 **GOVT No. 1 [c2016-030B]**

Page 7, Schedule 2 [21]. Insert after line 20:

Note. See section 9A (2).

No. 2 **GOVT No. 2 [c2016-030B]**

Page 9, Schedule 2. Insert after line 23:

[36] Section 32

Omit the section. Insert instead:

32 Review of Act

- (1) The Minister is to review this Act to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives.
- (2) The review is to commence before 30 June 2019.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after that date.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) [3.33 p.m.]:
I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

These amendments were passed yesterday with bipartisan support. They are sensible amendments and I thank the shadow Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation for her assistance. After very constructive dialogue some sensible amendments were put forward and the Government has agreed to them. The first amendment pertains to the clarification of exemption, and we made a notation in the amendments to make that clearer. This is a good thing for small business. The second amendment pertains to the granting of a review in three years. Under the usual statutory regime reviews are undertaken every five years, but given the complexities of this legislation and its policy settings it is important to monitor how this mandate is tracking. Given the important structural shift that has now occurred in going from a wholesale market to a retail market, and also regulating the wholesale price of ethanol, it is important that we conduct a review in three years.

The first amendment—clarifying the basis on which volume fuel retailers can seek an exemption—goes to the point that the shadow Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation made, which was a good point. The first amendment proposed by the Government is a minor amendment. It will clarify the intent and application of the legislation. The Government is concerned that retailers regulated under the Act have clear advice on the grounds under which they can seek an exemption. This will be especially important for those retailers who will be newly regulated following the amendment of the Act. The Government understands that dealing with Government regulation can cause anxiety, especially for small business. Should a newly regulated business require an exemption, understanding the grounds for seeking an exemption should be as easy as possible.

I am concerned that the legislation should be as clear and easy to understand as possible. This proposed minor amendment will clarify that the grounds under which a retailer can request an amendment include those set out in section 9A of the Act. Section 9A sets out the grounds that can form the basis of a defence against failing to comply with the mandate. This amendment will remove any concerns businesses may have had about what grounds can and cannot be relied on when applying for an exemption. The Government understands that most business people want to do the right thing, and we want to help businesses by making the legislation as clear as possible. This amendment should remove all doubt for retailers on the eligible grounds for an exemption.

The second amendment deals with a review of the Act in three years. The Government proposes an amendment for a statutory review of the Biofuels Act in three years. I am concerned that the effectiveness of the provisions of the Biofuels Act is subject to rigorous assessment and review. To achieve this, an amendment is proposed that will require a statutory review of the Act to occur three years after the current package of reforms come into effect. The proposed amendment to section 32 of the Act will require a review of the Act to commence before 30 June 2019, with the report of the review to be tabled in Parliament within 12 months after that date. The statutory review will assess the full impact and effectiveness of the Act and provide recommendations for further reforms of the biofuels regime, if necessary. Tabling the report in Parliament will enable members of this House an opportunity to scrutinise the findings and recommendations of the review. It is best practice that regulation is subject to regular review and assessment.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) [3.38 p.m.]: On behalf of the Opposition I speak in support of these amendments. It was Labor that introduced this nation's first biofuel legislation. I note that this debate, just as it

had in 2007, has bipartisan support. The only voices of discontent came from The Greens and, unfortunately, from a few on the Government side. That being said, I am pleased that the Minister and I were able to work very constructively on the amendments proposed by the Opposition. The intent is now very clear for those seeking an exemption. The Minister is quite right in saying that there can be anxiety amongst those small business people when major change like this is occurring, but I believe that the Minister is genuine in his approach.

We have worked very closely together on this. I believe that the extension of the review time is also very sensible; 2019 is a sensible time frame for a review of these very important changes: It will take a long time for this legislation to be implemented. As the Minister has quite rightly said, the detail of these regulations will require forensic precision, and I welcome that. I look forward to working very closely with the Minister on this because at the end of the day consumers are at the forefront. Both the Minister and I agree that these amendments are very important for this legislation and I commend them to the House.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

Message sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution.

CENTENARY OF ANZAC

Debate resumed from 18 February 2016.

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) [3.41 p.m.]: Today I commemorate 100 years since World War I, known at the time as "the war to end all wars". World War I was a global war centred in Europe that began on 28 July 1914 and lasted until 11 November 1918. More than nine million combatants and seven million civilians died as a result of the war, including the victims of a number of genocides. An incredibly important day in Australian war history was 25 April 1915—now known as Anzac Day. On this day, more than any other in our calendar, we are reminded of the perils of war and we mark the day with respect and honour.

Anzac Day marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during World War I. On 25 April 1915, soldiers in the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps [ANZAC] joined troops from Britain and France on a mission to invade the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey. The ultimate objective of the mission was to secure the Straits of the Dardanelles so that French and British warships could move forward to capture the city of Constantinople, now called Istanbul. The soldiers who landed at Gallipoli met fierce resistance from the Turkish defenders. The conflict dragged on for eight bitter months; both sides suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships. By the end of 1915 little military value had been gained and the Allied forces pulled out. More than 48,000 Allied soldiers had been killed, including 8,709 Australians. More than 86,000 Turkish soldiers died defending their country.

The evacuation of our forces is an interesting part of our history that is not as widely known as the landing at Gallipoli. Our forces moved out under the cover of darkness, without further casualties, by rigging up a unique series of unmanned rifles that fired from various locations. It was believed that the evacuation was a masterpiece of military planning and it has been called the silent evacuation from Gallipoli. In the space of five days about 80,000 men, together with most of their guns and equipment, were shipped out without the Turks being aware that a withdrawal was taking place. Some reports have since surfaced claiming that the Turks knew the Anzacs were leaving but chose not to intervene so as to avoid further loss of life on either side.

News of the landing at Gallipoli, and the battle that followed, had a big impact on Australians at home. On the first anniversary of the landing in 1916, 25 April was officially named Anzac Day. A variety of ceremonies were held across the country to mark the occasion, including memorial services, parades and recruitment rallies. When the war ended in 1918, Anzac Day was established as a national day of commemoration for the Australians who had died during the war. Today it is used to remember the people killed in all of the wars and conflicts in which Australia has been involved. It is also celebrated as a patriotic day where many reflect on what it means to be an Australian.

World War I continued for many years after that fateful day at Gallipoli. The events that occurred during the years 1914 to 1918 shaped how we live today, and we continue to mark the centenary of the

First World War, also known as the Great War. Remembering these times helps remind us why we are grateful to be Australian. After Gallipoli, some of the Anzac troops remained to fight in Palestine, Jordan and the Sinai Desert, while other divisions were moved to the Western Front in France, the main location of the war.

We also remember many other heroic events from World War I, including the epic sea battle between *HMAS Sydney* and the German ship *SMS Emden*, as well as the gallant, skilful crew of submarine *AE2*, which successfully sailed through the heavily mined sea lanes of the Dardanelles to inflict much damage on enemy shipping. When *AE2* ran aground on 30 April 1915, all crew were interred as prisoners of war for the duration of the war. At 11.00 a.m. on 11 November 1918, the guns of the Western Front fell silent. The Germans had called for an armistice so that they could make a peace settlement. On Remembrance Day, or specifically at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, Allied countries mark the anniversary of the day when the fighting stopped, and pause for a minute in silence to remember those who died in World War I.

The Flanders poppy has long been a part of Remembrance Day and is also increasingly being used as part of Anzac Day observances. According to the Australian War Memorial, during the First World War red poppies were among the first plants to spring up in the devastated battlefields of northern France and Belgium. In soldiers' folklore, the vivid red of the poppy came from the blood of their comrades soaking the ground. More than 330,000 Australians served overseas during this conflict. Of those, 60,000 died, 152,000 were wounded and more than 4,000 were taken prisoner. Of the prisoners, 395 died in captivity. Sadly, surviving did not necessarily mean the end of turmoil for many of the men and women who returned home, as they suffered the mental and physical scars of the war for the rest of their lives.

Remembering our fallen soldiers and the hardships faced by those who served in Australia's wars is incredibly important to many Australians. This was clear at the centenary celebrations of Anzac Day last year when hundreds of people across the country came out to mark the occasion. In the Miranda electorate, commemorative services were held at the Caringbah War Memorial, Miranda War Memorial and Sylvania Bowling Club, all of which I was proud to attend. There was also a shire-wide commemorative event held at Cronulla, which fittingly live streamed the Dawn Service from Gallipoli, set against the backdrop of our shire's beautiful beaches.

During World War I, of the nearly 60,000 Australian soldiers who died overseas, some were buried on the battlefields of Turkey, Egypt and France, while others have remained forever missing in action. For their families back in Australia, local war memorials became a place of mourning and remembrance. As a community, we are thankful that these memorials exist and are honoured with the respect they deserve. Our local memorial in Miranda, which was originally constructed in the grounds of Miranda Central Public School to honour and pay tribute to the servicemen from the area, was built with white sandstone and stood more than five metres high. A statue of a soldier was placed on top of the pedestal and 65 names were set into the marble tablets that adorned its sides, including the names of 14 who perished at war, their names marked with a star. The first name on the role of honour is that of well-loved teacher George Stevens, who worked at Miranda Central Public School. Sadly, the statue of the "old digger" was criticised and eventually removed.

The memorial was relocated to Seymour Shaw Park in 1967 and moved once again to a more appropriate place in the park in 2014. It means so much to the local community to have such memorials, and I commend all the hard work of our local Miranda RSL Sub-Branch members, under the leadership of then President Bruce Grimley for making this memorial one of the finest in the Sutherland shire. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the current executive of the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch, namely President Michael Molloy, Senior Vice President John Goodger, Junior Vice President George Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer Arie Havenaar and Secretary Brian Senior.

Memorials are the perfect place for private reflection but also, importantly, where we hold our annual services to remember those who served our nation. We can all recall the touching moment of being at a service to remember our fallen soldiers. The traditional ceremony of laying flower wreaths, wearing red poppies and rosemary sprigs, and observing a one-minute silence as a sign of respect are all significant traditions that I hope will continue in Australia. During the stillness of silence we can reflect on the loss and suffering caused by war. But the tradition that tends to evoke the most emotion is the sounding of the *Last Post*.

In military tradition the *Last Post* was the bugle call that signified the end of the day's activities. The bugle call has been incorporated into memorial services as a final farewell, symbolically relieving fallen soldiers of their duties. Despite the horrors of the battlefield there are always some who will risk their own life to help

others. There are a range of awards that recognise acts of bravery in battle. The Victoria Cross is the highest award. It commemorates gallantry, daring acts, self-sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty in the face of the enemy and is awarded to survivors and posthumously.

There are 431 men and women named on Sutherland shire memorials for their service in World War I, and I would like to honour these residents. Our history is very important to us and I thank local historians Marilyn Handley and Susanne Hewitt who wrote a book last year for the Gallipoli centenary about some of these Sutherland shire residents. The book entitled *Service and Sacrifice* contains the stories of most of the 428 soldiers and three nurses from our community who served in the war, including the 64 local residents who died for their country.

Mrs Handley of Heathcote and Mrs Hewitt of Gynea are members of the Botany Bay Family History Society and worked as volunteers on the five-year project. Driven by their passion to get a full history of these men and women, including their family background, connection to the shire, education, occupation before they enlisted and what they did during the war, they tracked down and interviewed descendants. They received a Federal Government grant of nearly \$16,000 to fund the publication. This information is invaluable to our community, especially as there are still a lot of family connections for residents in the shire to those who served.

The history and facts of war are of course incredibly important but it is the stories of the people who served that we should focus on to gather a true understanding of war. We remember the lives that were affected, the families who were forever changed and the stories and emotions that have been passed down through generations. I take this opportunity to tell some of those stories. Sergeant Norman Fletcher moved to Sylvania with his family when he was three and the family later moved to Miranda. He attended Miranda Central Public School but left at age 10 to assist his father in supporting their large family. He enlisted in the First Australian Imperial Force [AIF] in 1915 and served in France with the 14th Light Trench Mortar Battery. In 1917 he received gunshot wounds to the side of his head, face and mouth and was evacuated to a hospital in England. Norman Fletcher rejoined his unit in January 1918 and was promoted to sergeant. Sergeant Fletcher was twice mentioned in dispatches and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for his long and faithful service.

Norman Fletcher returned to the Sutherland shire and, despite having little formal schooling, displayed strong leadership qualities in the Sutherland community and was active in civic affairs. He served as a Sutherland shire councillor for nine years, from 1920 to 1928, during which time the council was successful in its demands to the New South Wales Government for the construction of Tom Uglys Bridge, an enduring icon of the gateway to the shire even today. After his years as a councillor, Norman worked as a labourer, stonemason, poultry farmer and market gardener. In 1925 he married Doris Goddard and together they raised two children, Jill and Bruce. During the Second World War Norman served as sergeant in the 10th Battalion Volunteer Defence Corps. A trench mortar platoon was formed and Norman trained local men in the handling and firing of the light mortar gun. He was 75 when he died on 2 February 1966.

Second Lieutenant George Alfred Bentley was the son of Charles and Gertrude Bentley, local orchard and market gardeners in Menai. He served in the 13th Infantry Battalion before he was injured at Gallipoli in July 1915 when a trench collapsed on him. The injury caused him great pain, numbness in his left leg and difficulty walking. He spent two weeks in hospital on the Greek Island of Lemnos, which I will return to later, and then transferred to the 2nd Australian General Hospital in Cairo. Second Lieutenant Bentley returned home to Australia after he was injured, but once he recovered he sailed back to France to join his battalion on 23 January 1917. Twelve days later he was killed at Stormy Trench, near Gueudecourt, when a shell burst near him and a piece of shrapnel hit him in the chest. He was later buried in France. George was 29 when he died at war and the father of a young daughter.

Private Stanley Kitchen was a former Sylvania resident who still has family in Miranda and Menai. Born in Newport, Rhode Island, in the United States in 1895 he immigrated to Australia with his parents in 1899. He enlisted in the AIF 1st Australian Light Horse Regiment at 19, propelled by his love of horses into the front line of history. The 1st Australian Light Horse was an integral part of fighting at Gallipoli. Private Kitchen was in action at the Dardanelles when he was severely injured on 7 August 1915, with gunshot wounds to his left leg. He was evacuated from Gallipoli and admitted to the 15th General Hospital at Alexandria. Invalided back to Australia on 3 September 1915 on board the troop ship *SS Ulysses*, Private Kitchen was discharged on 18 December 1915. He was awarded the Star 1914-15 Medal, the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the Anzac Medallion Medal.

After the war Stanley lived out his life at Sylvania. He married Mona Keen and had two children, Neville and Nola. He returned to work as a jeweller at the family business, Kitchen and Bingham Jewellers. He

died on 26 November 1977, aged 82, and his ashes are in the Wall of Memories at Woronora Cemetery. His grandsons Rod Kitchen of Miranda and Paul Kitchen of South Caringbah still have the dog tag that their grandfather wore at Gallipoli. Rod said his grandfather loved the army but did not support war. He described his grandfather as a man who contributed unselfishly to the democratic freedom we enjoy in Australia today.

Private George Ernest Biddles of GyMEA went to Gallipoli at the age of 30 as a stretcher bearer with the 1st Field Ambulance, C Squadron. He was with the first wave of diggers onto the beach on 25 April and he endured eight months of fighting before being evacuated on 15 December 1915. An amateur photographer, he took his own camera to Gallipoli and took many photos that give a vivid, firsthand account of the action. On the back of the photographs Private Biddles has handwritten notes that describe the living conditions on the battlefield. For example, one of his photographs is of the main beach, early in the operation. On the back he wrote:

The wounded are clearly seen lying on stretchers on the beach, with Red Cross men in attendance, awaiting transport to the hospital ship.

Another says:

...taking shelter from gunfire, the Turks have just opened fire, and shelter where ever attainable be sought. As soon as the fire eases off, a dash is made to a fresh position.

These photographs truly are an historic treasure. Private Biddles was discharged from the army as medically unfit in 1916 and went to work for the tax department. He married Dorothy Silverman in 1931 and they had three children, Billy, Barbara and Dot. The family lived in a boathouse at GyMEA Bay where he planned to build the family home, although George died in 1941 aged 58. During World War I the Australian Government welcomed women volunteers to serve as nurses overseas. Local nurses Penelope Frater, Ellen Gould and Julia Johnston all played significant roles in the Boer War and World War I. They were part of a 25-strong contingent of highly qualified nurses who were assigned to seven of the 38 ships in the first convoy.

They also held important roles at makeshift hospitals in Cairo, treating soldiers struck down with measles, mumps, influenza and pneumonia. It was the shocking injuries caused by shrapnel that stood out in the memories of war nurses. Julia Johnston was matron at Mena House, a makeshift hospital operated by the 2nd Australian General Hospital staff. After the Anzac landing on 25 April, the hospital was given 24 hours' notice to be ready to receive more than 1,500 casualties. The hospital staff was overwhelmed by the sheer number of wounded soldiers needing attention and the horrific nature of their injuries. For weeks no-one went off duty except for an hour or two to rest. During 1915 the nurses of the 2nd Australian General Hospital cared for almost 10,000 patients, most of whom were suffering gunshot wounds, digestive complaints or influenza.

During World War I the Government generally rejected offers from women to provide support in professions other than nursing. For this reason, the impact of the war was more commonly felt by women at home. With so many of Australia's young men overseas, women increasingly assumed the burden of raising their families alone. Women and children also worked tirelessly to raise funds, make care packages for the men at the front and organise recruitment drives. The war had a major impact on society, especially on the roles of women. Women took on the jobs traditionally held only by men and proved themselves capable employees.

When women originally took up men's positions in the workforce during the war, it was expected that they would not retain those positions once the men returned home. The harsh reality was that many men did not return home. While some men returned to their former jobs, the remainder of the jobs were left to be filled by women. Regardless of whether the men returned or not, women had experienced a measure of freedom and they were forever changed by it. Fashion for women was also greatly influenced by the war. There was more of a focus on practicality, to assist women to carry out their newly assumed roles at work, than on aesthetics. Regardless of gender, age or class, all of society was greatly affected by World War I. The loss of so many lives and the sacrifices made by all men and women at that time changed the world forever. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

While this centenary commemoration is focused on World War I, it would be remiss of me not to mention the other battles Australia has participated in and, importantly and respectfully, the returned soldiers from those wars. Since World War I the Australian military has been present at many other wars and conflicts, including World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and many peacekeeping missions abroad. Australians are very proud of all of the men and women who have sacrificed their own safety to fight for our freedom. As an Australian of Greek heritage I am also proud of the role that the

island my family descends from played in our Anzac story. The historic ties between Australia and Greece remain and are celebrated. On 24 April 2015 we commemorated 100 years since the Anzacs left Mudros Harbour in Lemnos for the Gallipoli landings.

During World War II thousands of wounded were brought to the hospitals on Lemnos. I acknowledge the almost 1,300 Allied soldiers who lie at rest in its military cemeteries. I am also a proud Australian, blessed to come from a country where so many people put their own lives on the line to protect the freedom of our nation. The soldiers, doctors and nurses who worked tirelessly under horrendous conditions and the families who worked hard back at home to keep the country strong should all be venerated and remembered with respect. I take this opportunity to conclude with the Ode of Remembrance, taken from Laurence Binyon's poem *For the Fallen*, which was first published in September 1914:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Lest we forget.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) [4.02 p.m.]: I acknowledge the enormous contribution made by members of my community during the Great War. As citizens of a new nation, Australians made an enormous contribution in World War I. Approximately 416,000 Australians enlisted, from a population of five million, including 164,000 from New South Wales. Of those, 60,000 lost their lives and another 156,000 were wounded or taken prisoner. Prime Minister Joseph Cook, who was also the Federal member for Parramatta, pledged Australia's support for Britain shortly after the announcement on 4 August 1914 that Britain was at war with Germany. The event was commemorated on its centenary by Parramatta City Council, with St John's Cathedral ringing the bells to signify the announcement that Australia was at war.

While thousands of Australians volunteered and many made the ultimate sacrifice, the Granville community's contribution cannot be understated. Clyde Engineering was the largest local employer of young men. As it was a protected industry, its staff were forbidden to enlist. This reduced the number of local people who could volunteer. Nevertheless, 1,469 names appear on the honour roll for Granville and district and two men from Granville were recognised for their service, bravery and sacrifice with the awarding of the Victoria Cross. Granville soldiers served in New Guinea in 1914 before heading to Gallipoli. The first soldier from Granville to die was Private Frederick Gordon Howes, who died of malaria in New Guinea on 24 January 1915. Like many, he lied about his age, claiming to be 40 years and two months. His son said he was actually 51. He lived near Granville railway station.

The campaign in New Guinea has been overshadowed by the enormous casualties of the Gallipoli landings. Today many do not realise that Australia entered the war prior to the Gallipoli landings. I will touch on that successful campaign, given that Granville's first casualty of the war was in New Guinea. Germany colonised the north coast of New Guinea and adjoining islands in 1884. It also had installations on Nauru and the Marshall Islands. On 6 August 1914 the British began an action against German colonies in the Pacific. The Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force was formed in response and sought to enlist 500 naval reservists and 1,000 infantry. On 11 September it landed at Rabaul, the then capital of German New Guinea. The small German garrison resisted briefly and six Australians were killed in the weeks that followed.

The force was expecting to deal first with the German installations on New Britain which were thought to include wireless stations at Herbertshohe and Bitapaka as well as Rabaul. Subsequent operations secured the other German centres on the north coast of New Guinea. Early on 11 September the fleet was off Blanche Bay, New Britain. Destroyers searched the harbours and inlets for German vessels but found none. The main pier at Rabaul was clear and there was no trace of mines in Simpson Harbour. Naval landing parties were put ashore at Herbertshohe and Kabakaul to secure the wireless stations. It was later established that both wireless stations were at Bitapaka, so the search at Herbertshohe proved fruitless. However, German forces were engaged at Bitapaka.

The party landed at Kabakaul under the command of Lieutenant Bowen, Royal Australian Navy, and moved inland along the Bitapaka Road. The Germans had prepared a series of positions covering this approach, manned by local troops, and had buried improvised mines under the road surface. The first position was outflanked by a small scouting group. The German commander was wounded and forced to surrender. He was then sent ahead of the Australians to announce that a large force had landed and that the remaining defenders

should surrender. Believing that they were outnumbered, the intermediate German defence lines withdrew, leaving only the troops at Bita Paka to resist the Australians. The advance continued, clearing several trenches but also taking casualties.

The Australians continued the tactic of outflanking the fixed defences that had been sited to cover the road, and this unsettled the local defenders. After further reinforcements arrived, a final push secured the surrender of the German forces and the capture of the wireless station by 7.00 p.m. Herbertshohe and Rabaul were occupied the following day. This was followed by the surrender of the remaining German forces on New Britain. Within weeks the German centres on Bougainville, at Madang on the north coast of New Guinea, and in the Admiralty Islands were occupied without significant opposition. Australia's first operational deployment of the war had been a great success.

The Australian military administration of New Guinea continued until 1921, when Australia received a mandate from the League of Nations to govern the country. Private Frederick Gordon Howes died during the military administration period, before Australians were deployed to Gallipoli and other battlefields. At the Gallipoli landings 157 soldiers from Granville died. Soldiers from Granville participated in the first Coo-ee March, a large contribution from a community that was already contributing so much through the essential work of Clyde Engineering.

Private George Cartwright was one of the Victoria Cross recipients. He was born in London on 9 December 1894 and migrated to Australia in 1912. He was working on a sheep station near Inverell when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 16 December 1915. He embarked on 4 May 1916 as part of the 33rd Battalion. He was wounded in action in 1917 and was gassed at Villers-Bretonneux Britain in April 1918. Private Cartwright was awarded the Victoria Cross four months later for displaying "most conspicuous valour and supreme disregard for personal safety" during an attack by the 33rd Battalion near Peronne. According to the honours and awards citation at the Australian War Memorial:

...on the morning of the 31st August 1918...Private Cartwright displayed exceptional gallantry and supreme disregard for personal danger in the face of a most withering machine-gun fire. Two Companies were held up by a machine gun firing from the south-western edge of the wood. Without hesitation, this man stood up, and walking towards the gun, fired his rifle from his shoulder. He shot the No. 1 Gunner; another German manned the gun, and he killed him: a third attempted to fire the gun and him he also killed. Private Cartwright then threw a bomb at the post, and on its exploding, he rushed forward, captured the gun and nine Germans...

This magnificent deed had a most inspiring effect on the whole line; all strove to emulate his gallantry.

It is hard to imagine being quite so brave. Private Cartwright took an enormous risk and in doing so made an incredible contribution, which was recognised immediately by his colleagues. He is unarguably deserving of the Victoria Cross. When Private Cartwright returned from the war he settled in Merrylands and remained in the Armed Forces, serving as an officer in the militia and training young recruits at the Merrylands Drill Hall, which was located on Merrylands Road in what is now Granville Park. He taught trench warfare to the young trainees using a trench he had dug, and this is located close to the memorial that was constructed to honour him in the south-west corner of Granville Park.

That was not the end of George Cartwright's service. He enlisted for World War II at Merrylands on 5 March 1940 and was finally discharged with the rank of captain on 10 May 1946. He died on 2 February 1978 and was survived by his second wife and a son from his first marriage. The other Victoria Cross recipient from Granville was Arthur Charles Hall. He was born in Granville on 11 August 1896 and grew up near Nyngan, where he lived most of his life. He enlisted as a private on 3 April 1916 and embarked on 7 October 1916 as part of the 56th battalion. He received a Victoria Cross for his brave actions at Peronne, which was gazetted on 14 December 1918:

For most conspicuous bravery, brilliant leadership, and devotion to duty during the operations at Peronne on 1st and 2nd September 1918. During the attack on 1st September a machine gun post was checking the advance. Single handed [he] rushed the position, shot four of the occupants, and captured nine others and two machine guns. Then crossing the objective with a small party, he afforded excellent covering support to the remainder of the company. Continuously in advance of the main party, he located enemy posts of resistance and personally led parties to the assault. In this way he captured many small parties of prisoners and machine guns. On the morning of 2nd September, during a heavy barrage, he carried to safety a comrade who had been dangerously wounded and was urgently in need of medical attention, and immediately returned to his post. The energy and personal courage of this gallant non-commissioned officer contributed largely to the success of the operations, throughout which he showed utter disregard of danger and inspired confidence in all.

The Victoria Cross is a fitting recognition of Corporal Hall's incredible acts of bravery at Peronne. Like George Cartwright, Arthur Hall enlisted again in World War II. He held the rank of lieutenant with 7 Garrison Battalion

when he was discharged on 16 November 1943. I also make special mention of Charles Mance, after whom Charles Mance Reserve in Merrylands is named. He was honoured with a State funeral in 2001. At the time of his death he was one of the last remaining Anzacs. Charles Mance was born on 3 December 1900.

At the age of 16 he lied about his age and enlisted for World War I with the 1st Battalion, embarking in October 1917. He transferred to the 22nd Battalion in December 1917. He was wounded on 15 June 1918 but returned to duty on 11 July with the 6th Brigade 2nd Division. He fought in a series of battles, including Ville-sur-Ancre, Villiers-Bretonneux, Mont St Quentin and Herleville Wood. He was gassed, leaving him blind and deaf for weeks, and was wounded by shrapnel at Herleville Wood. The gassing left him with chronic bronchitis throughout his life.

Charles Mance returned to Australia in 1920. He received many honours and medals from his military service over his lifetime, including the Legion d'honneur, France's highest decoration. He was one of the first Allied veterans to receive this honour. He was president of the First World War Diggers Association and was presented with a medal by the Prime Minister in 1988 commemorating the eightieth anniversary of the end of World War I. He also received the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. In 1998 Holroyd City Council presented Charles Mance with the keys to the city. A portrait of him, commissioned by Merrylands RSL Club, hangs in the foyer of the Holroyd City Council building. In 2000 he was a guest of honour at the unveiling of the statue of an Australian digger at Anzac Bridge.

Charles Mance learned bricklaying under the repatriation post-war Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. He worked in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory and later moved to Merrylands where he continued to work as a bricklayer. He was a member of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union and was widely respected in the construction industry. Building workers attended his State funeral in 2001. Charles also made a great contribution to the Merrylands community, especially in his retirement.

After the trauma of war, Charles became an alcoholic and suffered with alcoholism until 1950 when he gave up alcohol completely. After his recovery from addiction he founded Alcoholics Anonymous in Merrylands and provided counselling for many years. He later extended counselling to drug addicts, even to those who were in prison and were considered beyond help. He worked for charities and schools, in particular Merrylands High School where his great-granddaughters attended school.

Charles Mance tried to teach everyone about the horrors of war and spoke at many schools. He said, "War is no solution to a problem; it's useless. Why make things that destroy humanity. We should utilise the wonders of the Earth". He also urged us to remember the sacrifices made. He said, "Don't forget my comrades' sacrifice. Don't forget to honour them". We will not forget their sacrifice, as we will not forget his. At the time of his death there were only 18 Australian World War I veterans remaining. Charles Mance Reserve was upgraded by Holroyd City Council for the hundredth anniversary of Anzac Day. It is a fitting memorial to a great man.

Charles Mance will long be remembered in our community and I hope the lessons he taught us will live on. Having lived through war, fought, suffered terrible injuries from shrapnel and gas, and seen his comrades die, he urged all of us to avoid war. These are important lessons too easily forgotten. Charles Mance is remembered throughout the Merrylands community. I hope that as the years pass his strong words against war will be as well remembered as his service to Australia during the war. The four men I have mentioned today are but a small sample of those who served from the Granville community. Typical of so many who enlisted during World War I, two of the four lied about their age so that they could enlist and contribute.

The member for Miranda mentioned conflicts since World War I, and I echo her comments about the service made to Australia by so many men and women. My father participated in World War II as a fitter with the Royal Australian Air Force. He served in Borneo and throughout the Pacific. I do not know a lot about his service because he only told me the funny stories from the war, and obviously there are not very many funny stories from war. I know that the airfields where he served were bombed. I am incredibly proud of his service and every year on Anzac Day I wear his medals. He passed away 12 years ago. I will not forget my father's sacrifice. The bravery and sacrifice of all Australian service men and women will not be forgotten.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [4.16 p.m.]: I echo the sentiments of the member for Granville. All of us in this place no doubt have relatives who have participated in conflicts. It is not an unusual thing for them not to have talked about their experiences. My father participated in the Second World War. He was a navigator on a Lancaster bomber for the Royal Air Force and did more than 30 flights over Germany. He was

involved in the bombing of Dresden, something which he was very regretful of later on. Other than sharing the bare details of his service and some funny stories about getting home for a hot shower, he did not talk much about his experiences during the war.

Similarly, my grandfather fought in the First World War. He was wounded in action in France. One of the things I have that I treasure is a collection of some of the wonderful letters he wrote home to his family. It was an era when men knew how to write letters, rather than send emails. Some of my grandfather's letters are very endearing. Letter writing is an art that has been lost to us—the ability to write a letter, often one that tells a significant story or one of affection and which will last for posterity. I suppose emails last for posterity, but not in the same way that a handwritten note does.

It is a great privilege today, on the last sitting day before we celebrate Anzac Day, to talk about Anzac Day 1915 and the contribution of many people from my electorate to that event. On 25 April 1915, the Anzacs landed at Anzac Cove. These are hallowed words and together they form a sentence that has a lofty and solemn place in the story of our nation, along with our brothers and sisters across the Tasman. The ink on the Royal Assent to the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act was barely dry when the machine guns and artillery opened fire on the Australian Imperial Force in the Dardanelles. Only four months after these guns opened fire, the tradition for Anzac Day had been established. In South Australia, the citizens there not only built a memorial for those who had died in the Dardanelles but they also sowed a seed that has flowered over the decades.

It has flowered into what I speak about today in this place—100 years of Anzac and 100 years of solemnly remembering men and women who have been willing, and sometimes called upon, to pay the ultimate sacrifice for their country. I intend to impart to this place, to the people of Epping, and to our progeny, the meaning of this tradition we have so solemnly and fastidiously handed down. In discussions about Anzac Day, we often hear questions about Australia's involvement in World War I, and what the Anzac sacrifice means, so I will begin by illustrating the story of Major General Charles Frederick Cox. Major General Cox was born in Pennant Hills, and worked as a clerk for the audit branch of the Railway Traffic Authority before enlisting with the New South Wales Lancers in 1891.

Major General Cox's military story is a fascinating one, as he was involved with the Lancers and the Australian military before and after Federation. He participated in the celebrations for Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee, and was again training with British cavalry forces at the time the Boer War broke out, whereupon Cox volunteered himself and his squadron for service. During the campaign he was promoted to honorary lieutenant colonel, and became the eventual commander and lieutenant colonel of the 1st Light Horse. During the campaign he served with distinction, and transformed the British regulars' doubtful view of him to one of commendation and esteem, earning him the moniker "Fighting Charlie".

Following the outbreak of World War I, Cox was appointed to command the Australian Imperial Force's 6th Light Horse Brigade. Cox's brigade landed in Gallipoli on 19 May for dismounted service, but he had to be evacuated two days later after suffering a shrapnel wound whilst in one of the dugouts. Whilst he did return to his brigade for a brief time following his recovery, he again had to leave for more convalescence. However, he returned in time to command the 6th Light Horse during the Sinai-Palestine campaign. He and his brigade served with distinction in this successful campaign, in particularly at the battles of Magdhaba, Beersheba, and Jericho. Historian A.J. Hill wrote about Cox, saying that:

Cox was not without his critics, some of whom disliked what they saw as vanity and a seeking after popularity, even at the expense of discipline. Major (later Brigadier) W. J. Urquhart, an officer who knew him during the Sinai-Palestine campaign, provides an engaging picture: No academic soldier he, but a leader in battle whom his men would follow, a man of the sword and the warhorse, of the night march and the attack at dawn, a beau sabreur, who wore ... an emu plume of large dimensions and had a roving eye. If command of a brigade was the limit of his capacity it must be observed that, in this role, his record was one of unbroken success over more than two years of strenuous campaigning. He was appointed C.M.G., awarded the Distinguished Service Order, and mentioned in dispatches many times.

After the war, upon retiring from the Army with a rank of honorary major general, he served in the Senate for 18 years. During his time in the Senate, he was known for travelling extensively throughout New South Wales, for having a particular interest in defence policy, as well as the development of the railway and the construction of the new capital city, Canberra. He died at the age of 81 in 1944, and is buried in Carlingford Cemetery. Major General Cox's story is one of great significance to our story as a nation. In many ways, he is the embodiment of our national character of that time. A railway clerk, he fought for the British during the Boer War, he fought for Australia during World War I at Gallipoli and in the Sinai-Palestine campaign, as well as serving as a senator with interests in defence, infrastructure, and our new capital.

The trajectory of Major General Cox's life is very close to that of our nation at that time. He was a man who was characterised by loyalty and service. He cherished his ties with Britain, but after Federation he was an Australian first. His love for his country grew more exclusive as his country grew. His dedication to civil and military service and his interest in building up the backbone of this country mark him as one of Australia's nation builders. World War I was populated with nation builders; people who were there before, during and after the Federation of this country, and whose dedication to it was often illustrated with military service.

Major General Cox does not have a monopoly on this narrative, and nor would he claim to. Regardless of rank or stature, all of those who served at Gallipoli and in World War I are intertwined in our story of nationhood in a very special way. The proximity of World War I to the Federation of Australia has left an indelible mark on our country. We all inherit this mark. The watering of our fledgling nation with the blood of soldiers, boys, men, and families is part of our Australian identity. It is for this reason Anzac Day is connected with the love of our country and the celebration of our values. However, this is a solemn commemoration. When we remember how Anzac Day is part of our nation's identity, we should always remember that it is so because of the sacrifice of those who have gone before us. Let respect, contemplation and humility be the gifts we use to water this particular remembrance of our nationhood.

However, there is more to Anzac Day than its relationship with our nationhood. It must be said that we are in danger of taking the geopolitical situation and values of that time for granted. Whilst it may seem incomprehensible to us now, our defence situation at the outbreak of World War I was directly tied to the situation of Great Britain. If Britain was threatened, we were threatened. If Britain was weak, we were weak. As significant as our alliance with the United States of America is at the moment, it pales in comparison to the connection we had with Britain at the time.

Too often I meet people who do not know enough about our involvement in World War I. Such questions illustrate a disregard for our history, and disrespect for our forebears. Not only was there a real threat to Australia, but all those men who signed up and fought and died in World War I did so out of duty and love for this country. Apart from the connection with our nationhood, Anzac Day is a commemoration of those who have served this country in war and operational service, as well as their families, loved ones, and friends they left behind.

Gallipoli was the impetus for Anzac Day, but Anzac Day is forever. Anzac Day is for Paarderberg, Beersheba, Flanders, Ypres, Russia, Tobruk, Darwin, Kokoda, El Alamein, the skies of Europe, Singapore, Borneo, Korea, Vietnam, East Timor, Iraq, Afghanistan, and more besides, as well as Gallipoli. It commemorates Monash, Morshead, and Cosgrove, as well as Simpson and his donkey. With Anzac Day we solemnly honour those who served and died for this country. We do this because of what they were willing to sacrifice, and for those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. We do this because their being willing to die is something every Australian should cherish in their heart.

It is written that there is no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends. It is this eternal truth which we commemorate on Anzac Day. We solemnly remember thousands upon thousands, decades upon decades of Australians willing to pay the ultimate price for their countrymen. When we say that the Anzacs were willing to lay down their lives for Australia, we are saying that men and women throughout the threads of time have been willing to lay down their lives for our grandparents, for our parents, for us, and for our children. We are saying that men and women for over 100 years have treasured our freedom, security, and life as Australians so much that they were willing to lay down their lives so these may be protected for our sake. This is what we solemnly honour with Anzac Day. Services rendered, a price paid, a heritage bequeathed, and a future promised. This memorial is something we have chosen to celebrate, but it is also something we can choose to hand down or to ignore. It is something living and effectual.

The history pages of Epping are adorned and populated with proof of the living tradition of sacrifice and values. I stand here to enunciate and treasure that proof during our celebration of the centenary of Anzac. One example involves Leading Seaman Gordon Corbould, who grew up in Essex Street, Epping. He could have led the normal life of a young man at the time. Rather than marry, find a home and job and play cricket on the weekend, he volunteered to join the navy at a time when storm clouds were gathering over Europe. He was enlisted to train as a torpedo man on Australia's first submarine, which involved him training in London. Upon the completion of training and the building of vessel HMAS *AE1*, Corbould and the rest of the crew made their way back to Australia. HMAS *AE1* and its imaginatively named sister ship HMAS *AE2* arrived in Australia on 24 May 1914. He was a young man serving with a new crew in the inaugural Australian submarine in a fledgling Navy.

Pursuant to sessional order business interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

Pursuant to sessional order discussion on petition signed by 10,000 or more persons proceeded with.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) [4.30 p.m.]: I acknowledge and thank the many residents of Port Stephens in the public gallery today. The effort they have made to be here is a reflection of the depth of their concern and their passion for our beautiful community. I thank them for that. Of course, this debate would not be possible without the enormous contribution of the Port Stephens community, who have responded in record numbers to sign this petition, attend rallies, attend the delegate's two public inquiries and make formal submissions. I thank everyone who has taken the time to express their opposition to this absurd amalgamation. I particularly acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the Mayor of Port Stephens, the former member for Port Stephens and the general manager of Port Stephens Council. It is no secret that we have had our differences in the past but in the face of forced amalgamation those differences have been set aside.

There is no-one in the Chamber today who thinks forcibly amalgamating councils against the wishes of entire communities without any business case to support the supposed savings is a good idea—except for those opposite. Ever since the news was first dropped onto our community in December there has been—perhaps for the first time—unanimity across political divides. The community's voice has been very clear. I will say it really slowly: The residents of Port Stephens do not want their council merged. In addition to the more than 16,700 signatures on the petition being debated today, a recent poll found that 93 per cent of residents oppose the merger. Consensus is a difficult thing to find in politics, but the Baird Government has succeeded in one thing: unifying our community in opposition to this proposal. If this Government is to proceed with the merger it will do so knowing that the decision is entirely against the wishes of a whole community.

The Baird-Grant Government seems to have forgotten something fundamental. It is called democracy. They have forgotten that government is meant to govern for people. The Premier is not in the Chamber but the Minister is. The people are here today and 16,700 signatures are on this petition. They are saying very clearly that this amalgamation makes no sense and they do not want it. It was interesting to hear the Minister's comments in this place yesterday when he said the Government is putting people's lives first and putting communities first. What a load of hogwash. If this Government were putting people's lives first and putting communities first it would have already rejected this proposal.

If the Government proceeds with this merger it will be abundantly clear that the Government is putting its interests first, not the interests of our community. The Port Stephens community could not be described as Labor heartland, and I was among the most surprised to find myself elected to this place. But since the forced amalgamation was proposed I have been overwhelmed with offers from conservative voters wanting to assist me at the next election because they feel betrayed by this Government. I do not often agree with Alan Jones, but on this issue I do. Forced amalgamations will not benefit the community. They will not save money and they are causing communities far too much stress. Before the State election Government members were emphatic that forced amalgamations were off the agenda.

The Nationals members knew of the concern in their communities about forcing shires to merge. But only months after the election the Minister and this Government have done a backflip. Is it any wonder that senior members of The Nationals have quit in disgust? Is it any wonder that the member for Orange is now seeking to run federally to avoid the awkward position he is in? Is it any wonder that Liberal and National candidates in the upcoming Federal election—including the Deputy Prime Minister himself—are joining with their communities in opposition to amalgamations? Do those Federal Liberal and National candidates think regional communities are stupid? Do they think that we have not worked out that they are in the same party as the State Government that is inflicting this pain on them?

The candidates are certainly not stupid, because they know that the decisions the Baird Government makes about who merges with whom will affect the Federal election. The decisions made by the New South Wales Government on this issue could make all the difference to whether Malcom Turnbull forms government. Members opposite might not believe it but they need to believe it. The Premier and the Prime Minister need to understand that the forced merger of regional councils is political kryptonite. The current plight of Port Stephens Council makes a mockery of the supposedly rigorous process that we keep hearing about in this place. Every Government report and every review, including the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal review, found Port Stephens to be financially sound. They all found it was fit for the future.

But this Government has thrown its own processes out the window. Consequently, the last-minute decision to merge Port Stephens with Newcastle City Council came as a great shock. The economic modelling

from KPMG is being pulled apart and exposed as a sham. To make matters worse, the Government is still refusing to release the full KPMG report. What is it trying to hide? Our community is not hiding anything and has been quick to share its concerns about the proposal. I seek an extension of time.

Leave not granted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! Members will come to order.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: People from the Hunter have travelled here for this debate. I would have thought that Government members could pay them the courtesy of allowing their local member an extra few minutes to speak.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! There is no point of order. Leave was not granted for an extension of the member's speaking time.

Mr Michael Daley: I seek leave to move that the member's speaking time be extended by five minutes.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! Leave is not granted. Before I call the Minister, I note that Government members afforded the member for Port Stephens her right to be heard in silence. I ask Opposition members to hear the Minister in silence.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) [4.37 p.m.]: I thank the member for Port Stephens for bringing this petition to the House. I acknowledge the many people from Port Stephens who have travelled here today to listen to this discussion. This petition only further highlights the need for open, objective and factual conversations between councils and their communities about the benefits and the costs of mergers. I am pleased that we have this petition, because we have a complex system of local government made up of 152 councils that were put in place more than 100 years ago.

After four years of extensive consultation, reviews and reports the Government has decided that it is time to create a stronger, modern system of local government in New South Wales. Since 2011 the Government has sought to collaborate with councils on local government reform. It is a journey that was initiated by the local government sector. The local government sector came to the Government and said, "We are concerned about our sustainability in the long term and we want your help in ensuring we can continue to deliver the services and infrastructure that our communities need and deserve."

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The Government was prepared to come to the table. The Government consulted with councils and communities and took independent advice. The Fit for the Future process was designed to continue a dialogue with the community to ensure that the local government sector is well placed to meet the needs of residents and ratepayers into the future. We have also offered generous support and assistance to those councils to help them consider their future. We know that with stronger councils we have stronger communities—experts have been telling us that for years. But while the Government has been focused on delivering meaningful change, better services and facilities for New South Wales communities, it seems—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 76. The Minister has not mentioned Port Stephens once and whilst his historical account is rather entertaining, the people of Port Stephens would like to hear about their council.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! There is no point of order. The Minister is being relevant.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: If the member stops interrupting we will get there. Overall this is about creating better services and infrastructure for local communities. This means that communities should have better roads, better footpaths and bridges where they are needed. It is about keeping rates low and making sure that ratepayers get value for money. I am pleased to note that the Port Stephens Council also recognises the need for change in local government. I have received a proposal from Port Stephens Council to merge with Dungog Shire Council. They acknowledge that joining with a neighbouring council will deliver significant benefits to ratepayers and the community. The proposal put forward by this Government to merge Port Stephens and Newcastle City

councils is currently being examined and reported on. I am looking forward to receiving the report from the delegate of the Office of Local Government and the comments from the independent Local Government Boundaries Commission when this process is completed.

I have also referred the Port Stephens Council-initiated merger proposal to the chief executive of the Office of Local Government to commence the examination and reporting process. As I have previously stated, no decision has been made on any council merger proposal because I am awaiting the reports of the delegates and comments from the Local Government Boundaries Commission. For this reason I do not intend to offer a view in either support or opposition to this petition. Despite the scaremongering we are hearing, this Government remains committed to transforming local government for communities across this State. At every step of the reform process we have sought the views of councils and the communities they serve, and we will continue to listen. This Government is focused on delivering meaningful change, and that means better services and facilities.

Regional New South Wales needs strong local councils. We need councils to look beyond their boundaries and to play a role as a regional leader. We need a modern system of local government. Communities will be the beneficiaries of local government reform. This Government is committed to these reforms. Under this merger proposal an \$85 million financial benefit can be delivered back to communities. This merger process was put forward on 6 January, and the delegates are undertaking their work in accordance with the Local Government Act. As I have said, their comments will be forwarded to the Local Government Boundaries Commission and I look forward to receiving them.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The member for Shellharbour may be removed from the Chamber if she continues to interject.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) [4.42 p.m.]: I pay tribute to the people seated in the gallery and to the 16,700 people who signed the petition we are debating this afternoon. I make it very clear that Labor does not support forced amalgamations. This amalgamation process has been an absolute disgrace. This chaotic and confused process has meandered on for more than four years and the goalposts have been continually moved. Instead of outcomes underpinned by expert analysis, and advice on research, Premier Baird has announced the greatest act of boundary rigging in Australian politics since Joh Bjelke-Petersen. But what is this really all about? The underlying motivation is purely financial—namely, to cost shift from the State's balance sheet onto local councils before the recurrent budget revenues of this Government start collapsing.

This Government knows, like everyone else, that there will be an inevitable reduction in its recurrent finances over the next couple of years as the property market starts to cool. But unlike in the past, this time the Government will not be able to rely on the profits coming from state-owned corporations to help its budget position because they are either being sold or have already been sold. In Newcastle the Government has sold our port, it has sold our poles and wires, and now the Government is trying to sell Newcastle's public transport system. Let us think about what the Premier has promised—namely, bigger and better councils will be given additional responsibilities to match their improved status.

Roads, maintenance of infrastructure and recurrent services that were previously the responsibility of the State Government will now be handed over to these shiny new super councils. He has also promised to pay for these new mega councils by borrowing from T-Corp. But, of course, the councils will have to pay back those loans, along with interest and their service fee. How will they pay it back? They can get a special rate increase through the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART]. So councils will have to raise their rates to pay T-Corp for the loans and the additional responsibilities cost-shifted onto them by the State Government. Councils declared "fit" by IPART such as Port Stephens Council have now been told to merge with neighbouring councils declared "unfit".

Councils not even considered for amalgamation by earlier reviews are now suddenly to be forcibly merged. Some proposed boundaries divide towns in two. Local communities should decide the future of their councils, not the politicians on the other side of the House. Merging Port Stephens and Newcastle councils would provide modest savings, given that their combined revenue is more than \$340 million a year, but the gross savings would come from job cuts—from back office and administration jobs and from senior management, and \$2.5 million from having fewer councillors. There is no merit in the current amalgamation proposals put forward by the Baird Government. I urge members to support stand-alone councils and to continue to fight against forced amalgamations. I support this petition.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) [4.45 p.m.]: It is with great delight that I make a contribution to debate on this petition. I also welcome the residents of Port Stephens seated in the gallery who have taken the time to come and listen to this debate. I also acknowledge those who have signed the petition. It seems, with a little bit of research, that the State Labor machine is completely at odds with the State parliamentary Labor Party. In its own submission to the federal redistribution at the end of 2014—

[*Interruption*]

Those opposite each have one mouth and two ears; they should listen. Labor said in that submission, amongst other things:

But there are also compelling grounds to place Port Stephens with Newcastle. The inclusion of Port Stephens peninsula ... [with] Newcastle would consolidate the already well established links between Newcastle City Council and Port Stephens Council.

They also talk about community of interest. They touched on sporting teams and the Port Stephens sporting activities being predominantly in Newcastle. They talked about the key media organisations covering both Newcastle and Port Stephens. They talked about the University of Newcastle servicing predominantly Newcastle and Port Stephens.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber coming from both sides. I can barely hear the member with the call.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: They talked about the major specialty high schools located in Newcastle servicing Port Stephens. But this is the really good one on economic benefit, and I quote:

As the name suggests, Newcastle Airport at Williamtown—the fastest growing regional airport in Australia currently experiencing over 350% growth in the past 2 years—is widely considered to service travellers to and from the City of Newcastle ... In fact its location provides a central and unifying focus point between the existing areas of Newcastle and the proposed new communities of Port Stephens.

The quote continues:

The areas of Tomago and Williamtown, home to the Williamtown RAAF base and many manufacturing industries, clearly have an economic interest in being part of the Newcastle [area]. The coastal links between Port Stephens and Newcastle act to unify these regions and help to consolidate marine industry ...

So State Labor has said to itself that this is a good idea.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) [4.48 p.m.], by leave: I pay tribute to members of the community who have come to Parliament today to have their voices heard. They have seen and heard the lack of respect that the Minister for Local Government has for the communities of Port Stephens and Newcastle. I call on Government members who voted for local government amalgamations against the wishes of their communities to stand up for them now, as did the member for Port Stephens and the member for Newcastle. I urge Government members to think about the people in towns such as Wellington, Dubbo, Oberon, Harden, Cootamundra, Gundagai, Cabonne, Guyra, Walcha, Dungog and Gloucester.

Mr Chris Patterson: Point of order: I am happy for the member for Maitland to be granted leave to be heard and I am happy that people from Port Stephens and Newcastle are here, but the member's comments should relate to Newcastle.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maitland has the call.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Let us be clear—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Maitland will be heard in silence.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: The member for Upper Hunter has been shopping around Dungog like a town squire at the local B and S ball. First he was on with Maitland then he was on with Gloucester and now he is on with Port Stephens. Poor old Dungog is like the wallflower that no-one wants to dance with. Let us consider the electorate of Maitland. We were unfit and then we were fit. I use the parliamentary gym but I wish

the Minister for Local Government could make me fit with the stroke of a pen, as he did with our councils. No member of this Government has any sense or ability. The Government has created a total mess. The real tragedy for our communities is that council amalgamations will result in unemployment. The Government's proposal shows that savings will be found only as a result of local job losses. Employment is already skyrocketing in the Hunter. Youth unemployment is at 21.9 per cent. Our community cannot afford to lose any more job opportunities. When the dance is over, I want to know who is going home with whom. Who will be with the Minister? The only dancing shoes needed in this local government debate are the grab bag of flip-flops.

Discussion concluded.

Pursuant to sessional order community recognition statements proceeded with.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

KIRRAWEE HIGH SCHOOL WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE FUNDRAISER

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) [4.52 p.m.]: I commend the outstanding efforts of Kirrawee High School at its World's Greatest Shave fundraiser. Each day 34 Australians are diagnosed with leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma and the World's Greatest Shave is the major fundraiser of the Leukaemia Foundation. To date, Kirrawee High School raised nearly \$35,000. Impressively, it ranked second in New South Wales and eleventh in Australia for the most funds raised. The phenomenal response is a testament to the school's generosity and spirit of giving. I congratulate school principal Paul Owens on his outstanding leadership of this event. I also make special mention of the event organisers, teachers Mitchell Scott, Kath Falconer and Desma Hart, and students Sarah Gabriel and James Sabbagh. I applaud the staff and students who sacrificed their hair for this cause. In total, 25 students and three staff members received a full shave. Five year 12 girls cut their hair, donating it for the production of wigs, and one staff member removed his beard of eight years. Congratulations once again.

MARK HICKEY BRAVERY AWARD

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) [4.53 p.m.]: Today I recognise the courage of Newcastle resident Mark Hickey, who last week received a bravery award from the Governor-General. On the morning of 9 September 2014, Mr Hickey was at Clarkes Beach in Byron Bay when he went to the assistance of a man who had been attacked by a shark. The man was floating face down in the water about 30 metres from the shore. Mr Hickey immediately swam out to him, despite not knowing the whereabouts of the shark. He managed to reach the man, who was unconscious in waist-deep water, and dragged him back to the safety of the shore. While others assisted, Mr Hickey administered cardiopulmonary resuscitation to the man until doctors arrived to help. The swimmer, a local man in his fifties, died at the scene despite desperate attempts by his rescuer to revive him. I commend Mr Hickey for the considerable bravery he displayed on that fateful day.

LAYNE GRANT, SWIMMER

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [4.54 p.m.]: I congratulate Layne Grant, who will be swimming at the national championships shortly. She performed well at the NSW State Age Championships, where she competed in the 50 metres and 100 metres. At the national championships she will be competing in the 50 metres, 100 metres and 200 metres freestyle. She recently competed in the Hunter Region Independent Schools swimming competition, where she set a new 100-metre freestyle record for the under 15 age group. Layne is a year 10 student at the Manning Valley Anglican College, Taree, where she is an all-round athlete. It is a great school and a great town. I congratulate Layne and wish her luck at the nationals.

WOODFORD ACADEMY

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [4.55 p.m.]: The Woodford Academy in the Blue Mountains is the oldest complex of colonial era buildings in the region. Originally built as an inn in the 1830s, between 1907 and 1936 it was the site of an exclusive school, the Woodford Academy. Today, with the assistance of a group of dedicated volunteers, the Woodford Academy operates as a museum of sorts, offering a unique insight into colonial era life. I pay tribute to the hard work of the National Trust and volunteers, including Libby and Noel Burgess, Brian Kirkby, Felicity Anderson and Dat Lieu, who make it possible to enjoy and understand the history of the Woodford Academy.

Last year on Anzac Day, the Woodford Academy hosted a special dusk service, which I attended with my son as well as members of the Rural Fire Service, our local community and representatives from the Blue Mountains City Council. The academy was a particularly poignant setting for this service, given 54 students of the school would go on to enlist for service in World War I. The Woodford Academy is an excellent historical resource for locals and visitors to the Blue Mountains alike, and I thank once again the volunteers whose dedication brings the academy to life.

HENRY MAK CITY OF SYDNEY CHINESE NEW YEAR AMBASSADOR

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [4.56 p.m.]: Today I recognise Mr Henry Mak on being named a 2016 City of Sydney Chinese New Year ambassador. Henry is an Australian Chinese born Korean pop star, who performs under the name Prince Mak—he is also the only Australian-born K-Pop star. Henry was born in Australia and lived most of his life in Casula, in my electorate. He attended Casula Primary School, Moorebank High School and then Macquarie Fields High School for his senior years.

Always having a big interest in performing, Henry learned piano at a young age, is an accomplished hip-hop dancer and has studied acting at the Actors College of Theatre and Television. After high school, Henry moved to China and entered a singing competition, where Jackie Chan discovered him and said that he was exactly "what K-Pop needed". I thank Henry for his role in advocating the Chinese culture within Australia and wish him well with his future endeavours.

IRAQI CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.57 p.m.]: Today I recognise the Iraqi Cultural Festival held on the weekend of 19 and 20 March at the Casula Power House. It was a festival of music, talk, food, dance, film and live performances. Despite decades of violence and war in Iraq, the organisers wanted to bring the community together to showcase their culture, art and history. They certainly succeeded in doing that. The slogan for the festival was Song of Peace from Australia to Mesopotamia. Those involved in organising the festival included the Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum, the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors and the Choir of Love. The festival coordinator was Firas Naji. I was invited to the opening service, where I heard an interesting lecture from Dr Andrea Teti from the University of Aberdeen and the Director of Arab Trans, who used survey results to argue that, for Iraqis, identity was not destiny. Dr Ahmed Alrubaie, President of the Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum, also addressed the event. Anwar Alesi, Deputy Consul General from the Republic of Iraq, was also in attendance.

GRAFTON RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.58 p.m.]: I congratulate the community of Grafton and the broader Clarence Valley on their very successful Relay for Life event held at Jabour Park last Saturday. I particularly congratulate Northern Rivers Cancer Council NSW community coordinator Hannah Brooks, and before her Abby Wallace, as well as the local organising committee, on running such a smooth event. It was great to see the Federal member for Page, Kevin Hogan, at the event as well as Deputy Mayor Craig Howe and 950 people from Grafton and surrounds, who raised more than \$70,000 for such a worthy cause. It was very motivating to see Sam Carroll cut the ribbon and officially open the 2016 Relay for Life. Sam is a fighter and an inspiration to us all. Thanks must also go to the Grafton Vintage Motor Vehicle Club for the work it did in getting Jabour Park ready for the relay. Cancer is indiscriminate and the Relay for Life is a celebration of life. I thank all the participants on behalf of the New South Wales Parliament.

MURUGAN TEMPLE CHARIOT FESTIVAL

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) [4.58 p.m.]: Yesterday, I attended the wonderful annual chariot festival at the Murugan Temple in Westmead, along with 5,000 to 6,000 worshippers. The beautiful Murugan temple is the largest Hindu temple in the region and the main centre of worship for Sydney's Hindu Tamil community. Their association was founded in 1986, with the temple being constructed in the 1990s. The chariot procession is part of the temple's annual festival, on the ninth day of Thiruvizha. The large procession around the temple commemorates the journey of Lord Murugan, the second son of Lord Shiva and Parvathi and youngest brother of Lord Ganesha. "Murugan" in Tamil means undecaying beauty and everlasting youth. He is the Lord of Righteousness, who protects Dharma by destroying evil. Lord Murugan is the most popular god amongst Tamils. He has two consorts: Valli, symbolising desire and Devasena, symbolising power of action. I congratulate the board of directors and all the volunteers on putting together yet another successful chariot festival.

INVERELL HIGH SCHOOL FIRST XI CRICKET TEAM

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) [4.59 p.m.]: I recognise and congratulate the Inverell High School's boys first XI cricket side who, yesterday, won the semi-final of the Davidson Shield statewide cricket competition, defeating Pennant Hills High School in an absolute nailbiter. Inverell High School yesterday scored 4 for 143 off its 40 overs, with Tom Scoble top scoring with 50 not out and Sage Cook making a handy contribution of 41. Pennant Hills was eventually bowled out for 120 in the 38th over. It was a tense finish, with bowling honours shared very evenly among the Inverell lads. Declan Drake, took two wickets for 12 off three overs; Joe Smith took one for 15 off eight overs; Sage Cook took one for 19 off seven overs; Tom Scoble took one for 16 off eight overs; Rory O'Neill took one for 28 off seven overs; and Billy Higgins took one for 18 off five overs. I also acknowledge coach Dayne Rosolen from Inverell High, who does a brilliant job with the team, and wish the boys every success in the Davidson Shield statewide final next week in Bathurst.

ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE STRATHFIELD STUDENT LEADERS

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) [5.00 p.m.]: I congratulate the following students for being elected as 2016 student leaders of St Patrick's College, Strathfield: Declan Armstrong, Captain; Tony Elias and Luke Pafumi, Vice Captains; Alexander Whitehead, Berg prefect; Ryan Yango, Coghlan prefect; James Sacco, Hanrahan prefect; Patrick Calavassy, Hickey prefect; Jordan Kidd, Rice prefect; Joseph Florio, year 5 prefect; William Zalloua, year 6 prefect; Adam Boumelhem, year 7 prefect; Joseph Francis, year 8 prefect; Dominic Spicer, year 9 prefect; Sam Cividin, year 10 prefect; Joseph Bejjani, social justice prefect; Joshua Sabino, sustainability prefect; Christian Sassin, spirituality/faith formation prefect; Tom Mullen, co-curricular (sport) prefect; Marco Pecora, co-curricular (cultural) prefect; and Jordan Brewer, student welfare prefect. The students should be proud of the college they represent.

THE HILLTOPS PHOENIX

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.01 p.m.]: I congratulate the new publication within my electorate—the *Hilltops Phoenix*, which is a sister paper to the *Forbes Phoenix*, the *Parkes Phoenix* and the *Canowindra Phoenix*, and covers the zones of Boorowa, Young and Harden. I congratulate publisher, Cheryl Newsom; editor, Debra Clarke; and reporter, Joshua Matic for putting together a wonderful publication. That is not to say that the *Young Witness*, the *Boorowa News*, the *Harden Gazette* and the *Twin Town Times* do not do an excellent job as well, but it is nice to welcome a new publication in town. The *Hilltops Phoenix* is serving roadside mailboxes, and is also available online and through its Facebook page. The publication covers many different events and all sorts of things that are happening around the region. This week, for example, it covered the Chinese festival and a letter to the editor by the CEO of the Australian Red Cross. It also published articles by the excellent mayors of Young and Boorowa. Congratulations to the *Hilltops Phoenix*. I wish it the best.

CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) [5.02 p.m.]: I pay tribute to the Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre for reaching the wonderful milestone of 40 years of continuous operation. The centre was established in 1976 through the hard work of volunteers who are passionate about women's right to holistic health care that aims to empower women. To celebrate this milestone the centre held a gala ball at the Crowne Plaza at Terrigal, which I proudly attended as a sponsor. The organisation does wonderful things and offers too many services to name, but women on the Central Coast can access anything from legal and medical advice to counselling, women's safe spaces, alternative therapy, therapeutic and social groups, drop-in services and advocacy. The women at this centre are true feminists, and it is within this framework that their services are provided. They acknowledge the impact on women of sex-based stereotyping, gender discrimination, and the importance of empowerment and valuing women's knowledge and skills. I applaud the wonderful women who were award winners on the night for their valuable contributions.

ST JOSEPH'S HIGH SCHOOL, ABERDEEN, STUDENT LEADERS

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) [5.03 p.m.]: I congratulate the following three girls, Chloe Hollingsworth, Larnie Chapman and Kate Lloyd who represented St Joseph's High School, Aberdeen, at the recent NSW All Schools Triathlon intermediate relay at the Sydney International Regatta Centre, Penrith Lakes. These girls were victorious in becoming State champions, competing against a large field of

192 teams in the 15-16 age division. In sweltering conditions the trio competed in a swim leg, then a bike leg and finished with a run leg. I congratulate those girls on a fantastic win and being crowned State champions in their chosen sport.

HARMONY DAY

ASHFIELD CARNIVAL OF CULTURES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [5.04 p.m.]: I acknowledge the importance of Harmony Day celebrated throughout New South Wales this week and the Ashfield Carnival of Cultures held at beautiful Ashfield Park on Sunday. A recent SBS survey found that Ashfield has 147 ancestries represented and more than 70 religions observed throughout the suburb. Indeed, 44 per cent of the people living in Ashfield were born overseas, and that same percentage of people speaks a language other than English at home. Events such as the Carnival of Cultures show that our diversity truly makes us stronger. I congratulate Ashfield Council on again coordinating a successful event, along with all the organisers who took part, including the Metro Migrant Resource Centre, ANTaR Inner West, Ashfield and District Historical Society, Wests Ashfield Leagues, Save Ashfield Park and Koori Radio.

LITTLE RIPPER DRONE CHOPPER

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [5.05 p.m.]: Recently I had the pleasure of attending the New South Wales Surf Life Saving Championships held on the Central Coast and had the privilege of seeing the "Little Ripper", not just in name only. This amazing drone chopper, about the size of a metre square, which may be used for shark spotting and has the ability to carry a life vest or lifesaving equipment, could be the way of the future for every surf club in New South Wales. It is the brainchild of businessman and founding President of International Life Saving Federation Kevin Weldon and former Australian astronaut Paul Scully-Power, and has been seven years in the making. I had the pleasure of meeting Paul Scully-Power the other day and viewing the model firsthand. I look forward to seeing this type of drone doing its job over our Central Coast beaches in the very near future. Westpac Chief Executive Brian Hartzler said Westpac was funding the trial as the latest evolution of the company's more than 40-year history of supporting the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.

CENTRAL COAST SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING CHALLENGE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) [5.06 p.m.]: Recently I attended the Central Coast Rotary, University of Newcastle Science and Engineering Challenge at St Edward's College at East Gosford. Schools from across the Central Coast participated over two days. The Science and Engineering Challenge is a nationwide STEM Outreach program presented by the University of Newcastle in partnership with communities, Rotary clubs, universities and sponsors. Through the challenge, students experience aspects of science and engineering that they would not usually see in their school environment. The challenge runs a range of programs, but focuses on inspiring students in year 10 to consider a future career in science and engineering by choosing to study the enabling sciences and mathematics in years 11 and 12. Activities included bridge building, making hovercrafts and catapults, solving puzzles and designing towers to withstand earthquakes, but the main theme was teamwork. I thank the volunteers from Rotary.

ALBURY WODONGA RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB

MCDONALD'S COROWA AUSTRALIAN BILLY CART CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [5.07 p.m.]: I congratulate all the players, coaches, managers and organisers of the Albury Wodonga Rugby Union Football Club—known as the Steamers—who celebrate the club's fortieth anniversary this year. From their home at Murrayfield, the Steamers have gone on to win numerous championships, including premierships in 1987, 1999, 2000, 2013 and 2015. In its 40 years the club has also developed a powerful sporting culture with important links throughout the border community. The club has truly become one of the southern inland zone's strongest rugby clubs, and this has all been achieved in what is traditionally Australian Football League [AFL] territory. I wish the Albury Wodonga Rugby Union Football Club every success in the 2016 Rugby Union competition, as befits this anniversary year.

Each year on Easter Saturday Corowa's main street becomes a racing track for the McDonald's Corowa Annual Australian Billy Cart Championships. Competitors come from near and far to compete and enjoy

showing off their billy cart creations that each year become more streamlined and faster—all in the quest to win the prestigious trophy and be named Australian Racing Champion of the year. Congratulations to the organisers of this very entertaining event.

TIGER CORPORATION

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [5.08 p.m.]: On 16 March 2016 I had the great pleasure of celebrating 30 years of the Tiger Corporation in Australia in my electorate of Cabramatta. I thank the directors of Galaxy Import and Export Co. Pty Ltd, David and Anna Nguy, for the invitation to join them in celebrating their company's partnership with Tiger Corporation. Since 1923 the Tiger brand has been synonymous with high-quality products in Japan and also has become a household name internationally. Tiger Corporation entered the Australian market in 1985, providing Tiger products to the community with the help of Galaxy Import and Export Co. Pty Ltd. This was to ensure that Australian consumers were able to enjoy all the benefits of the Tiger product range. Tiger rice cookers are now a household name, particularly among the Asian community in Australia. I recommend anyone who loves rice to purchase a Tiger rice cooker.

TRIBUTE TO LADY DOROTHY CUTLER, OBE

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.09 p.m.]: It is with deep sadness that I inform the House that Lady Dorothy Cutler, OBE, passed away last Thursday morning in Orange. She was the widow of Sir Charles Cutler, Deputy Premier of New South Wales for 10½ years, from 1965, and member of the Legislative Assembly for Orange for 29 years, until 1975. He was a giant of New South Wales politics. A resident of Orange from the age of two, Lady Cutler set up the Art of Speech studio in 1937. Following war service, she worked part-time until 1965. She helped many people to overcome speech impediments, including former Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer. Lady Cutler served in the Australian Women's Army Service with the 2nd Ambulance Car Company during World War II and saw active service during the Japanese raids on Sydney Harbour.

On the entry of her husband, Sir Charles, to the New South Wales Parliament in 1947, Lady Cutler played an active and leading part in both State and Federal politics, which involved extensive travel both domestically and overseas. Additionally, Lady Cutler established an extraordinary record of service to the community through numerous charities, particularly those related to people with disability. She was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1976 for services to the community. Lady Cutler is survived by her children, Joanne, Ian, Geoff and Neil, two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. She was 97 and was a much-loved and respected figure in our community and our State. I extend the sincere condolences of all members to Lady Cutler's family. She leaves an enduring legacy of kindness and community service that will never be forgotten.

FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL MURAL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [5.10 p.m.]: I commend and congratulate Fairfield High School students Christine, Paige, Lauren and Gerwyn on the outstanding artistic work they have bestowed upon Fairfield. These bright young art students at Fairfield High School created an amazing mural in the local Fairfield Forum representing strength, diversity, community and eternal life. Each student designed their own section of the mural, and they worked together to create a cohesive design. The artwork has been well received by all and has been acknowledged as an amazing community project. I encourage everyone in this Chamber to pop down to Fairfield to experience this fine piece of artwork in person. I say well done to the students, teachers and everyone else involved. I hope the artwork inspires many more projects throughout the electorate.

TRIBUTE TO CLARE GRUBBA

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [5.11 p.m.]: I acknowledge Clare Grubba, a student of St Paul the Apostle Primary School in Winston Hills. Clare competed in the State Track and Field Championships last weekend at Sydney Olympic Park Athletic Centre. She threw a massive 6.07 metres in the under-nine girls shot-put. She then competed in the under-nine girls discus and was successful in achieving a 23.75-metre throw. I congratulate Clare, as does her mother, Michelle, and everyone at St Paul the Apostle Primary School.

ROSEVILLE MEMORIAL CLUB

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.12 p.m.]: Roseville Memorial Club in my electorate of Davidson is one of the finalists in the prestigious 2016 Clubs and Community Awards. It is

nominated in the Heart of the Community category for its impressive commitment to supporting live music and local sport. It is one of six clubs across north Sydney and the northern beaches that have been recognised as finalists. The award recognises the immense contribution that clubs make to their local area and to New South Wales across a broad range of categories.

Winners of the awards will be named at an official awards ceremony on Friday 6 May at the Royal Hall of Industries at Moore Park. Irrespective of the outcome, the energetic commitment of Roseville Memorial Club has not gone unnoticed in the community. Membership of the club has doubled in recent years. It is a crucial local institution. I look forward to attending its annual Anzac Day dawn service next month. I congratulate Roseville Memorial Club and its officeholders, as well as the other wonderful award finalists, on their impressive achievements.

TRIBUTE TO DON IVERSON

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.13 p.m.]: I pay tribute to Don Iverson, who was recruited to the University of Wollongong 15 years ago to lift the profile of health sciences. Don tragically passed away last week. He joined the University of Wollongong with a high profile and a reputation as an academic and government health policy adviser to the Canadian and United States governments. When the opportunity to establish a medical school arose during the term of the Howard Government, Mr Iverson designed a very different medical school that focused on providing medical practitioners to regional areas.

The model has been extremely successful, with more than 70 per cent of University of Wollongong graduates working in regional towns and cities, compared with less than 10 per cent from traditional medical schools. Mr Iverson's model has now been adopted by other newly established medical schools across Australia. Locally, in our city and region, Don's medical school and the accompanying Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute, which was also Mr Iverson's initiative, have attracted leading medical practitioners. This has resulted in a significant increase in the quality of health care for our communities. This is a tremendous legacy that will continue to benefit the people of the Illawarra for decades to come. Don is survived by his wife, Lynne, and daughter, Amelia.

VIVIENNE MILLER, HORNSBY ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.14 p.m.]: I have the pleasure of acknowledging Hornsby's Local Woman of the Year, Vivienne Miller. At 65, Vivienne is a dedicated and active volunteer member of the Hornsby community. She has 43 years of service with the NSW Rural Fire Service and 27 years of service with St John Ambulance. Vivienne joined the Cowan Rural Fire Brigade in August 1973. She has been an active member of Hornsby Headquarters, Berowra Brigade, president of Communications Brigade and is still active with the Cowan Brigade today, where she has held numerous positions including first aid officer and deputy captain.

Vivienne has been closely involved with both St John Ambulance and the NSW Rural Fire Service in the areas of first aid and advanced oxygen resuscitation training. Vivienne is well liked and very well respected by members and staff of the Hornsby-Ku-ring-gai district, where she has trained many of our volunteers in basic to advanced first aid skills and oxygen resuscitation. The time that Vivienne has freely and pleasantly given to all members, especially in the area of first aid training, can only be described as outstanding. Indeed, without Vivienne's contribution to the district, our first aid training would not be to the high standard that it is today.

Vivienne is well decorated. In 1993, she was admitted as a serving sister of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem. In 1997 she received the service medal of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, and was promoted to the level of Commander of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in 2005. She also received the St John Instructor of the Year award in 2000. In 2011, Vivienne received the National Medal (2nd Clasp) for 35 years of dedicated service to the NSW Rural Fire Service and then in 2014, she received the Long Service Award (3rd Clasp) for 40 years of service to the NSW Rural Fire Service. Vivienne is humble and distinguished. Hornsby is very lucky to have volunteers such as Vivienne who gives up her time to help serve her local community.

Community recognition statements concluded.

Pursuant to sessional order private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**SHELLHARBOUR ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [5.15 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House two issues; first, the absolutely pathetic annual update report released by the Government on the Illawarra Regional Transport Plan. The plan was originally released, ironically, on 1 April 2014. It was a 44-page glossy document. Overnight, after two years of pursuing the Government to release its annual update, it finally released a flimsy and pathetic five-page report. It is no wonder the Government's spin masters decided to sneak it in under the cover of darkness and stick it up on the Transport website.

There was no announcement of its release and no press release from its Ministers. There was certainly none of the usual fanfare, even from that shy, retiring media recluse, the member for Kiama. The tide did not even come in for the member's other blowhole on the transport update for the Illawarra. The report fails to mention any of the major projects the Illawarra requires to enhance connectivity to Sydney and south-western Sydney. It mentions nothing about the future of the Maldon to Dombarton rail link, which was so comprehensively stuffed up by the Government in its registration of the interest process late last year. It mentions nothing about the Bulli Pass to Memorial Drive extension. It says nothing about the progress of the Albion Park Rail bypass, which was promised 12 months ago by the Government.

Despite the paper shuffling that is going on with this project, the Premier misled the House on 10 March during question time by stating that it and the Shellharbour Hospital upgrade were "all underway and happening". Last time I looked, cows do not build roads and there are only cows on the route set aside for the Albion Park Rail bypass. I had a look at the site of the bypass to see whether it was happening and all I could see was cows—nothing else. Unless the Government has appointed Daisy the dairy cow the site manager, there is no Albion Park Rail bypass, in the Premier's own clumsy words, "all underway and happening". Further, there is unlikely to be anything more happening with this project until the eve of the next election in 2019. Despite my consistent calls for the project to be started by 1 July 2017, the Government is intent only on doing so two years later. That assigns the frustrated motorists using the Princes Highway through Albion Park Rail to another six years of traffic congestion and gridlock before this crucial infrastructure is completed.

The second matter I raise is the need for a Service NSW centre to be located in my electorate. Last year the Government gave a middle-finger salute to the people of Shellharbour by closing the RMS Registry Office. Every other electorate in the Illawarra has had established a Service NSW centre. My community only got a digital store. In an answer to a question on notice, the Minister has revealed that, in his words, "digital stores are by their nature only temporary". According to the Government's logic, not only will my constituents not get a Service NSW centre but the digital store that is currently available to them will be lost. This is despite a clear demand for access to all government services. The Minister has revealed that between November last year and February this year nearly 9,000 people have been served at the Shellharbour digital store.

The Minister indicated also that over the same period the Warrawong Service Centre has assisted 28,000 people. Is it too far a leap of logic for the Minister to understand that 28,000 people being assisted at Warrawong and 9,000 people being assisted by the digital store at Shellharbour indicates a demand for the same services to be provided within the Shellharbour electorate? The Government's attitude to the provision of basic government services to the community in my electorate is simply unacceptable. I again make it clear to the House that I will not tolerate every other community in the Illawarra having easy access to government services while the people in my electorate are treated as second-class citizens. There is a very clear critical mass for the establishment of a Service NSW centre within the Shellharbour electorate. To ignore this fact, as the Government has, is a disgrace. I will continue to fight for a Service NSW centre to be established within my electorate.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.20 p.m.]: Under Labor we saw 10 transport plans and 12 rail lines, none of which were delivered. The member for Shellharbour did not seek a briefing on the Maldon to Dombarton railway, yet she has raised questions about it in this House. If she had bothered to seek a briefing, I would have been able to explain it to her and detail what the Government is doing in relation to infrastructure. The Government is investing record sums in infrastructure in the Illawarra. The member for Shellharbour did not say that Labor's infrastructure plan for this State for the next 10 years did not once mention the Illawarra.

The member for Shellharbour would have been happy for a decade to go by with continued congestion at Albion Park Rail. It was this side of the House that funded the Albion Park Rail bypass. For all of her talk and the utter nonsense that she milks from the Albion Park Rail bypass and community, at the last election she offered no solutions and made no promises or commitments. The member for Shellharbour is a fraud. She comes into this House to talk about infrastructure investments but when an election is on she is nowhere to be seen. It is no wonder the people of Shellharbour and the Labor Party branches did not want her back. She would have been disendorsed.

REBEKAH OLIVER, NATIONAL SCHOOLS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

CHRISTINE CLAUSEN, OATLEY ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [5.21 p.m.]: I congratulate Rebekah Oliver for being selected to participate in the twenty-first National Schools Constitutional Convention. Rebekah attends Danebank Anglican School for Girls in Hurstville and is among 120 years 11 and 12 students from all over the State selected to be a voice for young people from across Australia. The National Schools Constitutional Convention will be held at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House in Canberra in March.

The convention allows senior students and future leaders the opportunity to become better informed about how Australia's Constitution provides an important democratic framework for our system of government. Importantly, it encourages and supports young people to be involved in the decision-making processes of government. The topic for 2016 is "Education in a Federation". Students will consider a range of views and decide whether they think it is time for a change. I applaud Rebekah and all those involved in the program and wish them well. I look forward to seeing them one day maybe in this House.

Last week I had the pleasure of presenting the Local Woman of the Year Award to Mrs Christine Clausen, OAM. I have known Christine for many years. She is a hardworking and community-minded person who is a worthy recipient of this award. Christine, an unassuming and caring individual, is the founder of the Narwee Creative Craft Group, one of the largest community groups in my electorate. The group meets on Thursday mornings, bringing together hundreds of women from across my electorate. The Narwee Creative Craft Group provides the opportunity for participants to learn new skills in sewing, knitting, card making, beading and painting. The group meets weekly at the Narwee Baptist Church and provides company, morning tea and childminding services.

Many of those who participate do so to learn new skills but more importantly to connect with people across the community. Founded in 1986, the group has over 140 regular attendees. It raises money for many important causes such as Alzheimer's Australia and the neonatal intensive care unit at Westmead hospital. It also raises money for those less fortunate in war-torn countries or those who have been affected by flood or fire. I am delighted to recognise Christine Clausen as the Oatley electorate Local Woman of the Year. I wish her and the Narwee Creative Craft Group all the very best in the future.

NORTH COAST ICE EPIDEMIC

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.25 p.m.]: Tonight I speak about the impacts that the illicit drug ice is having on my electorate and communities on the North Coast. There is no doubt that the North Coast is in the grip of an ice epidemic. There has been a steep increase in arrests for amphetamine possession. Over the two years to June last year police across the North Coast have seen arrests increase by 40 per cent in the Tweed-Byron region and 14 per cent in the Coffs-Clarence region. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] found seven out of 10 New South Wales juveniles convicted of drug offences in 2004 were reconvicted of another offence within the next decade. Adults were slightly less likely to reoffend, with 63 per cent facing the courts again within 10 years of their original conviction. I am pleased that North Coast health workers will share in almost \$300 million of Federal funding to break the nation's growing addiction to ice.

The Federal funding will be combined with up to \$380 million per year for mental health programs. I understand that primary health networks will be funded to create regionally specific solutions, rather than the traditional drip-down method of programs centralised in big cities. This is a major change in the way the Commonwealth funds such programs—from the bottom up rather than from the top down. Grassroots support services have a clearer picture on where the funding will produce the best results. Ice is not just a health problem for the Government to solve. It is a problem that impacts on families, police, the judiciary, mental health

services and the broader community. It is taking a toll on paramedics and health workers. It is absolutely reprehensible that the people who are there to help an addict put their lives at risk every time they deal with one. Paramedics and health workers have more than enough to deal with in the course of their daily life without the added threat of an out-of-control ice addict.

The toll on the user, the user's family and the community is something we see far too often. The violence and dysfunction within families, the theft and violent rampages in our communities and the children who are abused and left homeless are the legacy of a drug that is destroying the very fabric of our community. This is not an alarmist statement or a headline; that is the reality we face on a day-to-day basis. This problem requires a whole-of-community approach. There is a desperate need for significant prevention work, which includes detoxification and rehabilitation centres. Just as importantly, we need an education program for our kids at school as well as educating the broader community. The North Coast Primary Health Network held an ice symposium in May last year. The symposium brought together police, ambulance, health workers and drug and alcohol services. The group raised \$350,000 and now employs three officers who provide education services for schools, families and health service providers.

This is a good start but clearly much more needs to be done to combat illicit drug use and ultimately addiction to insidious drugs such as ice. We must be proactive. Yes, we need detox and rehab centres but we also need to speak out when we see drug deals and we must educate our kids against the danger of ice addiction. It is essential to "dob in a dealer" as they prey on the vulnerable and do not deserve sympathy or protection. We must embrace every option that helps rid our society of the scourge of drugs and drug dealers. The use of drug sniffer dogs should be welcomed and not scorned, as The Greens propose. Ice addiction is indiscriminate. It does not matter which political party people belong to, it can still grasp them and destroy their family. I ask The Greens to think about the victims first, and get on board with the rest of the community to help rid our society of the scum who profit from human misery.

BROADMEADOW SPORTING FACILITIES

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) [5.30 p.m.]: I call for government funding not only for the big sporting stadiums in Sydney but also for the great sporting precinct in Broadmeadow, Newcastle, the second-largest city in New South Wales and seventh-largest city in Australia. In 2009, under the former Labor Government, a Broadmeadow Precinct Concept Masterplan was commissioned and a draft produced by the former Hunter Regional Sporting Venues Authority. Once the Liberal-Nationals Government was elected in 2011, this draft was never translated into a masterplan, and for four long years afterwards nothing was done. In May last year I asked the Government: What stage is the Broadmeadow Sport and Entertainment Precinct Masterplan at, and what has been implemented? The answer was: The former Hunter Regional Sporting Venues Authority in 2009 commissioned the plan. Then—much to my delight—as a result of my needling this Government along, its response was:

The Venues NSW Board has recently considered the matter of master planning for the site and has begun preliminary work to revisit and refresh the plan and link it to current strategic business objectives.

Congratulations and well done—better late than never. In 2012 the then Minister for Sport said that while there is no money to proceed with plans to develop a world-class sporting precinct in Newcastle the plans are still on the cards. Not in 2012, 2013, or 2014 but finally in 2015 we have some movement at the station. Since then, I have met with Janet Mulligan from Venues NSW and Chris Hall from the Minister's office. I met with Janet Mulligan again with Newcastle District Tennis Association at its office in Broadmeadow. I met again with Newcastle District Tennis Association, as well as the chairman of the Newcastle Knights and the chief executive officer.

We have heard the Government announce its massive new Rebuilding the Major Stadia Network—the biggest investment in sport and major event infrastructure in New South Wales since the 2000 Sydney Olympics. More than \$1.5 billion will be invested in the stadia network over the next decade in Sydney. I ask the Minister: What about the State's second-largest city? Does he think we might get a crumb of the \$1.5 billion that is to be spent in Sydney? This Government does not have a good record of funding sporting facilities in the Hunter. We saw that with approximately \$60 million for the Hunter Stadium, which all came from Labor.

I remember standing out the front of the old Hunter Stadium some 10 years ago with the then member for Newcastle, Bryce Gaudry, collecting signatures for the expansion of the stadium. That may have been time well spent, as we finally saw a \$60 million upgrade, with \$50 million from the State Labor Government and \$10 million from the Federal Labor Government. Stage 4 of the stadium—building the northern and southern

ends of the ground, and replacing the grass hills with seated areas—is still to be done. The Newcastle Knights have a proposal for a training centre of excellence to be built at Broadmeadow, as part a new masterplan for the sporting and entertainment precinct. The chairman said, "If we don't get some plans in place we will be a backwater, and we want to lift our standards and get our Knights as quickly as possible to be the premiers." I could not agree more with that statement. A New South Wales Office of Sport spokesman said:

The site is recognised as having great potential to deliver enhanced economic and social benefits to Newcastle and the Hunter region.

Well, if it is then the Government should back it up with funding from the more than \$600 million from its planned long-term lease of the State's electricity poles and wires being earmarked for upgrading sporting stadiums. About 30 per cent of all Rebuilding NSW privatisation proceeds are supposed to be spent in regional areas. To conclude, while I welcome the work on the Broadmeadow master plan, it is simply outrageous that the Government had committed so much money to Sydney venues and nowhere else. The Broadmeadow precinct has enormous potential and deserves to have some money put into it as well.

TELOPEA COMMUNITY GROUPS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.34 p.m.]: I am excited about the start of the Telopea Masterplan, which was recently announced by the great Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing, Mr Brad Hazzard. There will be a \$2.5 billion development at Telopea. It is appropriate to bring to the attention of the House the great work being done by the Dundas Area Neighbourhood Centre and Telopea Connections, both great organisations in the Telopea area. Dundas Area Neighbourhood Centre is committed to creating a vibrant, safe and comfortable space for the local community. It provides access to advice, assistance and referrals. It also encourages involvement in social groups, activities, community programs and events.

The centre is run by an amazing, dedicated group of staff and volunteers who are enthusiastic and always happy to give their time to help. I recognise the wonderful work done by staff and volunteers including Keith Reynolds, Community Development Worker; Patrick Soosay, Youth Development Worker; and Shirley Cheng, Multicultural Worker. I also recognise Shirley Chen, Bilingual Multicultural Worker, who works with the centre's Chinese social group and playgroup; Glenda Thomas, who helps with singing English classes that provide a slightly different and enjoyable way to learn English; and Sylvia Liu, who is a wonderful tai chi and tea instructor.

I also recognise Peter O'Regan, who is the fantastic choirmaster of the community choir the Valley Voices. Recently the choir performed at the 2015 Granny Smith Festival and was invited for a performance at the Sydney Opera House with Opera Australia. Laura Jiang is a committed volunteer, who teaches English conversation classes. Florence Ilacqua is an artist and teacher from the Parramatta Art Society, who continues to help in leading a wonderful, enthusiastic and appreciative class. Diedra Samios volunteers to run computer classes, which are important in helping seniors in particular to overcome their fear of computers and become more independent and better connected with family and friends

The Dundas Area Neighbourhood Centre is also an active member of Telopea Connections, an organisation committed to bringing positive change to our local community. I recognise its members including Pip Martins, who is the Schools as Community Centres Project facilitator and last year's Local Woman of the Year; Ellen Ross from Parramatta City Council; Maria Cuenca from the Department of Family and Community Services; Peta O'Flaherty from Hope Connect; and Ambar Banerji from Dundas library. I also recognise Hume Community Housing, Rosehill police command and Western Sydney Partners in Recovery. Together those people and organisations support the residents of Telopea and surrounding suburbs.

The active group is responsible for organising a wide variety of community events, activities and other initiatives to educate, support and engage the local community. One of those events, as mentioned previously, is the Dundas Community Fair. The fair showcases local activities and gets people who may not otherwise be connected to become actively involved in life. The fair provides a place where people from many backgrounds can mix and socialise together in a fun and engaging way. The fair is one of many exciting things happening in Telopea. Again I ask the whole community to come together and take up the once-in-a-generation opportunity we have to plan the future of Telopea. We can revitalise the suburb and make it another jewel in the crown of Parramatta.

The Shrimad Rajchandra Mission is another wonderful group in our community. The organisation was founded by Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai, a religious scholar with a large following around the world.

Pujya Gurudevshri is described by his followers as a spiritual visionary and modern-day mystic. The founder of Shrimad Rajchandra Mission in Dharampur, India, Pujya Gurudevshri is leading seekers towards eternal peace and infinite bliss. The organisation has 80 centres spread across the globe, including one in Sydney. The Sydney centre is led by Dr Dhaval Ghelani. Pujya Gurudevshri is turning 50 this year.

For Pujya Gurudevshri's visit Dr Ghelani organised a grand event for his glorious fiftieth year celebrations. The program consisted of a musical dance demonstrating how a lost soul transforms its life with the teachings of its guru. Bearing testimony to Gurudevshri's divine and spiritual life, a special presentation movie titled *Unmoved Mover—The Mystic and His Mission* was shown to the captivated audience of more than 500 people. That was followed by a felicitation of all guests and Gurudevshri along with the presentation of a unique picture frame depicting Gurudevshri's 50 messages engraved on a golden coin within the map of Australia. It was a remarkable event. I salute Pujya Gurudevshri for his work and wish him the best for his birthday.

MIRANDA ELECTORATE DEVELOPMENTS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) [5.38 p.m.]: Today, as we approach the one-year anniversary of my election to this place, I speak about my journey. We all refer to having "that moment"—mine was on election day at Sylvania Heights polling booth. A mother approached me with her young daughter. She expressed that she was glad that I was running for State Parliament because she felt I would be a good role model for her daughter. The young girl asked me to sign my how-to-vote card and we posed for a photograph together. I have told this story before, but I still have this photograph on my phone. I keep it with me. This little girl is a constant reminder to me of one of the reasons I do this job: to show the next generation of young women that they can be anything they want to be.

So, what has happened in the Miranda electorate over the past 12 months? Well, there is far more than can be covered in this place in five minutes, but I will cover some key highlights. I am passionate about providing state-of-the-art hospitals for our community. The Miranda electorate has an ageing population. It contains higher than average numbers of people over 65 years of age—specifically 16.8 per cent compared to 14.7 per cent in the whole of New South Wales—and has witnessed an 18 per cent growth in the number of over 65s since the 2006 census. I am proud to be a member of a Government which promises to deliver better services to the community and delivers what it promises.

On Wednesday 10 February 2016 I was joined by the Minister for Health, Mrs Jillian Skinner, to mark the start of the main works for the \$62.9 million redevelopment of Sutherland Hospital. This will deliver a new and expanded emergency department and 60 extra beds, amongst other things. Many Sutherland shire residents also rely on St George Hospital, which was neglected for 16 years under the Labor Government. Not only has the Government accelerated construction of the acute services building at St George Hospital by completing it six months earlier than projected, it will save taxpayers about \$30 million without any reduction in the size of the project or the clinical services delivered. St George Hospital and Sutherland Hospital are shining examples of the Baird Government's determination to rebuild the State's ageing health infrastructure.

The opening of a new Service NSW centre in Miranda is a welcome addition to the area for the residents of the Sutherland shire. On 11 March, Service NSW opened its doors at Westfield Miranda, across the road from my office, and served an average of 700 customers each day for the first five days. Residents of the shire are now able to access more than 800 government transactions including driver licences, vehicle registrations, Seniors Card applications, birth certificate applications, competency cards, owner-builder permits, Housing NSW payments, driving tests and more in a convenient location at Miranda. The centre not only allows customers to undertake multiple government transactions in the one place but also offers extended hours, better customer service and shorter waiting times.

Another achievement the New South Wales Government has delivered to our community is the upgrade of Jannali station which is in the review of environmental factors [REF] phase at the moment. As part of the \$800 million Transport Access Program, customers will benefit from a new pedestrian bridge, lifts, ramps, a family accessible toilet, improved lighting and closed circuit television [CCTV]. This upgrade at Jannali station will be a huge boost for thousands of Jannali customers and will make catching public transport a much more attractive option, especially for older people, people with a disability and parents with prams.

The children of today will be the leaders of tomorrow. We all appreciate the importance of a good education and recognise the need to ensure our local schools can provide the best education to the next generation—for example, the little girl I met on election day. That is why at the end of last year I was really

proud to support four of my local schools through the Community Building Partnership [CBP] program. I supported Como Public School with a \$30,000 grant for the canteen refurbishment and Oyster Bay Public School, which needed \$29,100 for its new covered outdoor learning area for the infants site. I also gave \$20,000 to the Miranda North Parents and Citizens Association for a new playground landscaping project because their playground had been flooding due to severe rainfall and students were unable to use it.

In the same way \$16,000 was given to Taren Point Public School for a multipurpose learning space. Clearly the children of today are really important to the future of tomorrow and that is why it is important to support these kids through the CBP program. I have also supported many of our local sporting groups such as the Kirrawee Kangaroos Football Club with \$25,000 for an accessible toilet and storerooms, the Miranda Magpies Football Club with \$20,000 for redevelopment of their change room, and the Cronulla Junior Australian Football Club, which received \$19,620 for drainage works to flood-proof the oval and increase accessibility—that is an important oval used by several other local groups as well. Several of our church groups were also looked after, such as the Uniting Church and the Anglican Church. There are so many things to talk about but I will close with an important consideration from Dr Seuss, because I believe there is a Dr Seuss quote for every occasion. He said:

Today was good. Today was fun. Tomorrow is another one.

So let us have a look at what the next three years hold for the people of Miranda.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.43 p.m.]: I too acknowledge the extraordinary contribution the member for Miranda has made since coming to this place. We have just heard about the results she is getting for her community, and this is just the beginning. You would struggle to find a more passionate or dedicated local member than the member for Miranda. She is an outstanding community representative. She is passionate about her community and she fights as hard as anyone in this place to get the best deal for her constituents. I know that she will make a huge difference to her community and, more importantly, she is someone who will make an enormous contribution to our party and to this great State. I say to the member for Miranda: congratulations on your one-year anniversary. It is a pleasure working with you and I look forward to your contributions in the future. Your best days are certainly ahead of you.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) [5.44 p.m.]: I raise an important issue for the people of St George, namely, the Government's proposed boundary review of councils in the St George area. The Government recently put forward a proposal to merge Hurstville and Kogarah councils into a single Georges River council and to push Rockdale council into an arranged marriage with Botany council in the east. I am very concerned by the comments attributed to Mr Sansom, the former head of the Independent Local Government Review Panel, in reference to this merger, that were recently reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Mr Sansom is reported to have said that it was "appalling and simply ridiculous ... and that [there] has not been enough done to provide an adequate justification for this proposal".

I am also concerned that ratepayers have not been given enough information as to why this particular proposal for Kogarah and Hurstville councils is being pursued, instead of a merger between the three St George councils. I am not against council amalgamations, but it would be a better fit to merge Hurstville, Kogarah and Rockdale councils. If those three councils are not to be merged then they should stand separately. No reasoning or rationale has been provided to the St George community as to why the Government is pursuing a merger simply between Hurstville and Kogarah councils. There have been no graphs, no tables of contents and no financial reasoning; it is simply the will and determination of unseen forces somewhere in this Government's ivory tower.

It has been suggested that the proposed merger will save ratepayers more than \$40 million over the next 20 years, but the Government has not provided any information as to how that figure was arrived at. No accompanying methodology or rationale has been made public. If one is prepared to accept the general principle of economies of scale, this would argue in favour of a bigger regional council—namely, including Rockdale council—to achieve maximum efficiency for ratepayers while satisfying community of interest requirements. Community of interest is also an important part of this proposal. This will mean that Rockdale and Botany councils will have to merge. This new entity will be separated by an airport and a port—indeed, the two busiest in the country. This division between its eastern and western regions will mean that it will never function properly because it has no community of interest, shared services, common history or shared facilities.

Traditions also need to be considered in any merger proposal. The St George area is a defined community—for example, it has its own football team and various other things. It would be a gross manipulation of tradition if Rockdale council in the St George area were to be merged with the Botany council in the east. Community opinion should also be taken into consideration. Rockdale and Kogarah councils have lodged submissions asking to be placed in a joint regional council with Hurstville council. Interestingly, residents of the Hurstville council were polled as to their views on amalgamation; 14 per cent of those polled supported a merger with Kogarah council and a massive 63 per cent favoured no change at all. It is unclear why the Government, having already declared Kogarah and Hurstville councils fit for the future on every criterion except for scale and capacity, would then ask them to merge with a region that does not meet its own criteria for scale and capacity. In a letter to the Government the mayor of Kogarah, Councillor Stephen Agius—whom members opposite may have run into at various Liberal Party forums—said:

While it is clear that speculation is typically just that, I am disturbed by information that I have received that a Councillor of Hurstville City Council has been promoting that he has had some influence on a decision to form an amalgamated Council, to be known as Georges River Council, that comprises Hurstville and Kogarah City Councils [only] and part of Rockdale City Council.

The letter goes on. No-one in the Government has ever answered that. The allegations contained in that letter eventually came true, with only Hurstville and Kogarah councils proposed to be amalgamated. We need a St George council for our community. It will be larger, but it is right for our community and it should be pursued.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.49 p.m.]: I welcome the statement from the member for Kogarah that he is not against council amalgamations. It is the first time we have heard that from Opposition members. The Minister for Local Government has referred all merger proposals to the chief executive of the Office of Local Government. Delegates appointed by the chief executive will be given the responsibility to review the merger proposals that have been put forward. The member for Kogarah had until 8 March to submit a proposal. The chief executive and the panel will conduct public inquiries, call for written submissions and provide reports on the merger proposals to the Boundaries Commission. Members of the Boundaries Commission will provide their comments on the reports to the Minister for Local Government, who will consider the report of the delegates and Boundaries Commission prior to determining the outcome of the merger proposals. I will ensure that the Minister for Local Government considers the private member's statement of the member for Kogarah, and that he provides a response in due course.

ROUSE HILL RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.50 p.m.]: The Rouse Hill Rural Fire Brigade has served and protected our local communities proudly since its formation in 1939, following the devastating Black Friday bushfires. The Rouse Hill brigade was established jointly with Box Hill in 1939. Last year the Kellyville Rural Fire Brigade joined them by celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary. It is a remarkable milestone for all three brigades and an incredible record of dedication to our communities. In 1939 the devastating Black Friday bushfires were driven by fierce 50-miles-an-hour westerly winds, which wrought destruction in almost every major part of the State. A ring of bushfires surrounded Sydney, all the way from Palm Beach to Port Hacking and as far as the Blue Mountains at Mount Victoria. Fires were also reported in Penrose, Wollongong, Nowra, Bathurst, Ulladulla and Mittagong. Fires at Castle Hill, Sylvania, Cronulla and Frenchs Forest roared over fronts extending, at times, for many miles. Had it not been for a sudden change in the weather, the fires would have caused even greater damage.

At this time my family lived above the area now known as Heritage Park at Castle Hill. We remember this fire because we were lucky to save our home. My father used to say that the fires burnt an area from Parramatta all the way to the Blue Mountains. As with many great community institutions, the Rouse Hill Rural Fire Brigade was forged amidst the most trying of circumstances, which brought out qualities of sacrifice and courage in men and women in our community. It was on this dreadful weekend that the Rouse Hill and Box Hill rural fire brigades emerged. For various reasons, the Box Hill and Rouse Hill brigades chose to operate separately after a couple of years and our community, therefore, is the beneficiary of two brigades operating to protect life and property during times of devastating fire.

The brigades operated for many years utilising equipment and vehicles belonging to local residents. Even until the 1960s, the brigade used personal vehicles to tow a tanker trailer. Over the years numerous bushfires have impacted most areas of the district, the most notable being 1939, which affected Vineyard, Box Hill, Nelson, Rouse Hill and Annangrove. I remember well the first fire I attended in 1975 in my capacity as a member of the Box Hill Rural Fire Brigade. We fought fires at Annangrove, Glenhaven, Castle Hill,

Kenthurst, Hillside and Glenorie. In 1981 Maroota South and Glenorie were affected. In 1991 areas of Kenthurst and Glenorie were burnt, and in 2002 a total of 18,000 hectares were burnt across the Hills district. Property and lives were lost in the fires in 1939, 1991 and 2002, despite the best efforts of the brigades and a major focus on community education within the district.

Over the years, Rouse Hill Rural Fire Brigade has distinguished itself from others by its willingness to help other districts when necessary. It has been available to assist the State Emergency Service with storm damage and flooding in Goulburn, Cootamundra and the Blue Mountains, as well as emergencies in Hawkesbury and Cumberland. During the recent Blue Mountains fires the brigade maintained a vehicle in the field for six days, 24 hours a day, and members volunteered more than 1,000 hours. Examples such as that illustrate the courage, sacrifice and willingness of members to help communities during times of tragedy. The Rouse Hill Rural Fire Brigade remains a strong institution in our community, and that is reflected in its growing membership—currently it has 61 members, seven of whom have joined in the past 12 months. What struck me when meeting the volunteers of this brigade was the number of young people who are willing to give back to their community. I am heartened by the generosity of young individuals in the community and I take comfort in knowing that the future of the brigade is in capable hands.

It is obvious how far firefighting has come in New South Wales. From very humble beginnings, today the picture could not be more different, with the NSW Rural Fire Service providing state-of-the-art fire trucks, modern equipment, radios and, of course, training. Rural Fire Service volunteers are the consummate professionals. Their range of skills is impressive, because they need to know not only how to mitigate and combat serious bushfires and grassfires but also how to deal with motor vehicle accidents, house fires, and storm and flood damage. I pay particular tribute to great friends Don and Monica Langdon, who each have 52 years involvement in the Rouse Hill Rural Fire Brigade—an outstanding contribution. I also acknowledge the service of both the late Jo Mezzomo and the Derkson family. It is only through the selflessness of these volunteers and their commitment to service that this great community institution has endured. Commanding this brigade is the exceptional Steve Bruce, who leads with charisma and by example.

The physically exhausting and mentally challenging work of the volunteers of the Rouse Hill Rural Fire Brigade, and indeed all brigades, is appreciated. Without their professionalism and skills, the Hills community would not have the high level of fire protection it does. The time the volunteers spend with their brigade volunteering is time away from their work, their businesses and, most importantly, their families. I congratulate the Rouse Hill Rural Fire Brigade on this milestone, and I thank the volunteers for their ongoing dedication and selfless service to their brigade, their community and our State.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.55 p.m.]: On behalf of the Government, I acknowledge the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Rouse Hill Rural, Kellyville and Box Hill fire brigades. That is 75 years of dedicated service to our community. They do not always get much recognition, but every time the volunteers don their overalls and go out to fight a fire they do so to protect the rest of us; they put themselves in harm's way so the rest of us do not have to. The men and women of the Rural Fire Service represent what is best about our State and our country. I acknowledge Don and Monica Langdon, who have served our community with distinction for more than 50 years. The member for Castle Hill is a dedicated member of the Rural Fire Service and I am proud to have recently completed my basic fire training and joined this outstanding organisation. Long may the Rural Fire Service continue protecting our community.

TUNCURRY LONE PINE MEMORIAL PARK SECURITY LIGHTING

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [5.56 p.m.]: I call on the New South Wales Government to fund security lighting at the memorial in Lone Pine Memorial Park, Tuncurry. Unfortunately, in recent times there have been several attacks on the memorial by vandals. It is absolutely disgraceful that certain people have no respect whatsoever for the memory of those who served their country in our armed services. The term "Anzac" was created during the First World War when the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps first landed at Gallipoli. The spirit of Anzac and what it always means to Australians—a spirit of mateship, loyalty and selflessness in putting your mate first, which was displayed at Anzac and which we now think of as part of Australian culture—certainly does not apply to the ratbags who desecrated this most important site.

Lone Pine is one of the most significant military events in Australia's history, which is why the park is dedicated to the memory of those who laid down their lives in that conflict. Thanks to the many hours of work by volunteers, the memorial park is a showpiece of the area and is in a significant location near the shores of Wallis Lake. During the Centenary of Anzac commemorations in 2015, thousands of people came to pay their

respects at the dawn service at the Lone Pine memorial. To think that anyone in the Great Lakes area has such little respect for others is very disappointing. Following discussions with the local RSL sub-branch—in particular, with President Frank Brady, Secretary Graham Kernick and various Ministers—I am pressing the New South Wales Government to make funds available to install security lights in the park.

The sub-branch has told me that it needs \$10,000 for the lights. It wants to secure this funding but needs assistance in getting the message across. That is why it has commenced a petition, which is now being circulated, to show how the general population feel about the desecration of this wonderful memorial. Anzac Day is coming and I want to make sure that Lone Pine memorial is in good condition and remains that way. Nothing is more important than ensuring that the brainless idiots—those gutless cowards who, under the cover of darkness, sneak to this site to vandalise it by graffitiing it—do not do it again. It is extremely important that this funding is forthcoming. I cannot put it strongly enough or ask more vigorously that this funding be made available so that we can protect the Lone Pine memorial in Tuncurry. It is a special feature for Anzac Day, but it is also a beautiful site.

The memorial that the RSL club and its volunteers—in partnership with the council and using previous government grants—have erected should not be vandalised and wrecked by idiots. One thing that we know about cowards is that they do not like to do anything in the light. They will not do anything where people can see them. These lights, which will turn on during the dark and turn off at dawn, will certainly hinder the activities of the vandals and will shine a light on their activities if they are silly enough to do anything during the night. I call on the Government to fund this important project.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.00 p.m.]: As Parliamentary Secretary for the Centenary of Anzac I thank the member for bringing this important issue before the House. I put on the record how disgusted I am that people would attack a memorial such as this, or indeed any memorial that is dedicated to the brave men and women who have served this country and have paid the ultimate sacrifice. I will make sure that, in the coming days, I will meet with the member for Myall Lakes to discuss the issue. I will do all I can to assist him. I thank him again for bringing this to the attention of the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): Order! I add my congratulations to the member for Myall Lakes for bringing this to the attention of the House. It is an issue that runs deeply within the veins of all members in the place.

TRIBUTE TO PABLO GRANA

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [6.01 p.m.]: I commend a local champion, Pablo Grana, who is the Assistant Principal at Mary MacKillop College in Wakeley and is now in his twentieth year of teaching in our local community. He is a very humble man who describes himself as "just a cog" and "a facilitator", but he is far more than that. Pablo is an incredibly valued member of his school community. I have had the wonderful opportunity of working with Pablo during my time as the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator at Freeman Catholic College in Bonnyrigg Heights. My relationship with Pablo spans 20 years through our involvement in New South Wales Combined Catholic Colleges Soccer. I came to know Pablo as a local coach when I was teaching at Patrician Brothers College, Fairfield. During this time I found Pablo to be very passionate about the students under his care, and especially those he was coaching in soccer.

Over the years I witnessed Pablo's kind nature towards all students under his care and his wonderful sportsmanship to opposing teams who played against his school at the time, Freeman Catholic College. Pablo is very well regarded amongst his peers in both Catholic and public education. I was delighted to learn that Pablo was the recipient of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney's teacher of the term award in term 4 of 2015. Pablo has described his leadership as being honest with himself and working towards improving himself. He is a firm believer that everyone should be treated with the respect and dignity they deserve, whatever the situation may be. He has stood by this sentiment ever since I have known him. Over the years Pablo has worked with students from all walks of life and from diverse backgrounds. Throughout this time he has always found a way to relate to the students and to put himself in their shoes. His compassion, understanding and thoughtfulness are what make him such a fantastic person to be around.

During my time as the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator at Freeman Catholic College I had the opportunity to work closely with Pablo as a fellow member of the college executive. It was at that point that I had the opportunity to see Pablo's phenomenal organisational skills in his capacity as the college's administration co-ordinator. It is no wonder that he is now the Assistant Principal of Mary MacKillop College at Wakeley.

What makes Pablo a holistic teacher is his ability to understand curriculum and apply it to the school settings in which the students are receiving instruction. Pablo does this in such a masterful way—it is amazing to watch—that students become engaged and eager to learn every step of the way under his instruction.

When I taught with Pablo I saw his amazing information technology [IT] skills and ability to convey those skills to students he was teaching. Pablo was one of the most respected teachers at Freeman Catholic College—former alumni always speak of Mr Grana with such high regard. This is why it comes as no surprise to me, and to former colleagues and students that Pablo was presented with this accolade, having personally understood the nature of the Mary MacKillop College at Wakeley. Pablo's personal experience has given him the opportunity to empathise and engage with students. On behalf of this House, all members and the wider Fairfield electorate, I thank Mr Pablo Grana for his tireless efforts and for going above and beyond the call of duty. I say to Pablo: You have earned this award 10 times over, my friend, and I look forward to seeing you soon.

KIAMA NETBALL ASSOCIATION FUNDING

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.06 p.m.]: As members of the House would be aware, I am always fighting for grants for sporting clubs and community groups throughout the Illawarra and South Coast. Recently I was delighted to be able to announce \$50,000 for the Kiama Netball Association to help upgrade its seven courts at the Kiama Leisure Centre. My sincere thanks go to Mayor Brian Petschler and Kiama Municipal Council for matching this grant dollar for dollar. Being on court last Saturday and seeing all the smiling and happy faces of players reminds me that these grants are not a cost to government; they are a worthwhile investment particularly in young people and young players. Indeed, on separate courts, the mayor and I were given the honour of blowing the whistle on the first game on the new courts. I may even bring that whistle into Parliament House, because it may be of use in this place.

It is appropriate that this major grant should be awarded in the year of the association's thirtieth birthday. On Saturday 12 March 2016 I was very pleased to attend the thirtieth anniversary dinner of the Kiama Netball Association at the Kiama Bowling Club. The Kiama Netball Association began on 15 February 1986 with 94 players in 10 senior teams. In 1987 there were 320 players across seniors, juniors and modified teams. In 1988 Kiama affiliated with the NSW Netball Association. In 1989 the first Kiama representative teams—12, 13 and 14 years—were entered into State Age Championship. In 1995 the 13 year representative team won the State Age Championship and was named the Kiama Independent Group 7 Sports Council Team of the Year. In 2001 the 14 year representative team won the State Age Championship division 3. In 2004 the 15 year representative team won State Age Championship division 3.

In 2007 the 13 year and 15 year representative teams won State Age Championship division 3. Other achievements included being the State Age March Past Champions, Senior Carnival Winners 2001, State League Runners-Up 2010, State League Runners-Up 2015 17s division, Campbelltown Carnival Winners 2015—15s white. In 2015 Kiama registered 866 members across ages five to adult. Kiama Netball Association has developed its own A and B badge umpires and is now regularly C badging its own umpires on its own competition games. In this respect I acknowledge umpires Alison Smith and Nicola Downing respectively. Over 30 years and one of the original supporters of the Illawarra Academy of Sport, Kiama Netball has had a number of its players make it into the academy program for netball, including Andrea Quarterman in 1988, Kate Boniface in 1993 and 1994, and Tonille Smith to name a few. Zoe Uphill grew up playing netball in Kiama and eventually made it all the way to the national competition, playing in the Commonwealth Bank Cup, which has since evolved into the ANZ Championship.

This year Kiama will be fielding four representative teams at the Netball NSW State Age Championships and has entered a team into the prestigious metro competition, held weekly at Netball Central at Homebush Bay. I thank president Rhonda Beedles and secretary Kerren Britton of Kiama Netball Association for their hard work and dedication in organising this celebration. Two more dedicated and amazing women one could not hope to meet. As is the case with the many sporting organisations that members of this place associate with, the efforts of volunteers are what make this organisation work. Without the dedication and commitment of volunteers there is no doubt that weekend netball games around the State would not take place.

The passion and drive of volunteers ensure that young people can take advantage of the opportunities that sporting associations offer. I also acknowledge the outstanding founding president, Val Bruncker, who was head of the Kiama Netball Association for 28 years. Val has been involved in a number of sporting associations

in Kiama. Recently I was delighted to present her with an achievement award for her valuable contribution to the administration of sport and sporting organisations in the electorate of Kiama. I congratulate Kiama Netball Association and wish it all the best on its thirtieth birthday. May it have many, many more.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.10 p.m.]: As a netballer the member for Kiama makes a great politician. His commitment to the Kiama Netball Association is unrivalled. I saw the member for Kiama's Facebook post about the great night he attended at the Kiama Bowling Club to celebrate the association's thirtieth birthday. What the member was actually celebrating was 30 years of dedicated community service by many volunteers. Netball has the highest rate of female participation of any sport in Australia, with good reason. It is an outstanding sport. It teaches great skills and builds teamwork and community. That is what the Kiama Netball Association has been doing for 30 years. I join the member for Kiama in acknowledging the outstanding qualities that are the backbone of associations like Kiama Netball Association. To Val Bruncker and the team that have made it such a special association, I offer my congratulations. I say a big thankyou on behalf of all of us who appreciate what they do.

CANCER COUNCIL DANCE FOR CANCER FUNDRAISER

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) [6.11 p.m.]: I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Cancer Council, Central Coast, to draw attention to the Stars of the Central Coast—Dance for Cancer fundraiser in which I will be a proud participant. Ten leaders from the Central Coast have been hand-picked to step out of their comfort zone to help fundraise and dance their way onto the stage at Laycock Street Theatre, Gosford, in a bid to raise \$100,000 for the Cancer Council NSW. The 2016 stars are me, Kyal Demmrich from *The Block*, Rabbit from Star FM, Mick Ostini, Georgia Page, Kylie Bagnall, Lucy Wicks, Sarah Ferman, Kerry Harman and Jodie Myers. Stars of the Central Coast is a gala fundraising event where local celebrities team up with a professional dancer, all in the name of entertainment. In a fresh, fun way the dance has a goal to raise valuable funds for the local community in the fight against cancer.

In 2014 in Australia 123,920 people were diagnosed with cancer. Sadly, my good friend Peter Cooley passed away on 17 February 2016 from pancreatic cancer, which he battled for well over a year. He was a confidant, a friend and a true believer. My former staff member and friend Dayle Walker was a victim of ovarian cancer. She is sadly missed by me, her family and her friends. So I will Dance for Cancer in April to raise money for research and to heighten awareness. New South Wales has the largest population and consequently the largest number of cancer cases and deaths of any State or Territory.

According to the Cancer Institute New South Wales, in 2010, 39,484 new cases of cancer were diagnosed in New South Wales alone. The overall number of new cancer diagnoses increased by almost 5 per cent compared with 2009. Males are 1½ times more likely to be diagnosed with cancer than females. Prostate cancer in men and breast cancer in women remain the most common cancers in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Lung cancer is almost twice as common in Aboriginal people than it is in non-Aboriginal people. Allowing for population size and age, New South Wales has the third highest rate of cancer, behind Tasmania and Queensland. Every day someone's life is touched by cancer. Every day someone needs that little extra support to get through the treatment, and that is why I am raising money for Cancer Council NSW on the Central Coast. To date I have raised over \$2,535, with my target of \$3,000 to be raised before 8 April.

Recently I hosted a fundraiser at Coco Banana Brazilian Churrasco in The Entrance, and I will organise a raffle to try to raise the remaining funds. My dance partner is Joelle, who is teaching me the bachata. Joelle previously finished second in the World Salsa Open in Puerto Rico, for Salsa Pro-Am. Originating in the Dominican Republic, bachata is typically slower than salsa and danced a lot closer. It has more feeling and there is more time to play with the music and moves, except when I do it. Over the past few months Joelle has been enormously patient and has been teaching me the moves for the bachata. I am currently doing two dance sessions and two gym sessions a week to prepare for the big event.

Last Saturday night was my first live performance in front of a crowd and thankfully I made no mistakes—it was a salsa night with champions, professionals and others so there was no pressure. It was very intimidating. The big finale will be on 8 April 2016 at Laycock Street Theatre, but unfortunately for the member for Hornsby the tickets are now sold out so he cannot get any tips. Like the member for Hornsby I have found the preparation very stressful and it has moved me well outside my comfort zone, but together all the stars of the Central Coast hope to raise \$100,000 for this great cause. I have made some good new friends in the process. I did not realise that dancing was so physically demanding. Even though my routine only goes for three minutes,

the extra gym sessions I am having are helping, particularly in lifting my dance partner. I asked why Joelle did not have to lift me during our performance, which I think is unfair. We hope to have a good night and we will raise money for this great cause.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.16 p.m.]: I acknowledge the member for Wyong and thank him for his work in raising much-needed funds for cancer research. I will also participate in the Cancer Council's fundraising event "Dancing with the Stars" and in the process expect to embarrass myself doing the modern jive. I am sure that the member for Wyong is a far better dancer than I will ever be. One thing I promise to do is to make the member look like a very good dancer. I thank the member for Wyong for what he is doing for his community and, more importantly, for the 130,000 Australians this year who will hear the fatal words that they have cancer. Unfortunately many lives are lost to cancer in this country and every dollar we raise takes us a step closer to defeating this insidious disease once and for all. I wish the member good luck on the night.

CANCER COUNCIL STARS OF THE NORTH FUNDRAISER

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.17 p.m.]: As a member of Parliament one is expected to have a wide skill set, whether it is public speaking, leadership or making tough decisions on behalf of one's local community. Dancing, however, is not usually a skill associated with politicians, although politicians have to be very quick on their feet. I am not that quick on my feet. Despite my distinct lack of dancing experience—which is the sum total of what I learned for my year 9 bush dance—I have decided to sign up for the Cancer Council's inaugural Stars of the North dancing event. The fundraising concept is similar to the television show *Dancing with the Stars*, and I will be paired with a dancing instructor and given a few months to practise a rehearsed dance routine.

I would like to thank the owner of the Belcastro School of Dancing, Jan Belcastro, for kindly offering me some dance lessons with one of her wonderfully talented instructors, Sophia Anicic—they do not know what they are in for. I can assure members that Sophia will have her work cut out for her if she is to make my dancing look good on stage in front of a packed auditorium, but I know that I am in good hands. Sophia is putting together a modern jive dance routine as we speak that even I, with my two left feet, should hopefully be able to complete. I will have to draw on all my limited dance experience, which includes year 9 line dancing and hitting the dance floor at Hornsby RSL on a Saturday.

Ms Kate Washington: That's not going to help.

Mr MATT KEAN: No, I do not think that is the same kind of dancing. The Stars of the North dancing event is of course about so much more than me or any of the other contestants showing off our newly acquired ballroom dance moves. It is about being part of the Cancer Council team to help raise funds and search for a cure to end this insidious disease. Last year my family, like so many other families across the nation, were touched by cancer when my father was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He was one of the lucky ones and is now in the clear. But so many other Australians are not so fortunate. Every dollar we raise takes us one step closer to beating this disease. Hopefully, having me embarrass myself will raise some money to go towards fighting cancer.

I acknowledge some of the other contestants who have signed on to compete in the inaugural Stars of the North dancing event, in particular my very good friend and the newly elected Federal member for North Sydney, Trent Zimmerman. He is the only person I want to beat in this event, and looking at his sporting track record I am quietly confident that I can. The other contestants include: Willoughby mayor Gail Giles-Gidney; Northern Sydney Cancer Centre representative Paula MacLeod; Olympic pentathlon competitor Ed Fernon—he is a Riverview old boy and probably knows what he is doing; local author Bernard Cohen; Tamara Le Boursicot from McGrath real estate; and Coey Li from St George Bank.

I am always thrilled to support Cancer Council's proactive work in the local community. They have a fantastic team made up of passionate members like Becky Dadswell, Monica Mikhael, Liz Hing and Jessica Green. They all do a great job in supporting cancer survivors in our local community and encouraging local residents to get behind a fun range of engaging fundraising activities. The Cancer Council has a broad range of fundraising initiatives throughout the year, such as Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, which is coming up in May; Pink Ribbon Day; Daffodil Day; and of course the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Relay for Life event, of which I am a proud patron.

I am proud to say that the Hornsby shire supports all of these days through generous donations and countless hours of volunteer service. In fact, the Hornsby shire ranks amongst the top council areas for unpaid volunteers who give back to their local community. As the local member of Parliament, it is a real pleasure to be able to join these hardworking volunteers and support them at as many fundraising events as possible. Supporting the Cancer Council is a real team effort in Hornsby. We have many volunteers from far and wide who gladly give up their precious time to help others in need.

For instance, Dr Yvonne McMaster is a tireless health advocate who supports a range of Cancer Council events in Hornsby and the lower North Shore. Yvonne is a dear friend of mine who is passionate about palliative care and improving medical care for terminally ill patients in need of additional care. Yvonne is of course one of many loyal volunteers who help out at Cancer Council events each year. I want to acknowledge just some of the many helpers who have helped to make these fantastic charity fundraising days possible.

The volunteers include Vedant Tijoriwala and his brother Rahul Tijoriwala, Robyn Twigg, Lyn Murphy, Rowena and Alan Clarke, entertainers Craig Reeve and Peter Kirkwood, Michael and Jonas Jakubek, Jim Marsh, Greg Timewell, and cancer survivor Phil Burge. There are also many schools, community groups and businesses that support the Cancer Council. The Rotary Club of Hornsby is another community group that supports the Cancer Council every year for Daffodil Day. Each year Hornsby Rotary president Gail Farr saves me an apron to join her and Rotary members, such as Bill Scott, Geoffrey Sell and Sivaraj Sagathavan, to sell Daffodil Day merchandise at Hornsby railway station. I look forward to supporting the Cancer Council again next month and thank all those who support the Cancer Council in any way they can.

WESTCONNEX

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [6.22 p.m.]: Tonight I share a story from one of my constituents, Mr Graeme McKay. I have spoken loudly and often in this place about the impacts of WestConnex, particularly for the people of Ashfield and Haberfield. But I want to share Graeme's story because we do not often hear the voices of citizens in this place. Graeme's moving story captures perfectly the destruction of a suburb for the WestConnex motorway. Graeme says:

I was barely four years old when my parents bought the rear of 21 Wattle Street in Haberfield. I would spend the next twenty or so years of my life there.

We knew many other families in the street: the Barneys, the Ippolitos, the Yakanos, the Martins, the Triggs, the Elliots, the Campagnas, the Whites, the Lettos and the Brasingtons.

Our parents didn't seem to worry too much about where we were, because we were usually in one of those backyards.

Both of our immediate neighbours were Italian, and much fruit and vegetables were passed over the fence.

Just make sure you kept the cricket ball or football out of their gardens!

Of course traffic was not a major concern. It was back in the days when kids walked to school. I can recall parents mowing the school lawns on weekends.

We'd ride our bikes without fear as we were so familiar with people in our community.

We'd meet up at Scott's Haberdashery or the HMD milk bar. You'd see someone you knew outside the MFC, or Moran Cato's or the newsagent.

On Friday afternoons, you'd play Rugby League at Algie Park where all the local kids formed two teams and it was on.

These were also great days of community spirit.

I love the suburb and the people.

Always have, always will.

But enough of memory lane. Fast forward to 2016.

WestConnex' effect on Haberfield will be devastating.

At this stage nothing is certain and there is little trust of the Government.

The heritage significance of Haberfield sounds good on paper, but that won't stand in the way of the Baird Government.

After all, it is imperative to connect the outer western suburbs with the CBD and Port Botany.

What a shame it falls short of the CBD by 4 kilometres, and misses Port Botany altogether.

My old home at 21A Wattle Street will be demolished, along with all the homes on that side of the street. That is half of the street I grew up in.

Then there's the homes in Walker Avenue, Bland Street, Alt Street, Parramatta Road, Wolseley Street, Northcote Street, Martin Street and Ramsay Street.

Some residents are living from day-to-day.

Will they lose their homes—yes, no, maybe, we changed our minds.

People can't live like that, especially the older folks.

And what of the homes that were acquired and are no longer needed?

People forced to leave their homes now find they didn't need to?

What a disgrace.

The reality here is that I don't know what will be left of my Haberfield community aside from memories.

Homes demolished, and for what?

So many residents uprooted.

I organised a number of community meetings with a solicitor who specialises in compulsory acquisition compensation.

What he said at the meetings and what was actually happening were vastly different matters.

I'm glad I was able to do something for my community. I care about my community.

Many come from non-English speaking backgrounds, some are elderly and some just don't understand why it's happening. Why would our government do this to us?

You would think that the Government would at least pay people decent compensation for their homes.

Yes, homes—Not just houses or property. People's homes.

Homes where people have lived many years, raised families, experienced great times, hard times, Christmas, weddings, parties and BBQs. Their homes have been a major part of it all.

No more chats over the back fence. Might even have to buy their own fruit and veg.

No more meeting up at the shops for a coffee.

Friends of many years may lose complete contact.

Where do the elderly folks go?

Perhaps into nursing homes that they weren't prepared for, many kilometres away from lifelong friends?

Then there's the homes that won't be acquired.

Those residents will be able to stay and enjoy the increased traffic, pollution, dust, noise and the loss of their property value and amenity.

The Baird Government would have you believe that this incrementally delusional project will connect our suburbs.

It will, in fact, destroy our communities.

When did we become so obsessed with being an economy, and forget about being a society?

This is our life, our home, our future. One we have worked hard to achieve.

What we are facing here is the destruction of Haberfield—not the homes, heritage or the parks—The government is destroying the people and community.

So sleep well, great and powerful leaders.

Haberfield isn't.

TWEED HEADS NAVAL TRAINING UNIT

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [6.27 p.m.]: I advise the House of an organisation within Tweed Heads, the TS *Vampire* Naval Cadet Unit. The unit was formed on 10 June 1972 and the inaugural parade was held on 17 June 1972, with a total of six instructors and 30 cadets under the command of Mr A. B. Smith. At the time the unit was located in the rowing club premises situated on the southern side of Boyd's Bay Bridge at Tweed Heads South. The unit steering committee negotiated the lease of the land at the old dry dock, Dry Dock Road, Tweed Heads South. The dry dock was commissioned in 1898. A Commonwealth permissive occupancy lease was granted by the Federal Department of Administrative Services on 1 March 1976 and the unit occupied these premises shortly thereafter.

Construction of the two-storey building took several years to complete due to a lack of funds. Once the roof was completed, the top deck came at various stages with each new commanding officer. TS *Vampire* is located on Crown reserve land and is held in trust by Tweed Shire Council for the Crown. The site is also held in trust by the Department of Land and Water Conservation as administrator for the Crown. TS *Vampire* was recognised as a training ship on 25 May 1974. Over the years several commanding officers have contributed to the unit: in 1972, A. B. Smith; in 1974, Lieutenant A. B. Smith; in 1978, Lieutenant Norm Barnett; in 1986, Lieutenant Peter Wadsworth; in 1991, Brian Olds; from 1993 to 2008, Gary Fisher, who was a long-serving member of the Tweed Heads NSW Police Force and is well respected; from 2008 to 2012, Jim Anderson; in 2012, Sub-Lieutenant Adam Antonini; from 2012 to 2015, Lieutenant Geoffrey Mike; and from 2015 to the present, Sub-Lieutenant Adam Antonini.

The 1st Platoon A Company 41st Battalion of the Royal New South Wales Regiment shares the premises with the cadets and has done so for the past nine or 10 years, providing a training venue for reservists for the Australian Army Reserve. The TS *Vampire* Naval Cadet Unit also participates in Anzac Day services and ceremonials at Coolangatta, Kingscliff, Cudgen and Tweed for the dawn services and main parades. It does an excellent job and it is great to have young people learning skills that they normal do not experience. There are a great bunch of senior cadets. My son completed four years in the Australian Navy Cadets, which has had a tremendous effect on his life and put him on a really strong path.

TS *Vampire* cadets participated in various marches for communities such as the Banora Point festival and street festivals. Presently five staff members and 36 cadets are enrolled on the register of TS *Vampire*. Apart from highlighting their great work in this matter in Parliament, they have started a petition to lobby the Government—I will support them—for funding to buy kayaks and stand-up paddleboards. With that type of equipment they will be able to attract more young people. They take the kids off the street and give them a sense of purpose, direction and, more importantly, a great sense of self-esteem.

As a parent of a cadet I know that it is hard to iron the Navy whites and get the creases in the right place. The instructors at TS *Vampire* are retired Navy service people. They go out of their way and volunteer their time. When I was the general manager of the great Tweed Heads Bowls Club I noted that half the kitchen was renovated, together with many other bowls clubs. It is a great community group that needs this Government's support. I will lobby extraordinarily hard on their behalf. The Army Reservists also do a great job. We have one of the strongest Navy training units in New South Wales based in Tweed Heads. I am 100 per cent for the Tweed and 100 per cent for TS *Vampire*.

WESTMEAD, WENTWORTHVILLE AND CONSTITUTION HILL FACILITIES

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [6.32 p.m.]: I pay special tribute to those who work, live and play in the great suburbs of Wentworthville, Westmead and Constitution Hill. Everyone in this place would be aware of the brilliant medical practice and research that occurs at Westmead Hospital. However, there are also a fantastic number of local schools in this part of the Seven Hills electorate. Darcy Road Public School in Wentworthville celebrated Harmony Day, as we did in this House, on Monday 21 March. The students at Darcy Road had the choice of wearing orange—the colour associated with Harmony Day—or their national dress.

I know that this would have been a wonderful event and a vibrant display of colour and heritage. With the near 600 students at Darcy Road coming from more than 44 different nationalities, it would have been a sight to see. Eighty-six per cent of students at the school come from non-English speaking backgrounds, but at Darcy Road they all come together to learn and grow as young Australians in the great electorate of Seven Hills. I think it is fantastic to see our young people—indeed, our leaders of tomorrow—embracing each other's nationalities in mutual celebration. A poster colouring activity was conducted for Harmony Day, with the best posters displayed at Darcy Road Public School. On the last day of this term the kids at Darcy Road will lay

wreathes assembled by staff and parents for Anzac Day. I commend the principal at Darcy Road, Miss Trudy Hopkins, for ensuring that the next generation understands the sacrifices made by those who have served our nation and the importance of defending our values and way of life, no matter the cost.

At the other end of Darcy Road is Catherine McAuley, a brilliant Catholic secondary school for girls at Westmead. This year Catherine McAuley is celebrating its golden jubilee after opening its doors to young women in February 1966. The celebrations will be led by principal Ms Laetitia Richmond and 2016 school captains Annya Reshty and Annalise Awkar. The first event of many this year was the opening school mass, which occurred at the beginning of term. All events are leading up to the Mercy Day mass on 2 September and Back to McAuley Day on 6 November this year. I congratulate school captain Annya, who placed second in the final of the public speaking competition run by the Catholic Schools Debating Association. It is an outstanding achievement.

Next door to Catherine McAuley is Parramatta Marist High School, the oldest Catholic school in the country. Whilst rich in history, Parramatta Marist has its vision firmly set on the future and is preparing boys through an outstanding curriculum as well as wonderful services and support. The school is providing a world-class education for young men in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields, known as STEM subjects. Under the leadership of the principal, Brother Patrick Howlett, and assistant principal, Gavin Hayes, a STEM lab has been built as well as a digital fabrication workshop for projects using 3D printers, laser cutters and computer-controlled milling machines for working with metal. The project-based learning approach has improved the school's already strong academic results even more.

It is no surprise that Parramatta Marist ranked sixth in the State for the ratio of its maths students scoring 90 per cent or higher in the 2015 Higher School Certificate exams. The school is also currently preparing a light installation for the Vivid Festival that is taking place in Sydney at the start of winter. Many members of this place would find it hard to believe that year 9 students would be capable of building and testing drones, mechatronic hands and voice-controlled systems, but that is the type of great work happening at Parramatta Marist. Wentworthville is a place well and truly on the move, with works underway at Wentworthville railway station as part of the Government's Transport Access Program. The work includes the installation of four new lifts and stairs with canopies for commuters to stay dry. Most importantly, the station will be accessible to those with disabilities. The people of the great suburbs of Westmead, Wentworthville and Constitution Hill are great people in the great electorate of Seven Hills. I commend them to the House.

BERNIE BANTON FOUNDATION

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [6.37 p.m.]: I recently had the good fortune to meet with and talk to Mr Rod Smith and Ms Karen Banton from the Bernie Banton Foundation. As members are aware, the Bernie Banton Foundation was established because Mr Bernie Banton had found his journey with asbestos-related illness to be full of struggle and battle simply to get straightforward information and answers as well as access to support services. He did not want others to go through the same thing. Rather than offer my own clumsy explanation of the foundation, I offer this from the home page of the Bernie Banton Foundation website:

The Bernie Banton Foundation is a NSW registered, apolitical not for profit organisation with authority to operate in all Australian states and territories offering awareness, education and advocacy relating to asbestos issues. The foundation also offers peer-based support and comfort to asbestos related disease (ARD) sufferers and their loved ones, Australia wide. We act locally though communicate globally with like-minded organisations in an effort to alleviate asbestos exposure and resultant suffering.

The website contains incredibly useful information about asbestos-related illnesses including legal help, social supports, illness and disease information, medical information, educational units of work, different treatments available, new medical and clinical trials, social media links, and forums and discussion pages. Of course, it also includes Karen Banton's story about Bernie's early symptoms and diagnosis, which she has called *One in a Million*. It is a story everyone should read. In recognising the terrific work of the Bernie Banton Foundation I need to offer an apology and explanation regarding some comments that I made in a debate in this Parliament in August 2015. When I am wrong I have no problem in acknowledging it and saying I am wrong. In August 2015 this Parliament dealt with a number of amendments to workers compensation legislation. During question time on 5 August, prior to the bill being introduced, the Minister, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, read testimony from the Bernie Banton Foundation regarding changes to the Board of the Dust Diseases Board. The testimony stated:

Bernie Banton Foundation supports any initiative that will streamline the application process for an eligible sufferer of asbestos related disease, or indeed any "dust" disease, without lessening any of the benefits or services currently in place.

The fact the proposed Advisory Committee will for the first time give victims support organisations a direct input on how victims are helped can only be seen as a positive move. The Government is to be applauded for this initiative.

The comments from the foundation were spot on. They were a clear and direct reflection of the work of the foundation and the aspiration that it seeks to offer those facing asbestos-related diseases. But what the Minister did not tell the House at that time, nor did he explain to the House at any time during or after the debate, was that he had in fact asked for feedback and comment from the foundation without actually releasing to them or showing them the bill at that time. So these comments from the foundation were an excellent summary of their thoughts and feeling toward any reform proposed as an improvement.

Eight days later the Legislative Assembly was dealing with amendments that had been made to the bill in the upper House. The Minister again made reference to the foundation without clarifying that he had sought comment from them without actually showing them the bill. However, by now the bill was of course a public document and the Bernie Banton Foundation, in particular Mr Rod Smith, had indeed read the bill in great detail. To their credit they had contacted various members of Parliament to provide ideas and suggestions for amendment to improve the quality of the bill. However, when the amendments were being dealt with in the Legislative Assembly and given that the Minister had again failed to recognise the reality of how he had engaged with the foundation I made comments that quite frankly read poorly in the black and white of *Hansard*. At that time I said:

The Minister referred to the Bernie Banton Foundation. Quite frankly, Bernie would be rolling over in his grave not only today but also yesterday and the day before. Members of the Bernie Banton Foundation have recognised that they have not seen the bill, they have not read the bill and they do not understand the bill ...

In regard to my comments about Bernie rolling over in his grave, words that Ms Karen Banton took offence to, I apologise unreservedly. I did not intend offence. I am truly sorry. In regard to the comments that the foundation had not read the bill, that may have been accurate to say on 5 August during question time or indeed on 6 August when the bill was first introduced, but by 7 August the foundation had indeed digested the bill in detail and participated successfully in lobbying for amendments that were made by 13 August. Thus my comments made on 13 August were factually incorrect.

Overall this is a broad and stark reminder to members of the responsibility that we all share in making comment or speech in this place. It is also a reminder of the careful manner in which members of this place should access and use the words and endorsements of external organisations. By that I mean that transparency and honesty in establishing the context is indeed everything. Finally, I offer this plug: The foundation receives no ongoing government or union funding, relying upon personal donations, fundraising and corporate sponsorship. I encourage everybody to give.

MALIBU BOATS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [6.42 p.m.]: Malibu Boats is famous for building ski and wakeboard boats, also known in the United States as tow boats. Malibu has factories on both sides of the US, in Tennessee and in California. Their Australian home is in Albury, where work commenced in 1995. The original owner struck a licensing arrangement with Malibu to use their research and product development here in Australia. Eventually the American parent acquired the Australian operation. Now there are plans to expand with a view to taking Malibu Boats throughout Asia, building them in Albury.

Albury was chosen as the Australian manufacturing site because of its strong transport infrastructure—rail, air and road. Boats are delivered by road freight and Albury is ideally located to service customers in the principal markets of Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. Malibu has 65 staff in its Albury factory, where the general manager is Mr Price Taylor. Mr Taylor gives three reasons for basing manufacturing in Australia: first, quality boats can be built here; second, Australian water sports enthusiasts like Australian-made boats; and third, at the moment there is a strong exchange rate advantage with the lower Australian dollar making it more than competitive to buy an Australian-made boat. Malibu Boats has 35 per cent of the world market for these sports boats. In Australia that proportion rises to 75 per cent of the market compared to imported boats in this category. Malibu at Albury is literally keeping the imports away, maintaining manufacturing jobs in this country.

As with all industries, there are emerging trends. Dedicated water ski boats remain very popular in Australia and account for one-third of the local Malibu output. Skiing has not succumbed to newer water sports. The remaining two-thirds of their boats are designed to be more versatile, catering for skiers, wakeboarders and surfers. But it is this last sport where the trend is heading, says Price Taylor. These boats put out a wave that can be ridden by a person standing on a surfboard. This represents quite a shift in thinking. Currently there is the problem that it is mum and dad who put up the money to buy a water sports boat, but the risk of injury might prevent them from really getting the most out of their acquisition. So it is the skiing and wakeboarding children who tend to enjoy the sports side of things more than their parents. But surfing this new kind of wave is a sporting activity which is gentler on the ageing body.

Malibu has developed what it calls its "surf gate". This produces an endless, surfable wave up to around one metre in height. You can also choose on which side of the boat the wave will be generated, thus catering to the needs of different surfers and their stance on the board. Now the whole family can get in the water and use a power boat for a range of activities. You no longer just pay the money and watch younger ones have all the fun. What surprised me on a tour of the Malibu factory in Albury was the important role of new technology in sports boating. Many controls are now placed on a touchscreen, and this is where you will also find the owner's manual. The boat can be optioned to have a reverse camera, which lets the person steering the boat see what the skier or boarder is up to behind his or her back. Adjustable ballast systems keep the boat stable; this means you do not have to compel people to sit in specific seats to keep the boat balanced. A high level of customising is possible, with theatre-style LED lights and sound systems. Some Malibu boats will hold up to 17 people, so the boat itself becomes an important part of a day out on the water.

Price Taylor says what drives the company is consumer demand for new and improved technologies. They want to keep ahead of the competition, watching the automotive industry in particular to find new technologies that can be adapted to their boats. At one level, this is simply a good news story about a factory in my electorate, but that would be to miss much of what this is about. Regional New South Wales presents terrific opportunities to manufacturers. In Albury, Malibu is not just taking its product to the world; it is dominating its market. Land is inexpensive compared to establishing a business in the capital cities.

Transport infrastructure is excellent in my electorate—and improving even further due to the efforts of this Government. Indeed, re-engineering of another section of the Riverina Highway, which previous governments found too difficult and costly to touch, is nearing the end of its first stage, with dramatic improvements in safety and comfort for road users. A factory like Malibu helps keep the local workforce in touch with international thinking. When Malibu's engine supplier, Ford-Indmar, wanted to test its engines in a saltier environment, they came to the Albury region due to the higher salinity of our lakes. So when members want a boat, come to Albury—the home of manufacturing and innovation excellence.

ARMENIAN AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.47] p.m., by leave: I have spoken in this place a number of times before about the plight of Armenians, mindful of the many Australians of Armenian heritage who live in and around my electorate of Davidson. Next month marks the 101st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Following the significant centenary commemorations last year it is important not to lose sight of this occasion, which has been formally recognised in this Parliament a number of times. We remember it also with the monument on the level 9 rooftop garden in memory of the Armenian Genocide. While those alive today did not personally experience the genocide, its effects live on with many people of Armenian heritage who now call Australia home.

In a similar vein, but in more recent memory, many people mourn and honour the victims of the anti-Armenian Azerbaijani attacks in Sumgait and Baku from 1988 to 1990. The February 1988 anti-Armenian rallies through Azerbaijan gave way to waves of ethnically motivated violence, death and destruction. Consequently, Azerbaijan's Armenian community all but disappeared, with thousands displaced, culminating in a war involving the people of Nagorno Karabakh, otherwise known as Artsakh. I understand that war resulted in almost 30,000 dead on both sides. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were forced to flee their homes. To this day, justice and resolution continues to be sought on behalf of many of those who lost their lives or were displaced by this violence.

Despite an official ceasefire occurring in Nagorno Karabakh in 1994, tensions and border skirmishes have continued in the region. Many displaced Armenian families have sought refuge, including in New South Wales. They are now making vital contributions to our society. In memory of such tragic events, I am proud to support the Armenian Australian community, which includes numerous constituents in the electorate of Davidson. As we have seen recently in Syria, humanitarian dangers to Armenians and other persecuted groups continue to be real. While it is important to promote tolerance, justice and democratic freedom, recognising and remembering the past will help to ensure that dark historic events are not repeated. I pay tribute to those assisting to these ends. They include many within the local Armenian community, such as the Armenian National Committee of Australia, and external supporters such as the inspirational Baroness Caroline Cox, a member of the United Kingdom's House of Lords and long-time humanitarian worker. We can all contribute towards more positive outcomes for the future.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.51 p.m. until
Tuesday 3 May 2016 at 12 noon.**
