

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 5 May 2016

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Bills

CRIMES (SERIOUS CRIME PREVENTION ORDERS) BILL 2016

CRIMINAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (ORGANISED CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY) BILL 2016

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report messages from the Legislative Council returning the Crimes (Serious Crime Prevention Orders) Bill 2016 and the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Organised Crime and Public Safety) Bill 2016 without amendment.

The SPEAKER: The House will now proceed to Government business.

CRIMES (DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL VIOLENCE) AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2016

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) (10:11): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016. Reducing domestic violence reoffending is one of the Premier's top priorities for New South Wales. Domestic violence is a complex issue and delivering on that priority requires a significant effort across all of government. As the Attorney General of New South Wales, I have been working with my ministerial colleagues, in particular, the Premier, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Justice and Police, and the Minister for the Prevention Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, to improve the way in which the New South Wales justice system responds to domestic violence. I am committed to ensuring that our laws in this area provide the best possible protection for victims of domestic violence that will lead to the least traumatic and stressful experience for those victims throughout our court system.

This is the second bill I have introduced this year with those vital objectives in mind. In March I was proud to introduce model laws to implement the New South Wales component of the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme. In passing those model laws, New South Wales became the first jurisdiction to give effect to the scheme to ensure that domestic violence perpetrators are held accountable across the nation. Under the scheme, apprehended domestic violence orders [ADVOs] issued in New South Wales will automatically be recognised and enforced across the nation, removing the need for victims to register their ADVOs in a court of the new jurisdiction to have them enforced and to protect them when moving interstate. I recently returned from a meeting of the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council, the membership of which includes the Ministers responsible for law and justice from each State and Territory and the Commonwealth, and the New Zealand Government. The council assists the Council of Australian Governments [COAG] in promoting best practice in law, criminal justice and community safety.

At that meeting I called on my State and Territory colleagues to fast-track their commitment to adopt the model laws, as New South Wales has, in order to drive the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme into reality. Today I am introducing another bill to significantly improve the operation of our domestic violence legislation and the protections it offers to victims of domestic violence. The amendments in this bill implement the recommendations of the statutory reviews conducted by the Department of Justice of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007, and of chapter 9A of the Coroners Act 2009 relating to the Domestic Violence Death Review Team. I tabled both statutory review reports in Parliament yesterday. The Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act and chapter 9A of the Coroners Act are key parts of the New South Wales legislative framework for addressing domestic violence.

The primary objectives of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act are to, firstly, ensure the safety and protection of all persons who experience or witness domestic violence; and, secondly, reduce and prevent violence by a person against another person where a domestic relationship exists between those persons. The Act aims to achieve those objectives by empowering courts and, following reforms introduced by this Government in May 2014, senior police to make apprehended domestic violence orders [ADVOs]. An ADVO is a civil order that allows an immediate response to domestic violence, prioritising the safety of the victim. A civil ADVO scheme was first introduced in New South Wales in 1982 and was continuously refined and improved until the current Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act was passed with bipartisan support in 2007. Today ADVOs remain a key tool of the justice system to protect victims of domestic violence.

The primary objective of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team, as set out in chapter 9A of the Coroners Act, is to examine domestic violence related deaths with a view to reducing the incidence of such deaths in New South Wales and to promote improvements in systems and services. The team is convened by the State Coroner, Michael Barnes, and brings together key government agencies, non-government organisations and sector experts. Both statutory reviews concluded that the policy objectives of the respective Acts remain valid and that their terms mostly remain appropriate for securing those objectives. However, the reviews did make recommendations to improve the way the New South Wales justice system responds to domestic violence.

The Government supports all the recommendations of both statutory reviews. To the extent the recommendations of the reviews require legislative changes, they are implemented in this bill. In giving effect to those recommendations, this bill will expand the availability of ADVOs and give courts and police greater flexibility in the ADVO process to ensure they can offer the best protection and support to victims. In relation to the Domestic Violence Death Review Team, the bill will further enhance the team's role in reducing domestic violence in New South Wales by expanding its membership and reporting every two years to allow the team to fulfil its legislative function to the highest possible standard and better facilitate interagency collaboration.

The bill also makes an amendment to introduce plain English ADVOs, as announced by this Government in November last year. ADVOs are being rewritten in simple language tailored to the individual, removing the complex legal language found in current ADVO forms. This reform means that domestic violence perpetrators will no longer have an excuse for not understanding or complying with ADVOs and victims will better understand the protections afforded to them.

Before turning to the detail of the bill, I take this opportunity to thank the many stakeholders from government and non-government sectors who contributed significant time and expertise to the development of these important pieces of work. A list of all stakeholders who provided input to the statutory reviews is set out in appendices to each review. The statutory review process also involved consideration of the numerous reviews that have taken place in recent years, including the Australian and NSW Law Reform Commission 2010 report, "Family Violence—A National Legal Response", which I will refer to as the Family Violence report, and the 2012 report of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues, "Domestic violence trends and issues in NSW".

In short, consultation on these reforms has been detailed, considered and extensive. It was important to get these changes right. I now turn to the detail of the bill before the House. The bill is divided into two schedules. Schedule 1 sets out amendments to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 arising from the statutory review of that Act and plain English apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] forms. Schedule 2 sets out amendments to chapter 9A of the Coroner's Act 2009 arising from the statutory review of the provisions relating to the Domestic Violence Death Review team.

I will first address the amendments to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act in schedule 1 to the bill. The bill amends the objects of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act to acknowledge the particular impact of domestic violence on Indigenous persons; those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; those from the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities; older persons; and persons with disabilities. This was also a recommendation of the family violence report.

Clauses 1 to 5 and 8 of the bill amend key definitions regarding who can get an ADVO. For example, the Act currently allows a person to apply to the court for an ADVO where the person is in or has been in a domestic relationship with the defendant. "Domestic relationship" is defined in section 5 of the Act. The bill expands this definition so that the victim's current partner can also seek an ADVO if they are being harassed by the victim's ex-partner. Currently this kind of relationship and this kind of availability is not covered. Perpetrators are often possessive and may behave threateningly towards a victim's new partner. This change will ensure that everyone who is at risk has the legal protection of an ADVO.

The statutory review recommended—and this bill introduces—a number of reforms relating to when a person can get an ADVO. Importantly for victims of domestic violence, the ranges of offences that are categorised

as domestic violence offences for which an ADVO may be sought are to be expanded. Currently the Act nominates 55 existing criminal offences, which, when committed or attempted in the context of a domestic relationship, are grounds for seeking an ADVO. This bill expands that list to include any other New South Wales criminal offence or offence under the Commonwealth criminal code when committed in a domestic relationship and intended to coerce or control a victim or cause them to be fearful. For example, the Commonwealth offence of using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence—such as sending abusive text messages—will now be considered a domestic violence offence when committed in a domestic relationship and, therefore, becomes grounds for seeking an ADVO and obtaining its protection.

In this way the Act will, for the first time, recognise the very broad range of physical and non-physical behaviours that can constitute domestic violence. Expanding the range of offences in this way also recognises that at its core domestic violence is about controlling behaviours and constitutes any behaviour that is coercive or engenders fear in a domestic relationship. This change was also a recommendation of the family violence report. In addition, the bill adds some relevant offences that were missing from the existing list of 55 criminal offences and also includes in the definition of "domestic violence offence" any New South Wales or Commonwealth offence arising from substantially the same set of circumstances as one of the offences on the list. This reform will also have the effect of expanding the types of offences recorded as domestic violence offences on a perpetrator's criminal record.

The bill also expands when a person can get an ADVO by revising the threshold for making an ADVO. Currently, under section 16 (1) of the Act before making an ADVO the court has to be satisfied that the person has reasonable grounds to fear, and in fact fears, the commission of a personal violence offence against them by the defendant. Section 16 (2), however, permits the court to make an ADVO without being satisfied that the person in fact fears the relevant conduct if that person is a child or is suffering from an appreciably below average intelligence function or where there is a history of personal violence.

The bill amends section 16 of the Act to allow the court to make an order for any other person in need of protection without needing to be satisfied that that person in fact fears the relevant conduct. This is a vital reform as we know victims are often reluctant to tell police that they are afraid of their partner due to concerns about reprisals. However, an ADVO made under this section will be limited to the standard orders set out in section 36 of the Act, which already constitute a criminal offence. This amendment will allow courts to make an ADVO to protect a victim who may be reluctant to express fear due to concerns about retaliation, while ensuring that they are not subject to intrusive orders they do not want.

The bill amends section 48 of the Act in relation to ADVOs to protect children. Currently, section 48 of the Act provides that only a police officer may make an application for an ADVO if the person for whose protection the order would be made is a child. Stakeholders stated that reluctance in certain communities about approaching and involving police is delaying and sometimes even dissuading people with children from seeking otherwise appropriate ADVO protection. The Act is accordingly being amended to clarify that the requirement in section 48 (3) for police to appear on behalf of a child applies only where the child is the sole person for whom protection is sought. This will clarify that women and men with children can make private applications for an ADVO, in the same way that women and men without children can. Importantly, the bill retains the court's discretion to refer any application involving a child to police at any time during proceedings, where it would be in the best interests of the child to do so.

The bill makes a number of procedural amendments to the Act to clarify and streamline its provisions. The bill amends section 32 of the Act to clarify when a provisional ADVO remains in force. A provisional ADVO is a type of urgent interim ADVO made by an authorised officer or by a senior police officer. This amendment addresses concerns raised in the statutory review where a final ADVO has been made but not yet served on the defendant, but the 28-day limit on a provisional ADVO has expired, which can leave the victim without the protection of an ADVO for that short window. This amendment closes that gap.

The bill inserts a new section 57A into the Act to allow the court to proceed to hear and determine an application for a final apprehended violence order [AVO] even if the defendant and person seeking protection are not present, provided that the court is satisfied that the requirements for service have been met and it is in the interests of justice to do so. This amendment is consistent with the court's existing power to make interim orders in the absence of both parties in certain circumstances. The bill inserts a new section 41A into the Act to prohibit the defendant in an application for an ADVO from personally cross-examining any child. This amendment formalises the existing Local Court of NSW Practice Note for Domestic and Personal Violence Proceedings, which states that children cannot be questioned by an unrepresented defendant and may only be questioned by a person appointed by the court who is an Australian legal practitioner or other suitable person. This is an important reform that will help the most vulnerable of people appearing before our courts—our children and young people—so they do not feel even more intimidated or re-traumatised by these proceedings.

The bill amends section 39 of the Act to expand the list of offences for which the court is required to make an AVO on a guilty verdict or guilty plea. It also clarifies that the court is not required to make an AVO if it is satisfied that a final AVO is already in place against the defendant. The bill also amends section 40 of the Act to allow evidence admitted in the District Court or Supreme Court in the hearing for a serious charge to subsequently be admitted in the Local Court and Children's Court in a related ADVO application, where the ADVO is remitted back for final determination. This will ensure that, where an interim ADVO has been made on a charge for a serious offence that does not result in a conviction, victims are not required to give evidence twice for a final ADVO, which often results in double handling and leads to delay in matters, which leads to trauma and revisitation of all the very difficult things that lead people to the circumstance of being before the court.

The NSW Police Force submitted to the statutory review that, while it may appear as the applicant and obtain orders for the protection of the victim, an application can subsequently be made to vary or revoke the order without notice to it. This may result in defendants coercing the victim into consenting to inappropriate applications for variation or revocation. Section 72 of the Act is accordingly being amended to provide that the Commissioner of Police must be notified of any application made to revoke or vary an ADVO which was originally sought by police and the commissioner must be given standing to appear in relation to the matter. The amendments will also provide that, where a person applies to vary or revoke an ADVO that was initiated by police and one of the protected persons is a child, the application requires leave of the court before such an application can be heard.

These changes maintain the safeguards for children and adult victims who may be coerced into consenting to inappropriate applications for variations and revocations by maintaining the need for police involvement to ensure the best interests of the child are always paramount. With the passing of this bill, sections 72 (5) to (8) of the Act will be repealed so that a defendant can no longer apply for an ADVO to be revoked after it has expired. Those provisions were inserted into the Act to ameliorate the effect of other pieces of legislation, specifically those governing licensing of firearms and other weapons. This is because, for 10 years following an ADVO's expiry, a person who was subject to it could not hold a firearms licence or a prohibited weapons permit.

The insertion of these provisions meant that a defendant was able to revoke an expired ADVO and therefore become eligible to apply for a licence or permit as though the ADVO had never existed. The statutory review considered that the ability to revoke an expired ADVO in order to avoid the consequences flowing from the record of that order's existence is anomalous, unique and undesirable. The Act currently lists a range of possible conditions that the court may wish to make in an ADVO including, for example, location restrictions and restrictions on approaches to the victim when under the influence of alcohol and drugs. A prohibition on attempting to locate the protected person is not currently included in the list of potential conditions. Including this prohibition was a recommendation of the Family Violence report.

The statutory review also recommended redrafting the costs provisions of the Act to clarify when costs orders may be made against police officers in response to the Supreme Court's decision in *Constable Redman v Willcocks*. This decision considered the complexities that arise between section 99 of the Act, which allows for costs orders against police officers only where the police officer made the application knowing that it contained matter that was false or misleading in a material particular, and the provisions in the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 (NSW), which, pursuant to sections 211 to 218, do not require these exceptional circumstances where the procedural misconduct is proven. The bill accordingly creates a standalone provision governing the award of costs in ADVO proceedings, without reference to other legislation. The provision limits costs in ADVO proceedings against police unless the court is satisfied that:

- (a) The police officer made the application knowing it contained matter that was false or misleading in a material particular, or
- (b) The police officer has deviated from the reasonable case management of the proceedings so significantly as to be inexcusable.

The new section 99A will also set out certain situations that alone will not give rise to an award of costs against police, such as where the victim does not turn up to court or gives unfavourable evidence. This bill makes a number of amendments to improve the interaction between ADVOS and family law orders, which are made by the Family Court. Consistent with the Family Violence report, section 50 of the Act is being amended to provide for a regulation-making power to prescribe the ADVO application form. The form will require applicants to indicate whether family law proceedings are on foot and whether parenting or property orders have been made, and to provide the terms of any order to the court. These changes will ensure that New South Wales courts have access to information on all relevant Family Court orders, which may in some cases conflict with ADVOS.

Consistent with the Family Violence report, the bill amends section 37 so that applicants are also required to inform the court of any existing or pending family law property orders, and that judicial officers are required to inform the applicant of this obligation. This ensures that any New South Wales court property orders are consistent with orders made by the Family Court. Finally, the bill introduces a new section 40A into the Act to

give the Children's Court jurisdiction to make an ADVO where care proceedings are before it and are not related to concurrent criminal proceedings in another jurisdiction. The amendments will allow the Children's Court to make an ADVO with the child the subject of the care proceedings named as the protected person, as well as jurisdiction to make an ADVO to protect that child's siblings and any adult who is affected by the same circumstances.

The amendments also extend the jurisdiction of the Children's Court to allow it to vary or revoke any existing ADVO, on the application of a party or its own motion, where care proceedings are before the court and where the circumstances justify making the order. The Secretary of the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services and the Commissioner of Police will be notified and given the right of appearance before the Children's Court. These reforms implement the Family Violence report recommendation which aims to avoid parties being involved in multiple court proceedings arising from similar facts or circumstances. The bill also gives effect to the Government's plain-English ADVO reforms announced in November last year by amending sections 36 and 50 of the Act. The bill applies these reforms to both ADVOs and apprehended personal violence orders, together referred to as apprehended violence orders, or AVOs.

The Department of Justice has worked with the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Behavioural Insights Unit to develop plain-English personalised AVOs designed to increase defendant understanding of, and compliance with, those orders. These changes are being introduced in response to issues identified by stakeholders who work directly with domestic violence defendants and victims. These stakeholders noted that some of the terms of the AVO orders are difficult for both parties to understand, as they often use detailed or legal language that people are not familiar with. There is strong evidence that improving the legibility of forms will improve compliance and the protection of victims.

The bill amends section 50 to allow the AVO application forms to be better regulated, and also amends section 36 of the Act relating to the standard orders to remove the word "molest" and replace the phrase "otherwise interfere with". Both phrases have sexual connotations and caused some defendants to distance themselves from the proscribed behaviour and the order. Section 36 now includes a standard order prohibiting a defendant from intentionally or recklessly damaging or destroying any property that belongs to or is in the possession of the protected person. This new standard order replaces the phrase "otherwise interfere with", providing both victims and defendants greater clarity with regard to their rights and obligations and further strengthening the AVO framework. Regulations are being drafted concurrently with these amendments and will prescribe the new plain-English AVO application forms.

I now turn to schedule 2 to the bill which implements the recommendations of the statutory review of chapter 9A of the Coroners Act relating to the Domestic Violence Death Review Team. Schedule 2, item [1] amends section 101B of the Coroners Act to align the definition of "domestic relationship" to the corresponding definition in the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. This is to ensure that all domestic violence related deaths are reviewed by that team. Items [3] to [5] amend the section governing the membership of that team. The Commissioner of Victims' Rights will be included on the team to recognise the critical role that victims' services play in domestic and family violence policy and service delivery. An Indigenous representative will also be added to the team to assist in identifying gaps in service delivery and to provide information, expertise and perspectives on issues particularly affecting Indigenous populations.

Finally, item [6] of the bill will mean that the Domestic Violence Death Review Team will in future report every two years to Parliament, rather than annually. The State Coroner submitted that the current requirement to report annually does not allow sufficient time for the development of evidence-based policy recommendations within a collaborative, interagency framework. It also does not allow sufficient time to adequately monitor the implementation of the team's past recommendations. Biennial reporting requirements will be consistent with similar bodies that report on qualitative and quantitative research, such as the NSW Ombudsman's reviewable child deaths report and the Australian Institute of Criminology's National Homicide Monitoring Program report.

Domestic violence is a serious crime and a personal violation of trust, all at once. The system for preventing and responding to such a multifaceted problem and challenge to our community, and our response to it, must be comprehensive. These laws must reflect the fact, as they will, that domestic violence is about a perpetrator controlling a victim—it is not just physical abuse. These changes must also be responsive and flexible to the feedback we get from those working in the team. This bill is the result of a comprehensive statutory review undertaken by this Government, including a thorough examination of the ADVO system, which is the primary mechanism through which individuals are protected from domestic violence in New South Wales.

The reforms expand the coverage of the Act to give police and courts greater flexibility in the ADVO process, with the result being increased safety and freedom from violence for victims and their children. Domestic violence in all its forms is completely unacceptable. This bill is further evidence of the Government's ongoing

commitment to both prevent domestic violence and provide victims with the support and protection they need in real time when it does occur. The Government will not resile from the strong commitment it has made to protect victims of domestic violence. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

ROADS AMENDMENT (TRANSPARENT TOLLING) BILL 2016

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Ryan Park, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (10:42): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I start by acknowledging my great friend and colleague the shadow Minister for Roads, Transport and Freight, the member for Strathfield, for the work she has done on drafting this bill. This is an important bill and the member for Strathfield has worked tirelessly to ensure that this policy development is a priority going forward. It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the Opposition to introduce the Roads Amendment (Transparent Tolling) Bill 2016. It is not evident under this Government, but transparency is the hallmark of good government. It is a sign of a government that is mature and confident enough to bring issues and proposals to the light of public debate and have a genuine discussion with the electorate on the whys and wherefores of a particular policy, change or project. A good government has the courage of its convictions. It is neither secretive, illusive nor furtive in its dealings. It is open to discussion, debate and deliberation with the public and confident that as a result of this openness, better policy is formulated.

No-one on this side of the House is an expert in everything and no department is expert at everything. Members of the community do not always get things right, but they do expect transparency around government decisions so they can understand why a government agency or Minister takes a particular view. This Government is wracked by a culture of secrecy. Just last week under freedom of information laws this Government refused to release 97 documents that were part of the Government's consideration on privatising Sydney Trains, one of the largest privatisation proposals in this State. This Government is considering this proposal but refuses to release a single document about the process.

This Government's arrogance is no better demonstrated than in the manner in which it is undertaking the roads portfolio in this State, something that the shadow Minister has exposed. Time and again this Government is infected with an arrogance and blind faith in its own agenda—unwilling to debate or argue its case with the people of New South Wales. There is no more glaring an example of this behaviour than the Government's proposal concerning WestConnex. Projects like WestConnex are some of the costliest infrastructure projects undertaken by the State. There are significant implications for the financial modelling used to underpin this project.

The New South Wales Government has concluded negotiations and renegotiations for several toll road contracts that will see private motorists and commercial road users pay billions of dollars in tolls over future decades. These negotiations were conducted in private and with no independent scrutiny or accountability. If we get these negotiations wrong, we stand to short-change the people of New South Wales at an unacceptable cost, and lock them and future governments into deals that are not in the interests of the State. When it comes to the public interest, this Government cannot be trusted. When it comes to tackling cost of living pressures, the Government goes absent without leave [AWOL].

Time and again it has demonstrated it will side with the interests of big money, the privileged few, over the broader public interest. It has shown its inability or unwillingness to stand up to the Federal Government's attacks on education and health. It seems that Liberal-Nationals governments simply do not understand cost of living concerns and they cannot be trusted to tackle these issues. New tolls—even reintroducing old ones abolished by Labor, like the one expected for the M4—will add thousands of dollars to the annual budget of families across Sydney, particularly those in Western Sydney. But this concern is lost on the Baird Government. This is why the Parliament needs to ensure some degree of transparency, some oversight of the way in which the Baird Government keeps going about raising the costs of living.

The Roads Amendment (Transparent Tolling) Bill 2016 attempts to shed more light and transparency on the ways in which tolling agreements and orders are made in the State. The bill is the result of consultation with the motoring groups and road transport industries, conducted largely by the shadow Minister. We convened a roundtable, surveyed the issues, identified problems and came up with acceptable solutions. Consultation, discussion and debate—all the hallmarks so sorely lacking in those opposite. This bill demonstrates Labor's

commitment to ensuring the negotiation process is transparent, that road users receive demonstrable value for their toll payments, and that the public interest is not being diluted or diminished.

Broadly, the bill ensures that future tolling agreements will not be concluded until they have been approved by an independent regulator as being in the public interest. Information to demonstrate that the public and consumer interest is protected is to be published. No future tolling agreements will allow above-CPI increases. All tolling agreements are to be reviewed by the Auditor-General, and a methodology is to be published justifying tolling differentials for heavy vehicles. I make it clear that while the bill does not impact existing contracts, it sets higher standards of transparency for future negotiations.

I will now explore some of the details of the bill. The bill requires that the Minister cannot enter into agreements or orders unless such agreements or orders have been investigated by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] and found to be in the public interest.

The Auditor-General will conduct performance audits of the agreements and orders after they have been made or amended. Tolls and charges will not be permitted to increase by more than the consumer price index [CPI] and reports of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal and the Auditor-General will be tabled in the Parliament and information on such matters published in the *Government Gazette* or other publicly available documents. This bill will ensure a higher level of scrutiny and better value for the public by making a number of revisions to part 13 of the Roads Act, which deals with arrangements surrounding road construction and operation in the State. Division 2, part 13 concerning tolls and charges will be amended to state clearly that the division provides for the scrutiny and transparency of orders requiring them to be approved by the Minister and published in the *Gazette* and by requiring further information about tolling under them to be made publicly available.

A new part 13A is referred to, which will provide for the further scrutiny of those ministerial orders through the requirement that IPART concludes that such orders are in the public interest and subsequently requiring the Auditor-General to conduct performance audits of the orders after they are made. Section 213 applies to tolls and charges for tollways. New part 1A will ensure that any order made under this section, and after the commencement of this subsection, that increased the toll beyond the increase in the consumer price index over the same period is void. Section 214 concerns tolls and charges for bridges, tunnels and road ferries. It will be amended in the exact fashion as the preceding section 213, namely, requiring orders to be approved by the Minister, published in the *Gazette* and increases above CPI again declared void.

Section 215 applies specifically to the Sydney Harbour Bridge and will be amended to declare that any order with charges exceeding the CPI is void. Section 215A will be amended by this bill to ensure that Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] publishes information that demonstrates the manner in which the public interest is protected by any order made by the preceding sections I have discussed. In particular, the new section requires the explanation of methodology used to give effect to a different tolling procedure published on or before the date on which the order commences and importantly ensuring that the Government Information (Public Access) Act applies to this section. Such information is to be made available at no cost. That requirement has been missing in relation to the WestConnex project, which is critical, given the Government's appetite for removing as much as it can from the purview of the Government Information (Public Access) Act.

Section 216 will be amended to cover instances of road ferries operated privately under contract with Roads and Maritime Services and inserts identical provisions to those in other sections in division 2. The bill will insert a new section 13A into the Act specifically to provide for the role of IPART and the Auditor-General in improving the transparency of tolling and ensuring greater public oversight of the decision-making process within government. The new part commences with a clear statement of intent that aims to improve scrutiny and transparency of future tolling agreements by, first, limiting any increase to CPI movements; secondly, requiring the public dissemination of such decisions; thirdly, requiring that IPART investigate any process relating to the public interest test; and, fourthly, requiring the Auditor-General to conduct performance audits of tolling agreements and orders and any subsequent amendments to them.

Division 1 new section 227A will provide definitions of IPART, performance audits, private sector entities, tolling agreements and tolling orders. Section 227B will ensure that the application of part 13A only applies to tolling agreements entered into, or proposed to be entered into, after the commencement of part 13A, and tolling orders published in the *Gazette* after the commencement of this part—an important provision. Whilst many in the community would like to review some of the decisions entered into by this Government—reflecting the amount of mistrust in the Baird Government when it comes to the public interest—we must ensure that the legislation does not present sovereign risk to current commercial agreements. The shadow Minister for Roads and Transport and I will not expose taxpayers to potential sovereign risk. That is not the way in which a sensible and alternative government should operate.

Division 2 new section 227C will require that any future tolling agreement must not be entered into, published, amended or replaced until IPART agrees that it is in the public interest to do so. Section 227D states specifically that the Minister must ensure that the Crown or a public sector agency does not enter into a tolling agreement that provides for tolls and charges to increase over any period in excess of comparable movements in the CPI. A new division 3 is added, with section 227F providing for the referral of any tolling agreement, order or amendment to IPART for its investigation. Section 227G deals with subsequent IPART investigations, providing that IPART is to carry out an investigation of a proposal, with the investigation having utmost regard to whether or not it is in the public interest, and any other matter specified by the Minister.

Clause 3 will ensure that any investigation is limited to the provisions of a proposed arrangement or amendment that relate specifically to the calculation and charging of tolls and charges for the duration of the agreement. Following the investigation, section 227H will concern itself with the subsequent report by IPART and how it is made public. It requires such a report to be produced within four weeks of the initial referral by the Minister. Clause 2 requires the identification within the report of the matters considered. Clause 3 will ensure that the Minister tables the report in both Houses of Parliament within one month of receiving the report. That does not always occur with this Government. Clause 4 provides that the Minister is to make the report publicly available free of charge by publishing it on the department's website, which provides transparency.

A new division 4 will provide for the Auditor-General to undertake performance audits, which is also critical for transparency. Section 227K provides that the Auditor-General is to report to the Minister and both Houses of Parliament on the results of the audit as soon as practicable after it is completed. Section 227L will enable the Minister to refer to the Auditor-General for a second or subsequent audit, with the Minister able to identify particular aspects of any tolling agreement for investigation. It concludes by requiring audits under that section to be reported back to the Minister and both Houses of Parliament as soon as practicable. Section 227M will ensure that material and information held by a private sector entity must be produced to an authorised person. Any failure to do so, without lawful excuse, will result in a maximum penalty of 50 penalty units.

Section 227N will ensure that the costs associated with a performance audit may be allocated to a private sector entity in such amounts as the Minister decides, and it provides for instances where such costs are expressly included within a specific tolling agreement. Section 227P provides that no compensation is payable by or on behalf of the State on account of the enactment or operation of these amendments, as well as clearly defining terms pertaining to this section. The Opposition supports the development of a modern road network for New South Wales. Tolls are an important part of the funding mix. We do not shy away from those difficult discussions that will help to provide for an efficient and high quality road network. The shadow Minister for Roads and Transport and I understand that more than most members in this place.

This bill is the product of lengthy consultation and discussions with industry and other interest groups. Labor believes that talking to the public and discussing proposals with various interested parties achieves better outcomes, better legislation and better policy, and the community is provided with a better outcome. This Government, which does not understand basic good governance, is running this State as though it were some two-bit operation, from the back of a van. The Opposition wants to force this Government to the table and insert some legislative provisions that will ensure that a future government—whether Labor or Liberal, whether directly or through an independent third party—looks to the impacts and costs of tolling, and ensures that any proposal or amendment is subject to the public interest test.

There are no contracts at risk. There is no risk to current road projects being developed. Those who wish to spend a significant amount of time in this House, regardless of which side of the House they are sitting, will have to go through more detailed and transparent processes when engaging contracts regarding tolling in the future. When it comes to tolling and its impact on motorists and the road transport economy, the Minister for Roads and Maritime Services and his Premier are the epitome of Dodgy Brothers Incorporated, or at least a peculiar version of Felix and Randall from the *Odd Couple*. Without any consultation, without engaging motorists, Baird Government Incorporated has plans to slug motorists thousands of dollars each year to get to work, drop the kids at school or sport, or simply get from one place to another.

For businesses, particularly small to medium enterprises, the costs are higher. I note that the member for Londonderry is in the Chamber. She is a strong advocate for her region and she knows that the M4 is a vital part of the business plans of many of these enterprises. The engine rooms of the New South Wales economy use that lifeline. We now have a plan that could seriously disrupt those plans and increase the cost of doing business. One thing that is certain is that if businesses pay more then the community pays more. The costs are not only rising but also outstripping cost of living rises by almost 4 per cent a year. That is almost double the consumer price index rise. This is great business and something for which the Premier is no doubt being patted on the back in boardrooms across the State. However, once again, what the Premier likes is not necessarily what the people of

Western Sydney like. We will have to live for generations with these agreements. Whether it is members on this side of the Chamber or on the other side, we will be dealing with this for decades.

The M4 deal was scrapped by the Labor Government in 2010, but the Coalition Government wants to reimpose it until 2060. That is 43 more years. I may be looking to retire from this place by then, and I am sure, Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be long retired. Our children and their children probably will still be paying a toll set decades before they were born. Once again, I commend the work of my colleague and friend the shadow Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight for her advocacy in this area. I look forward to continuing to present legislation, proposals and policies that ensure government transparency, particularly in an area that affects so many people. I look forward to the Government's support for this legislation. If it does not support it, it will demonstrate that it does not support transparency and fairness. The Opposition will ensure that every community knows that the Government is not sticking up for them, that it is in the pockets of major road providers, and that it is not acting in the interests of the community that all of them should represent.

Debate adjourned.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: General Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) having concluded, the House will now consider General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills).

Bills

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION (PUBLIC ACCESS) AMENDMENT (SYDNEY MOTORWAY CORPORATION) BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 25 February 2016.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (11:03): I strongly support the member for Strathfield's private member's bill, the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016 because I believe that openness and transparency are essential in government. As elected officials we work for the residents and taxpayers of New South Wales. Transparency enables citizens to hold governments to account with regard to how they spend taxpayers' money. Openness provides much-needed checks and balances against the misuse of government assets, finances and hard-earned taxpayers' dollars. This bill seeks to provide that information held by the Sydney Motorway Corporation may be accessed under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 [GIPA]. Despite its claims of being open, honest and transparent, the Baird Government has demonstrated unprecedented levels of secrecy and concealment since coming to office. Earlier this morning the shadow Treasurer and member for Keira spoke eloquently about this Government's poor track record on openness and transparency.

The abolition of the WestConnex Delivery Authority in 2015 and its replacement by the Sydney Motorway Corporation, which is now responsible for the delivery of the WestConnex project, is yet another prime example of the Baird Government's shielding itself from public scrutiny. The change from the WestConnex Delivery Authority to the Sydney Motorway Corporation is significant. This change established the corporation as a private company with only two shareholders: the Treasurer and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. The Baird Government has intentionally manipulated the corporation's structure in a tactical and strategic way to avoid transparency. This private company, which is entirely funded by taxpayers, is now beyond the scope of the Government Information (Public Access) Act, and therefore beyond the checks and balances applied to other government agencies.

Applications under the Government Information (Public Access) Act for information about the Sydney Motorway Corporation have been refused. One response refusing such an application said, "The Sydney Motorway Corporation Pty Limited is a private corporation and not a government agency." For a private corporation to be subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act, it must be explicitly included, and that is what this legislation seeks to do. The Government Information (Public Access) Act is an integral part of New South Wales's established system for public access to government information. It helps to maintain and advance a system of responsible and representative democratic government that is open, accountable, fair and effective. The Act achieves that by allowing information to enter the public domain, and that subsequently promotes open discussion of public affairs, enhances government, and contributes to positive and informed debate on issues of public importance. It informs the public about the operations of agencies and, in particular, their policies and practices for dealing with members of the public. It also ensures effective oversight of the expenditure of public funds.

Unlike members opposite, I am proud that in New South Wales we have legislation that gives members of the public a legally enforceable right to access government information. I am proud to stand with my Labor

colleagues on this side of the House, where we remain committed to ensuring that the people of New South Wales are able to exercise their right to access information about infrastructure projects. This is no ordinary infrastructure project: WestConnex is Australia's largest infrastructure project and it is expected to cost about \$15.4 billion. That is why it is so shameful that this Government has forced this House into a situation where the Opposition has had to introduce this legislation. The Government Information (Public Access) Act provides an enforceable right to make access applications for government information. It restricts access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure. It is clearly in the public's interest to know how their hard-earned dollars are being spent.

The current structure of the Sydney Motorway Corporation is designed to frustrate attempts by the Parliament, the media, ordinary taxpayers and other interested parties to hold the Government to account. What does this Government not want the people of New South Wales to know about WestConnex? What is the Baird Government hiding? What is it that this Government does not want to be held accountable on? The New South Wales citizens in my electorate of Charlestown have a right to know how their taxpayers' dollars are being spent. They have a right to critique that spending and to determine if the money could have been better spent on fixing local roads, for example, on upgrading Hillsborough Road in my electorate. This Government's secret scheming and constant pursuit of avoiding—

Mr Ray Williams: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Charlestown will resume her seat.

Mr Ray Williams: Point of order: On the basis of the unparliamentary nature of the comments that have been made by the member for Charlestown I ask that those comments be retracted. They are unparliamentary. The perception that has been raised about our Government in the language the member used is absolutely disgraceful. I ask that that language be removed from the record.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Charlestown has been asked to withdraw those comments. I cannot direct anyone to do that, but the member may resume her speech in light of the fact that she has been asked to withdraw those comments. Order! The member for Drummoyne is not displaying parliamentary behaviour either.

Ms JODIE HARRISON: Let us look at the proposed privatisation of the Lower Hunter's public transport—

Mr Ray Williams: Point of order: Given the member's refusal to withdraw the comments that have been made, I move:

That the member be not further heard.

Motion agreed to.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (11:11): I make a contribution to the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016. In doing so I congratulate the member for Strathfield, the shadow Minister for roads, on her advocacy on this issue. It was great to have her in my electorate of Londonderry recently to listen to the concerns of many residents of Western Sydney who are being kept in the dark about the toll on the M4. The shadow Minister for roads loves coming to Western Sydney—at this rate we will soon be making her an honorary resident of Western Sydney as she raises concerns on behalf of our community.

Anyone would acknowledge that it should not take an Opposition private member's bill to ensure that projects such as this are delivered with the full transparency and accountability that they demand—and that the public demands. The aim of this bill is to do just that: to remove the veils of mystery that surround the Sydney Motorway Corporation. As I represent a Western Sydney electorate in this place, the mystery surrounding exactly when the toll on the M4 motorway will begin is of particular interest to me. Plans to reintroduce a toll on the M4 will cost households in Western Sydney thousands of dollars every year. Unfortunately the Baird Government is hiding this information and refuses to tell us—and, more importantly, refuses to tell the residents of Western Sydney—when this toll will begin.

This bill aims to make it easier for information to be accessed about the entirety of this project, including the Baird Government's toll plan, which is being hidden deliberately. This bill aims to hold the Government to account—and rightly so—and to ensure that every dollar that is spent on this project is spent with the intention of providing a fully functional and transparent service to the New South Wales taxpayer. In her second reading speech on this bill the shadow Minister and member for Strathfield said:

The Labor Party is on the side of communities of interest that have a stake in the WestConnex project, from the daily commuters in Western Sydney—

whom I represent in this place and who will pay for the project with a toll, which we will get to later—

—to the residents and businesses of the inner west and inner city—

but most importantly and crucially to the taxpayers of New South Wales, who will not tolerate projects of this scale being wrapped in secrecy. The Sydney Motorway Corporation has been set up in such a way as to make it impervious to the standard checks and balances that are routinely and rightly applied to government. It is a body that was deliberately designed to impede the efforts of this Parliament, the media and members of the public—people in our electorates—to hold the Government to account on this project. If that were not enough, now the Government is refusing to detail when the toll on the M4 will be reintroduced.

The people of Western Sydney have two very basic questions for the Premier and for the Minister. They have a right to ask these questions. I do not exaggerate when I say that these questions are raised with me on a daily basis: When and for how long? When are you going to start charging people to drive on a road that is currently toll free and for how long do you intend this toll to hang around? The planned toll plainly contradicts what former Premier O'Farrell said about tolls on the M4. He said that there would be no new tolls on existing roads—that is probably why the Government has such a glass jaw on this issue.

Mr John Sidoti: It is an upgraded road.

Ms PRUE CAR: Based on what we know, motorists using the M4 will have to pay up to \$4.21 each way to drive between Parramatta and Homebush—and the member for Drummoyne knows that is an existing road. That equates to \$42 a week or \$2,189.20 a year for motorists travelling to and from work each day. Some 165,000 people use this motorway every day. But the Government will not tell us when this toll will start to hit Western Sydney families or for how long it will operate. The member for Strathfield also said:

WestConnex is the largest infrastructure project in Australian history, and is being built by a government with the worst record on accountability and transparency.

The Government is showing its colours today. The motorists of Western Sydney, who will be slugged toll after toll just to use the road, have a right to know. The only people who think they do not have a right to know are those in the Government. I note that we have heard nothing from the member for Penrith or the member for Mulgoa on this issue. I hope that they will go straight to the Premier and the Minister, and ask when their constituents will start to pay the toll on the M4.

Dr Hugh McDermott: The same with the member for Seven Hills—we have heard nothing from him.

Ms PRUE CAR: There are many of them, as the member for Prospect just noted. Opposition members representing Western Sydney communities, including me, are being inundated with responses to petitions that we will present to this Chamber. My electorate officers simply cannot enter these petitions quickly enough. Everywhere I go in my community there are lots of angry people who need to travel on this road to get to work to pay their mortgage, and then they just want to get home to their families.

Mr Adam Crouch: That is what WestConnex will do.

Ms PRUE CAR: The Government is very sensitive about this today. As a representative of that community I warn the Government that it ignores us at its peril. The Government must stop the secrecy and for once start being honest with the people of Western Sydney.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (11:18): I oppose the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016. It is a nothing bill. It is a sham bill. It exists because the Opposition has nothing to put forward except opposition, opposition, opposition. The bill from the Opposition roads spokesperson, Jodi McKay, proposes to amend the Government Information (Public Access) [GIPA] Act to specifically include the Sydney Motorway Corporation Pty Limited and its subsidiaries as public authorities under the Act.

The stated rationale for the bill is said to provide greater public scrutiny of the WestConnex project. We do not believe that. The Government does not support the bill because the Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPA] already applies to the client agencies for WestConnex, which are Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] and the NSW Treasury. On 25 February 2016, Jodi McKay, MP, introduced a bill to amend the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. The intent of the amendment is to include the Sydney Motorway Corporation [SMC] under the Government Information (Public Access) Act. This would have the effect of extending the disclosure obligations that the Government Information (Public Access) Act places on government agencies to the SMC, which is a proprietary company.

The SMC is not a government agency and is not subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act. SMC is a corporation and is subject to corporate governance, financial management and reporting

requirements under the Corporations Act. The Opposition Treasury spokesperson did not understand the difference between the public sector and the private sector, and this is similar. The bill either reflects a lack of understanding of the Government Information (Public Access) Act or it is a deliberate political tactic to make WestConnex appear to be secretive. The Opposition is always after conspiracy theories. Let us get on with building New South Wales.

Much of the information about WestConnex is subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act because its records are held by Roads and Maritime Services. RMS is also the custodian of all records held by the former WestConnex Delivery Authority, which are subject to GIPA requests. Information about shareholding in the SMC is also held by NSW Treasury and subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act. This is the equivalent level of transparency that applies to the NorthConnex project, which has not raised any concerns. This bill is purely political. The GIPA inquiry avenues are readily available to the New South Wales Opposition, as the proposer of this bill knows full well, because she is a regular user of that process. This bill is a stalling tactic to stop development in New South Wales and is bringing it back to number eight, which is the place it held when Labor was in office.

The private member's bill proposed by the Opposition roads spokesperson is a cynical attempt to convey WestConnex as being less open to scrutiny than any other major projects, which is not the case. NSW Labor should be the group that is open to more scrutiny. The key question is, "Do they support WestConnex?" It is a simple yes or no answer. The obvious answer is no, because they have introduced this bill to the House. We hear from Labor members that they support it quietly but they do not want to say how they will pay for it. Before the last election they said one thing and now we have various inner-west Labor members of Parliament railing against the project so they can pretend to their constituents that they have fought against WestConnex while knowing full well that it is a vital project for Sydney. All residents of Sydney will benefit from the WestConnex project.

Meanwhile, other Labor members of Parliament admit that we need WestConnex. It is a party at sixes and sevens with the whole project. No wonder it failed to deliver the M4 East for more than a decade. It could not bite the bullet and move past the short-term thinking of "protect my own seat". This bill is a sham. Who knows what the Leader of the Opposition thinks about the matter? Who in his unhappy crew does he agree with and who does he contradict? In his most recent media comments, the Opposition leader indicated that Labor supports the M4 East and the new M5 sections of WestConnex. I wonder how the Opposition roads spokesperson has explained that to her constituents. I was concerned to hear the Leader of the Opposition describe the most crucial element of WestConnex—the link that will join the M4/M5 together—as "highly dubious".

For all the benefits of WestConnex to be realised, the M4/M5 link is of the utmost importance. It will be the final element in creating the free-flowing motorway network, and the member for Newtown probably will be able to ride her pushbike on it. It will create a city and inner-west bypass, and will be a considerable timesaver for motorists, including those in Western Sydney who are headed to the airport and the port. Crucially, it will take traffic off local roads. Surely The Greens want to take traffic off roads. How does Labor hope to achieve this without the M4/M5 link? What is Labor's plan? We have to wonder if Labor has any plan. While I am talking about Labor's plans, or the lack of them, I ask: How does it propose to fund improvements to our motorway network? It was not described in Labor's "better way" budget, which was released prior to the 2015 election.

In recent months Labor has mounted a scare campaign, claiming motorists had no idea that a toll will be reintroduced on the M4. This is ridiculous and untrue. This Government has always been up-front that there will be a toll, but the huge benefit for motorists is that they will arrive at their destinations sooner. WestConnex is about moving people through the city more quickly. We have always said that if people see value in WestConnex they will use it, and we believe they will. There is always a free alternative. Labor admits upgrades are needed, but it refuses to say how it will fund them. We know what Labor is like with funding and how it manages a budget. Will it cut funds to schools, to ambulance, to police? There are many questions. It is about time Labor had some answers.

It is clear that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to building WestConnex. It has done a proper analysis of the project and has had it independently endorsed by Infrastructure NSW and Infrastructure Australia. This Government is completing the appropriate environmental assessments for each stage, and has a sound and sensible method to fund the project properly. The WestConnex project will widen and extend the M4 and M5, and will join them to form a continuous free-flowing motorway network. WestConnex will benefit everyone and will work alongside the much-needed public transport infrastructure upgrades we are delivering to keep our city moving. The aim of this Government is to keep the city moving, which is why the building projects are taking place. The Government opposes the bill.

[Business interrupted.]

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS****Member's Speaking Time**

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (11:27): Having spoken to the Government Whip, and to ensure the goodwill, peace and harmony for the rest of the sitting until lunchtime, I seek leave to move a motion that the remaining ordinary time of the member for Charlestown, which is about 2½ minutes, plus extensions if needed, be reinstated.

Leave granted.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (11:28): I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to restore the speaking time of the member for Charlestown.

Motion agreed to.

[*Business resumed.*]

*Bills***GOVERNMENT INFORMATION (PUBLIC ACCESS) AMENDMENT (SYDNEY MOTORWAY CORPORATION) BILL 2016****Second Reading**

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (11:28): I thank members for their consideration. I support the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill, which is about transparency and openness. I will give an example of transparency and openness regarding Hunter public transport.

The secrecy surrounding the Newcastle public transport privatisation proposal is a perfect example of how this Government attempts to avoid public scrutiny. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure arrived in Newcastle in the early hours of the morning on 5 November last year to make the shock announcement that the Government wants a single, private operator to run Newcastle's light rail, bus and ferry systems. The Minister arrived in Newcastle unannounced, held a media conference revealing the Government's privatisation plans and then quickly high-tailed it back to Sydney. There was no consultation with those affected, no briefings to key stakeholders that privatisation was being considered—just a meeting with the media. Such a controversial position should have been raised during the lead-up to the 2015 election. The privatisation plans should have been put to the people of the Hunter for feedback before the process began, and certainly before any announcement was made. The people of the Hunter deserve to have a voice; they deserve to be heard.

There was no warning that privatisation was on the table. This announcement again demonstrates this Sydney-centric Government's utter disregard for the people in the Hunter and regional New South Wales, and the Government's disregard for transparency and openness for the people of New South Wales. For many people this may feel like *deja vu*, as it is not the first time that a Coalition Government has attempted to privatise Newcastle transport. The Greiner Government planned to privatise Newcastle transport back in the 1990s. That plan was defeated then because the people of the Hunter stood their ground and fought—and we will fight again. With a project of the size and cost of the WestConnex, and given this Government's appalling track record on project management, it is so important that the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill passes. No longer should the Government be allowed to avoid public scrutiny.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (11:31): I speak on behalf of the Greens in debate on the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016. As has been outlined by other speakers, the object of this bill is to amend the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 to provide that the information held by the Sydney Motorway Corporation may be accessed under that Act. I thank the member for Strathfield for introducing the bill and acknowledge the work that she is doing to push for more transparency around this project. The fact that we are today, arguing to bring basic transparency to the largest government transport infrastructure project in the Southern Hemisphere—with a cost greater than that of the Channel tunnel crossing from France to England—is highly indicative of the way that New South Wales politics is rapidly sinking back to the bad old times when secrecy and backroom deals were the order of the day. The question has to be asked: Did we ever leave those times?

Today in this Parliament we are faced with the complicity of senior Ministers in the deplorable process of allowing our Parliament to become the handmaiden of private corporations and for our public service to become nothing more than a rubber stamp for projects, such as WestConnex, which would never pass muster if they were

subject to proper objective analysis and evaluated against well-developed alternatives. A proper objective analysis and evaluation has never been made of the WestConnex process, despite the fact that \$16.8 billion is going into this polluting motorway and despite the fact that the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements [SEARs] demand that alternatives to this mega tollway be properly explored and presented.

Premier Baird may hide behind a very enthusiastic Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight in the other place, the Hon. Duncan Gay, but it should be clear that the Premier is overseeing the destruction of the New South Wales public service and is removing its involvement in the delivery of projects like this. These so-called private-public entities woo banks and private companies into sweet deals for the wholesale sell-off of many of this State's major assets, lands and services that is not in the interests of the people but in the interests of the corporations and the big businesses that fund and fuel the Liberal Party and The Nationals in New South Wales. Unfortunately, those businesses—the corporations and their profit motives—are driving the decisions that are being made in this State, not the interests of the people.

WestConnex is perhaps the flagship example of a privatisation and destruction agenda that seeks to put communities last and the interests of corporations and profits first. Apart from the information that we get from press releases announcing billion-dollar contracts that have been awarded for WestConnex construction, the community, the public and the media have been able to access contracts only via the New South Wales Government Information (Public Access) Act. From what we can tell, these contracts are worth just over \$165 million, but this is a figure gleaned only from those contracts that have been available via the Government Information (Public Access) Act prior to the development of the Sydney Motorway Corporation.

This figure does not include details of the billions of dollars of construction contracts that have been awarded to companies like Leighton and Samsung. Leighton has been publicly exposed for illegal activities and million-dollar bribes paid to gain overseas contracts in Iraq and Algeria. We cannot see the details of the contracts but we know that many of them were awarded after the *Sydney Morning Herald's* first exposé of bribery scandals in 2011 and Leighton's own reporting of the actions of Leighton Offshore to the Australian Federal Police in early 2011. Nor can we see any contracts for less than \$150,000.

Another issue that needs to be dealt with in the future is the fact that the information about contracts is currently removed from public access when the contract is completed. This Government is making endless attempts to try to ensure that there is no public scrutiny of this project. The question to be asked is: Why? It is because the Government knows that the project is a dud. If the Government opened up the books and if people looked at them and at the alternatives, they would ask: If we spent \$16.8 billion solving Sydney's congestion transport problems what could we do? If the Government had asked that question and had looked genuinely at the alternatives, it would know that a 33-kilometre polluting private road with massive tolls is not the answer.

The companies that have laid the framework for this disastrous project are Leighton and AECOM. AECOM has a shocking reputation for problematic traffic modelling resulting from Brisbane's Clem7 tunnel. But those companies are now getting a whopping slice of the WestConnex cake—a huge transfer of public money into private hands. Leighton and AECOM were brought in at the beginning—at the establishment of the Sydney Motorway's project office. They helped to provide the initial business case and design for this infrastructure monster, and they are reaping larger and larger contracts as the project has developed. But now, without the Government Information (Public Access) Act, the whole situation has become ever more opaque. It is incumbent on us—the members of this House, who make decisions about how public infrastructure is funded in this State—to question why information is being kept secret.

There were reports recently that the Sydney Motorway Corporation has sent a request proposal to investment banks, inviting the likes of Macquarie Capital, Goldman Sachs, UBS and boutique banks to pitch for advisory roles to put together a new \$1.5-plus billion funding package. Unless this important bill goes through the Parliament the details of this funding package will never be known. Even with access via the Government Information (Public Access) Act, we know that the details will be obscured as they were in the updated business case, where much of the important information was redacted. The Government is attempting to hide the details because it knows that they do not add up. Now adding to this obscurity is the Sydney Motorway Corporation, which exists outside the reach of the Government Information (Public Access) Act. Members are elected to Parliament to be accountable to the people. Instead, this Government is hiding decisions about the largest infrastructure project in this State and handing over its oversight to consultants and unaccountable corporations who are wreaking havoc on our cities and neighbourhoods.

The Liberal Party, here and in Canberra, is happy to divest its responsibilities to corporations to govern on its behalf. That is unacceptable. Somewhere along the line, democracy is getting in the way of the Liberal Party's privatisation agenda. There is no better way to disrupt the process of people starting to ask questions than to remove their ability to access open, transparent information about the infrastructure projects that the Government is delivering by setting up a private Sydney Motorway Corporation. That happened in August 2014.

It was an attempt not only to hide information from the public record but also fundamentally to remove the public service from the planning and delivery of public infrastructure in this State.

Now all transactions concerning WestConnex are signed off by the Sydney Motorway Corporation's board. It is unclear how it is accountable. It is not Premier Mike Baird, Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian, the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight or the Minister for Planning who people can go to and ask about these projects. It is seven individuals whose names will probably be a little less familiar to any members of the public who might be listening: Peter Brecht, Penny Graham, Mary Ploughman, Cameron Robertson, Rod Pearce, Leilani Frew and Dennis Cliche. They are now the ones making the decisions about this \$16.8 billion project, not the people who were elected to, allegedly, deliver on this construction project. The effective transfer of money and power away from the New South Wales Government and public service into the hands of private corporations that will never operate with the transparency and protocols required for a well-functioning public sector is nothing short of highway robbery.

All of this is being done under the cloak of "commercial in confidence". As I mentioned earlier, responses to the Government Information (Public Access) Act requests are often highly redacted or not released at all. While this bill attempts to bring some semblance of transparency to the body that will be managing more than \$3.5 billion of Federal funds and more than \$1.8 billion of State funds, let us be clear that this is only one step towards greater transparency and accountability for this disastrous project. Federal funding is going into this project and State money is going into this project, yet at the same time the processes surrounding it are so appalling and so disturbing—and the destructive impacts on communities across the 33-kilometre route are astounding. This bill is an important first step towards providing some transparency and I thank the member for Strathfield for introducing it. The Greens will continue to fight for transparency and accountability when it comes to this disastrous motorway project.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Before I call the member for the Blue Mountains, I welcome students who are attending Parliament today as part of the Secondary School Leadership Program. I hope you have an enjoyable time.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (11:42): I support the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016, which was introduced by the member for Strathfield, because, as is the case for many in this Chamber, my community relies on the M4—and because we believe in public scrutiny. The M4 is a road that is central to the lives of so many of our constituents. Moreover, the WestConnex project is large and costly and will have wide-ranging and long-lasting impacts throughout Sydney—not all of them positive. It is therefore bewildering to me that the Government has chosen to be so wilfully obstructive and deceptive about the Sydney Motorway Corporation and its plans for the M4 and WestConnex once roadworks are completed.

I have lodged questions on notice in Parliament about the future of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. I have asked the Minister to be up-front about whether he—or his Premier, if such decisions are not within his remit—is readying the Sydney Motorway Corporation, and our roads, for eventual sale to the private sector. The response to that question was: "There are no current plans." This is the refrain of conservative Ministers in all portfolios in this Government. "There are no current plans" is the spin you give when you know that, if you were honest about your ambitions, you would attract the opprobrium of the public.

This is a Government that knows that, if it were honest with people, it would expend significant reserves of political capital. That is why this Government is so tricky and deceptive. That is why this Government lies. That is why this Government has set up the Sydney Motorway Corporation as a so-called "private company"—so that it can escape the scrutiny of the Opposition and so that journalists or ordinary members of the public cannot lodge freedom of information requests and see for themselves what this tricky, deceptive Government is up to. The Government is doing everything in its power to escape scrutiny over the WestConnex project. It is increasingly clear to me that WestConnex is an awful project.

This being budget week in Federal Parliament, we have a sharpened focus on the opportunity cost of government spending decisions. The Turnbull Government has made some interesting decisions this week that highlight opportunity cost. While it has set aside just \$100 million for domestic violence prevention, it is wasting \$160 million on a pointless marriage equality plebiscite—an exercise of appeasement to the Cory Bernardi faction of the Liberal Party. The opportunity cost of running a Cory Bernardi plebiscite is that we could have more than doubled our commitment to tackling domestic violence. The parallel question of opportunity cost in New South Wales is brought into stark focus when we consider the Baird Government's WestConnex project. Our roads are choked with gridlocked traffic every morning. Trains are breaking down, signals are failing throughout the railway network and people in my electorate are being forced to stand for more than an hour every morning and evening as they get to and from work on underfunded, understaffed trains.

The WestConnex project is costing the New South Wales taxpayers \$1.8 billion. That is a staggering amount of money. It is a staggering amount of money to spend on duplicating and widening a motorway when all available evidence tells us that, when it comes to road congestion, demand almost always increases to meet supply. That means that if your roads are gridlocked now, and if you then add additional road capacity, the newly widened road will quickly become gridlocked as well. This Government would rather chase its tail, pursuing an unattainable dream of free-flowing motorways, than invest its money in publicly owned, public transport. Efficient, reliable and accessible public transport is the only way to get a critical mass of people to and from work every day.

So the opportunity cost of the WestConnex project is considerable, and the Opposition should not have to do daily battle with the Minister and the Government in order to shine a light on the inner workings of this project. If the Government is going to spend taxpayers' money in one way or another, it must do so with transparency and with honesty. This has been lacking from the Government's efforts so far. So far, this Government has been anything but transparent and anything but honest. This is why it is critical that Parliament passes the bill introduced by the member for Strathfield.

We need more transparency because, left to its own devices, the Baird Government will obstruct, obfuscate and obscure its activities whenever it can. For example, the Government is not being honest about the purpose of reintroducing tolls to the M4. Its argument in favour of new tolls on this old road is that it is widening it. Under that argument, the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight would be camped out beneath the Leura flyover trying to flag down motorists travelling to Katoomba. He is not doing that, because tolling a publicly owned road that has long been toll free is an absurd proposal. When governments pursue plainly absurd policies you have to ask yourself why. You have to ask yourself why, because there is no point asking the Government or the Sydney Motorway Corporation—they will not tell you.

One of the reasons the Government is pursuing this absurd proposal to reintroduce tolls to the M4 is that it needs the cash to fund the other sections of the project. The only way it can afford to build the tunnels and extensions elsewhere in the WestConnex project is if it levies a toll on the old M4 section. This is the most heavily trafficked section of the WestConnex project. We know from recent road projects that traffic modelling and projections are often woefully inaccurate. But what is well known is the reliance upon the M4 by residents of Western Sydney. It is a constant. Rather than producing a plan or building a project that is affordable, sensible and sustainable in its own right, this Government is going to go out and shake down Western Sydney residents for another \$2,000 each per annum.

It will cost the average commuter \$2,000 per annum to get to and from work along the M4. This will happen at the same time as public transport fares are jacked up by up to 30 per cent across the network. One way or the other, under the Baird Government, if you live in Western Sydney you will pay more. You will pay more to get to work in the morning and you will pay more to get home. You will pay more to go shopping in the city or to visit friends and family on the weekend. You will pay more every day under this Government, because as far as Mike Baird is concerned you are the cash cows that this Government must milk in order to make the budgets balance on the pointless projects the Government has committed to.

In concert with the shadow Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the member for Londonderry, the member for Blacktown, the member for Granville and other Labor colleagues, I have circulated a petition against the new M4 tolls throughout my electorate. We are being inundated by people wanting to sign this petition. Thousands of residents are up in arms about this proposal. But I will convert that anger into a currency that Mike Baird understands: These are thousands of voters. It is clear that the Government does not care about communities, about society or about people—but it does care about votes.

This issue is red hot in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. Questions arising about tolling, funding, financing, commercial partnerships and the like must be answered by this Government. We need to be able to follow the money. We need to be able to understand just where the money goes, and to whom it is going. The Government needs to lift the lid on the Sydney Motorway Corporation. It needs to stop obfuscating and covering its tracks. It needs to stop hiding the truth and avoiding scrutiny. Premier Mike Baird and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, Duncan Gay, need to come clean with taxpayers about the waste and mismanagement they are presiding over within the Sydney Motorway Corporation and the WestConnex project so that voters can make an informed decision about whether the New South Wales Liberals are governing in the interests of the community, or governing in their own self-interest and the commercial interest of their mates in big business. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:51): I speak in support of the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016, and I commend the member for Strathfield for introducing this important amending legislation. It is utterly ridiculous to consider the Sydney Motorway Corporation to be a private company, beyond the reach of the obligations of the Government Information (Public

Access) Act. It administers public money and its sole shareholders are the Treasurer and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. It should be subject to the same scrutiny as other State-owned corporations and public sector entities.

The experience of my constituents in Granville during construction of the M4 widening project is reason enough to be alarmed by the establishment of the Sydney Motorway Corporation beyond public scrutiny. I walk under the motorway to Granville station in order to catch the train to Parliament House and I appreciate the impact that the motorway and the current construction program has on the daily lives of residents and businesses. Initial works commenced in January 2015. This was characterised by the contractors driving around at unsafe speeds on the cycleway that runs underneath the M4 viaduct in Granville. No hoardings were in place and no safety precautions appeared to be taken, despite this occurring in the middle of the school holidays when many children were riding their bikes along the cycleway, which up to that time was a safe place to play. After this, the WestConnex Delivery Authority closed off the cycleway, despite the Minister's assurance that it would remain open during construction, forcing cyclists onto busy streets with poor visibility and parked cars.

Then the construction commenced, with heavy machinery being moved around the site outside the hours of operation approved in the development application, waking everyone up, parking across driveways and generally behaving like the neighbours from hell. While I have not had any complaints about parking across driveways for a while, I still regularly receive complaints about noise outside the hours approved in the development application. On a number of occasions I have been woken by the movement of heavy machinery at 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock in the morning. Even though I live three or four blocks away, sometimes my street is used as an access route by the construction vehicles. It is bad enough on my street; I can only imagine how much worse it is living next to the construction noise every day and often at night.

On one occasion, people were woken at 2.00 a.m. by chainsaws removing trees and mulching them—yes, operating a mulcher at 2.00 a.m. next to someone's home. The immediate neighbour, Issa Nasrallah, contacted me later in the morning and the matter was raised in the other place. My colleague the Hon. Walt Secord asked the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight about residents being awakened at 2.00 a.m. by chainsaws chopping down trees as part of the M4 widening project. The Minister's reply was rather evasive, although he later told the Parliament that the work met the requirements under the environmental protection licence granted for the work. He also claimed that the work was in an industrial area hundreds of metres from anyone's home, rather than admitting that trees were cut down at 2.00 a.m. outside someone's home. This was absolutely not the case.

To make matters worse, the construction work has caused extensive cracking in adjoining homes. While a dilapidation report was completed prior to commencement of construction, requests from neighbours to document and compensate or remediate cracking are falling on deaf ears. Who can forget the gigantic mounds of asbestos-contaminated fill that were brought to and stored on the site, next to people's homes, without any notification, with only inwards facing "Danger asbestos" signs? In September last year I was advised that the area was being sealed off, with tarpaulins placed on mounds of earth. I examined them myself from the nearby footpath and noticed that they were not even completely covered, with the base of the mounds of contaminated fill exposed and revealing golf ball size lumps of dry clay.

When it came time to remove the asbestos, the WestConnex Delivery Authority did not even bother to wet it before bringing in the earthmoving equipment. Instead it just used air quality-monitoring equipment, which would document rather than prevent the bonded asbestos being broken and fibres being dispersed. Yet again, the heavy earthmoving equipment arrived before 6.00 a.m., making noise outside the approved hours of operation. Workers on the site were not wearing any protective equipment for asbestos removal. Pedestrians were not diverted from the adjacent footpath either. I know this because I came to see it for myself after receiving yet another complaint from residents in adjoining properties.

Make no mistake, the way the WestConnex Delivery Authority has gone about dealing with the public during construction of the M4 widening stage is reason enough to support this bill and ensure that the Sydney Motorway Corporation is accountable to the public. The negotiations around acquisition also raise alarms. In the Granville electorate only 10 homes were acquired for the M4 widening project, despite many more being directly affected—even including a number that would be completely overshadowed. The homes that were compulsorily acquired are located on the path of the widened motorway and their acquisition was absolutely necessary. Yet it took public embarrassment on Channel 7 for WestConnex not to force a family with six children to move out on the date of settlement, a few days before Christmas 2014.

This happened to the Hussein family from Onslow Street, Granville. Despite being well aware that the family needed the proceeds of settlement to settle on their new home that same day, an entirely unrealistic rental was proposed: \$600 per week for a three-bedroom fibro house, which on the private rental market at that time would have been worth \$450 to \$480 a week. What of the adjoining neighbours whose quality of life will be destroyed when the new viaduct is constructed? They are not eligible to have their homes compulsorily acquired.

This means they can request an acquisition and are ineligible to be compensated for moving expenses and stamp duty. At times, efforts to negotiate with those owners have been characterised by insulting valuations and vague offers attached to threats to withdraw the offers. In one case I am aware of, a verbal offer has been made but nothing has been received in writing over many months, except a threat that the offer must be accepted by a certain date or it will be withdrawn—yet the offer was not formally made until a few days before the closing date.

WestConnex is the biggest infrastructure project in Australia, and if the evidence from construction and negotiations with neighbours is anything to go on the entire project needs more public scrutiny, not less. Quite ironically, the first aspect of the M4 widening project to be completed was the tollgate on the James Ruse Drive exit, which is used by residents of Granville, Parramatta and Rosehill. The road is an utter goat track, yet the tollgate stands proudly telling us that shortly we will have to pay \$4.21 for the privilege of driving on a road that was paid off in 2010. The cost of widening the road is \$500 million. The toll amounts to more than \$2,000 a year for commuters who use the M4 to go to and from work each day.

The toll will increase at 4 per cent per annum every year unless the inflation rate is even higher than that—a scenario that is unlikely to occur under current economic projections. The toll will be in place for decades, with no explanation of the apparent over-recovery of construction costs that is clearly happening, and no explanation from this Government as to why it is breaking its promise not to toll roads that are already constructed. With the level of secrecy and obfuscation that has occurred so far on the WestConnex project, it is absolutely clear that the Sydney Motorway Corporation must be subject to the Government Information (Public Access Act).

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I acknowledge the member for Lakemba, but suggest that he defer his contribution to debate to next week as we will move on to Government business at 12 o'clock. In accordance with sessional orders debate is interrupted for the consideration of General Business Notices of Motions General Notices. I set down the resumption of the debate as an order of the day for tomorrow.

Motions

DIABETES

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (11:59): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises childhood obesity has a direct correlation to type 2 diabetes.
- (2) Notes that more than half of Western Sydney's population is overweight and at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
- (3) Commends the Government's investment of \$5 million in funding to 'Make Healthy Normal' and, thereby, reduce the incidence of people developing type 2 diabetes.

Currently in New South Wales more than 50 per cent of adults and 20 per cent of children are overweight or obese. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the many young people in the gallery today and focus on the fact that the general population has become overweight in a short time and the figures are staggering. Being overweight affects our health now and into the future and it has an effect on the health budget. The direct economic cost of obesity to this State is estimated at \$18 billion per year. Most people do not realise that just a handful of belly fat increases the risk of heart disease, cancer, stroke and, in particular, type 2 diabetes. In 2014, 9.4 per cent of the State's population had diabetes or high blood glucose, which rose from 6.4 per cent in 2002.

The New South Wales Premier has included obesity and childhood obesity in his statewide priorities. The pending launch of the New South Wales diabetes prevention framework coordinates diabetes related work across the State. It will identify enhancements to evidence-based practice and set a range of strategic directions for New South Wales local health districts for decreasing the risk of diabetes or diabetes complications in local populations. Every six seconds a person dies from diabetes and every five minutes a person is diagnosed with diabetes. The number of people with diabetes in Australia is now three times higher than 25 years ago and one in four Australians aged over 25 years has diabetes or has been diagnosed with pre-diabetes.

Staggeringly, more than half of Western Sydney's population is overweight and at risk of developing type 2 diabetes. During the 2013 to 2015 period an extensive screening program of 4,000 residents was undertaken throughout Western Sydney which found that 50 per cent of the people screened were at high risk of developing diabetes. In some areas of Western Sydney that risk was assessed as being as high as 100 per cent. The people being screened presented with a current condition of being overweight or obese and it was determined that they inevitably will develop diabetes. Every 30 seconds a lower limb is lost to diabetes—one of the horrific complications of diabetes that results in the death of thousands of people every year. Extraordinarily, every 30 seconds a lower limb is lost as a complication of diabetes.

Diabetes is responsible for 60 per cent of all amputations in Australia. Australia has one of the worst diabetes related lower limb amputation rates in the developed world with nearly 20 per 100,000 people with

diabetes losing a limb compared to an average of 12 per 100,000 elsewhere in the world. These are horrifying statistics. Currently more than 50 per cent of the population of Western Sydney is now recognised as being overweight or obese, which is horrifying. That is a cost not only to their health and productivity; there is also an astronomical cost when they seek health services. It is estimated that the cost of diabetes alone on productivity and health services is \$8.6 billion. As I said yesterday that is akin to the cost of the North West Rail Link. There is a loss in productivity and a cost to our health services.

Interestingly, if people were to lose two kilos of their body weight they would reduce the risk of developing diabetes by 30 per cent. If people such as the member for Wyong, or any member, were to run or exercise every morning and reduce their weight by four kilos they would eliminate the risk of developing diabetes. I know that the member for Wyong indulges in physical activity every day but it is incumbent on us all to play a role by highlighting this issue in our communities. I emphasise how important it is for us all, in particular, young people, to maintain our health. I welcome the fact that all members support this motion and I look forward to other members participating in this debate

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:07): I thank the member for Castle Hill for raising the important issue of childhood obesity. Children learn their habits for life during childhood, a fact that I am reminded of regularly in my role as shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education. It is important that we teach our children how to live a healthy life, so that they have every opportunity to enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential as adults. However, the prevalence of childhood obesity, and adults who are overweight or obese, is a clear indication that the habits being learned are not healthy ones. I was surprised however to hear that the member for Castle Hill did not realise we have an epidemic on our hands.

Yesterday in this place the member said it was "astounding" and that "we did not know" that there was such a high prevalence of obesity in Western Sydney and that there was such a high correlation with type 2 diabetes. It begs the question: Under which rock has the member for Castle Hill been living? Over many years, there have been innumerable commentators, academics, health professionals and even politicians, raising this issue, flagging it as the greatest health challenge of our time. Indeed, an Australian Health Survey in 2011-12 highlighted that 63 per cent of adults were then overweight or obese, with 28 per cent classified as obese. Projections then suggested that by 2025, the prevalence of overweight and obesity would increase to over 70 per cent.

So to be clear, there are no surprises with current prevalence rates. The only surprise is that the Government's inertia on this issue may be lifting a little. I take this opportunity to correct for the record the comment of the member for Castle Hill yesterday when he said, "If people who are overweight lose just four kilograms of weight they eliminate the risk of developing type 1 diabetes." Type 1 diabetes is a very different beast to type 2 diabetes. Type 1 is an autoimmune condition. What causes this autoimmune reaction is unknown and it is not linked to modifiable lifestyle factors. There is no cure and it cannot be prevented.

In contrast, there are lifestyle factors that can reduce or eliminate the risk of type 2 diabetes. Importantly, type 2 diabetes can be delayed or prevented entirely. The member for Castle Hill is correct in stating that there are strong links between obesity and type 2 diabetes. As he said, obesity can also have many other serious health impacts. Children who are overweight or obese are more likely to develop gastrointestinal, orthopaedic or endocrine conditions, including type 2 diabetes. These children also face an increased risk of suffering a range of weight-related conditions during adulthood, including: type 2 diabetes; coronary heart disease; stroke; high blood pressure; gallbladder disease; osteoarthritis; sleep apnoea; mental illness; body pain, and some cancers. Many of these health conditions are preventable through making simple lifestyle changes, such as eating healthily and exercising more.

While all these health conditions caused by obesity are significant, children report that the most immediate consequence for them being overweight is social discrimination. This social discrimination is associated with poor self-esteem and depression, and makes it more difficult to address the underlying causes of obesity. The motion of the member for Castle Hill highlights obesity rates in Western Sydney. I suggest to Government members that they occasionally look beyond Sydney, because the Australian Bureau of Statistics has found that obesity is in fact more prevalent in rural and remote areas than it is in urban areas. Obesity is also more common in disadvantaged socioeconomic groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people from certain ethnic backgrounds. The National Health Performance Authority's 2013 report found that 60 per cent of people in Western Sydney and 62 per cent in south-western Sydney were overweight or obese. In the Hunter region, that figure was 70 per cent and in western New South Wales it was 79 per cent.

The Government's Make Healthy Normal program is a step in the right direction. However, is a television campaign enough to address the issue? Not nearly. When we consider what is at stake, the answer is a resounding "no". I will look at it at the individual level. Meaningful, effective and practical strategies could see children avoiding becoming overweight, and thereby avoiding the social and health issues that they will experience

throughout their lives. It will also allow them to maximise their opportunities and productivity. Looking at it from a policy and economic perspective, according to the Government's records, "overweight and obesity costs the New South Wales economy around \$19 billion annually". Therefore, from an individual and government perspective it makes sense to invest in meaningful and effective solutions in an effort to improve people's lives and the Government's bottom line.

However, what makes sense to many of us is not often supported by this Government, particularly in the health arena. Over the past five years, the O'Farrell-Baird-Grant Government has shown its true colours when it comes to health. The Audit Office of New South Wales reports that ambulance waiting times are at their worst point in five years. In fact, 26 per cent of emergency patients across New South Wales wait more than four hours for treatment, including 47 per cent of patients at the Liverpool and Nepean hospitals. Over the past five years written complaints to the Health Care Complaints Commission have increased by more than 28 per cent. The Government talks about infrastructure and getting on with the job, but in five years not one brick has been laid for the Maitland Hospital in the Hunter. That project was promised in 2011, but not one brick has been laid.

This week we are seeing more attacks on health care with the Government dropping the requirement for registered nurses in aged care. The \$5 million being spent on the Make Healthy Normal advertising campaign is welcome. However, it does not replace health workers on the ground and it does not restore the billions of dollars that have been ripped out of the health system by the Abbott-Turnbull governments. Nor does it offer a meaningful and effective whole-of-government response to the tragedy of ever-increasing weight gain in our children. I will conclude my contribution with a sobering thought expressed recently by someone whose name is familiar in this place. Paediatrician and former member for Macquarie Fields Dr Andrew McDonald commented on childhood obesity and stated:

This generation of children is at risk of running shorter lives than their parents and this is the first time in human history they have run this risk.

With this in mind, I urge the Baird-Grant Government to do more than run a television campaign to combat childhood obesity. If this is what a priority looks like to the Premier, we should all be worried.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:13): I thank my colleague the member for Castle Hill for moving this motion. Obviously childhood obesity is a major issue, not only in New South Wales but also throughout this country. Children who are overweight or obese are obviously more likely than other children to suffer poor health and wellbeing outcomes. This is a serious situation and the Government is taking it seriously. The member for Port Stephens said that the Government should not simply talk about doing something to combat obesity but also get on with introducing prevention programs. I have a list of programs that have been implemented on the Central Coast that the Government is supporting, and I will take pleasure in discussing them in my contribution.

Mr John Sidoti: What a good member.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I thank the member for Drummoyne for that compliment. Obese children are more likely to carry their excess weight into adulthood, which means they will be at increased risk of developing chronic disease later in life. We are seeing scary obesity statistics on the Central Coast. Up to 50 per cent of children in the area could be suffering from childhood obesity. This also reflects their parents' obesity rates. People are not making the choice to live an active lifestyle. During the last election campaign I was thrilled that I lost nine kilograms. Unfortunately, and I know it is hard to believe, I seem to have found a few of them since being elected. However, after hearing the comments of the member for Castle Hill yesterday, it is beholden on me to reduce my weight again because overweight and obesity are issues not only for young people but also for adults in our community. In 2014, one in five children between the ages of five and 16 years were estimated to be overweight. That is almost 240,000 children.

I am pleased to note the number of programs dealing with this issue available on the Central Coast. Central Coast Canteen Network involves working with school canteen staff to offer healthy dietary choices to schoolchildren. The Q4 Family ACTIVation Pack provides resources to help parents and carers of children aged from five to 12 years to get active. It is designed not only to get children to be more active but also to instil a healthy lifestyle in their parents. Healthy Drinks for Children targets everyone from infants to 12-year-olds. Live Life Well @ School is a joint initiative between the Department of Education and NSW Health focusing on quality nutrition and physical activity in primary schools. We also have the fantastic and charmingly named Magic Lunchbox program. It is a captivating and fun program which provides support resources and which is available as a free download. Munch & Move is targeted at not only encouraging healthy nutrition in children but also making it fun.

Those programs demonstrate that the Government has implemented a wide range of initiatives to address obesity. This Government does take childhood obesity seriously. The numbers are scary and it is up to members as leaders and parents in our community to become active with our children. Almost 50 per cent of our children

are overweight and suffering from childhood obesity. We must do more; we must deliver. My generation was made aware of the need to be healthy by Life. Be in It, or as we knew it, the "Norm" campaign. We must convey that message to our children; we must keep them fit and healthy.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:17): I take this motion extremely seriously and congratulate the member for Castle Hill on moving it. However, there is one thing that he and everyone else can do; that is, make the Government follow up on its commitment to update the Fresh Tastes @ School canteen guidelines. Almost two years ago I asked the Minister for Education when he would update the guidelines to comply with the updated Australian Dietary Guidelines. The Federal Government issued new guidelines in 2015 stating that we should eat more fibre, that we should restrict our intake of salt and, for the first time, that we should limit our intake of sugars. School canteens classify the food they offer as green, amber or red depending on its nutritional quality. A glass of full-cream milk is given an amber rating. However, a Coco Pops drink, which is packed with sugar but which also has a high level of fibre and contains low-fat milk, is given a green rating. That is because sugar is not included in the guidelines under which these products are rated.

Two years ago the Minister told me and the community: "The Department of Health and the Department of Education have a committee and we are trying to bring the school canteen guidelines in line with the 2013 update of Australian Dietary Guidelines." But they have not done it. They have not done it because the food industry is going ballistic that it will have to change the packaging on Tiny Teddy biscuits and Coco Pops sugary drinks—all those products that have been given the green light because of set manufacturing standards. The Government must seriously address that issue. The Government put together fluffy campaigns but the school canteen guidelines are compulsory and must be upgraded. The last time they were upgraded was in 2006. Sugar was not even included when they determined the criteria for red, amber or green food categorisation at schools. Sugar must be included in that criteria.

Kids can buy garbage in school canteens that has been given the green light—for instance, Tiny Teddy biscuits that basically are full of sugar—because it is low in fat and high in fibre. That issue must be dealt with. I commend the member for Castle Hill for his commitment to this issue—a commitment that is shared by many members. In 2013 the Australian Dietary Guidelines were updated. The food industry created a system that enabled products in our supermarkets to include terminology such as "canteen friendly" and "canteen approved" to influence mums and dads.

The State Government must take leadership on this issue and then other States will follow. We must update the guidelines to ensure that sugar is a criterion when determining what is good for our kids. An organisation called the School Canteen in my electorate does not sell sugary foods. It makes everything from scratch and it struggles to make money and to be successful as most school canteens do not have kitchen facilities in which to make food from scratch. If it went to Woolworths and bought party pies like other operators do, as described in the *Daily Telegraph* last week, it could make money. But generally the facilities are not available to make stuff from scratch and the guidelines do not support organisations such as this.

I call on the Minister—I have already asked several questions in the House about this issue and I wrote letters two years after the Government committed to update the guidelines—to take on big food and to take seriously the issue of obesity. Let kids have a treat every now and then at school but make sure that sugar is included in the guidelines. At present fibre and salt content are the two things that determine what goes into a school canteen and what does not. Let us include sugar in those guidelines. Let us make sure we do not hook our kids on sugar and that we have good quality products for them to consume.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (12:22): The member for Balmain made some worthwhile and valid points, except of course the part about the Government conducting fluffy campaigns and his criticism of Tiny Teddy biscuits. However, we will not go there. There were productive speeches and good points were made about this issue, in particular, the frightening statistics relating to childhood obesity and, to a lesser degree, adult obesity. I will not repeat the points that have already been made but I will talk about the Government's solutions and initiatives to combat the scourge of obesity in our community.

I refer to the new Make Healthy Normal campaign. Why do we need a Make Healthy Normal campaign? Currently in New South Wales more than 50 per cent of adults and more than 20 per cent of children are overweight or obese. Those are frightening statistics. The member for Balmain made some valid points with which I agree. In saying that, the direct economic costs of obesity to this State are estimated to be in excess of \$18 billion. What programs could we undertake if we had an extra \$18 billion a year? I am sure every member in this House could deliver worthwhile and effective programs with that sort of money.

Most people do not know that just a handful of fat increases their risk of heart disease, cancer, stroke and type 2 diabetes. This Government is committed to taking urgent action to arrest the alarming prevalence of overweight and obesity in our population. The good news is that making small lifestyle changes can make a huge

difference to one's health. As the member for Terrigal said earlier, his weight has fluctuated. During election campaigning he did extra exercise and made healthy choices to lose weight and I am glad to see he has kept off that weight—most probably because he has been on an active campaign since he was elected.

Problems such as these are not simple or easy, but effective measures can make a difference and improve people's health and behaviour. Recently we launched a television advertising campaign and rolled out a major community engagement exercise whereby people can find out more about Make Healthy Normal. The campaign was developed following reviews of similar local and international campaigns and intensive market research. The Make Healthy Normal campaign focuses on some of the negative behaviours and attitudes that have emerged gradually over the years. Sadly, for many of us these behaviours have become normal.

The campaign asks us: "Is it normal to drive to the shops when you can walk? Is it normal to order large meals? Is it normal to sit in front of a screen all day at work and at home? Is it normal to be too busy to play with the kids?" Simple lifestyle choices can really make a difference. As the member for Balmain said, an impression can be created in a child's mind, particularly at an early stage, that certain things are healthy when in fact they are not. I commend the member for Castle Hill for moving this worthwhile motion and for the useful information that has been brought to this House.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (12:26): I congratulate the member for Castle Hill for moving this important motion. The prevalence of overweight and obesity amongst Australians has been steadily increasing for the past 30 years. In 2011-12 around 60 per cent of Australian adults were classified as overweight or obese and more than 25 per cent of these fell into the obese category. In 2007 around 25 per cent of children aged two to 16 were overweight or obese, with 6 per cent classified as obese. A 2009 report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] predicts that there will be continued increases in overweight and obesity levels across all age groups during the next decade in Australia up to around 66 per cent of the population.

While overweight and obesity are prevalent in all population groups, variation exists in their distribution across the Australian population. As the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs it concerns me that obesity is particularly prevalent among those in disadvantaged socioeconomic groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and many people born overseas. Obesity is also more prevalent in rural and remote areas compared to urban areas. Health problems related to excess weight impose substantial economic burdens on individuals, families and communities.

Data from the Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle [AusDiab] study indicate that the total direct cost for overweight and obesity in 2005 was \$21 billion: \$6.5 billion for overweight and \$14.5 billion for obesity. The same study estimated indirect costs of \$35.6 billion per year, resulting in an overall total annual cost of \$56.6 billion. For adults, the health problems and consequences of obesity are many and varied, including musculoskeletal problems, cardiovascular disease, some cancers, sleep apnoea and, as has been mentioned, type 2 diabetes. Many of these health problems are preventable though a healthy and active lifestyle.

Like the member for Terrigal, I recognise all the programs being run not just by this Government but also by governments in the past to tackle lack of exercise and healthy eating. I was a school principal for a number of years so I have seen and worked with the school guidelines. Those guidelines are currently mandatory. A lot of schools try hard to do the right thing but it is very difficult, particularly when buying packaged foods. What the manufacturers do to get inside the guidelines is shrink the size of the pie—they do not make the product itself much healthier.

Instead of receiving a normal sized pie, they are given mini pies. So kids buy two or three mini pies, which puts them over the limit. One of the most concerning challenges is encouraging people to be active. We talk about getting fit, walking and running, but our lifestyles are dictated by the fact that we spend a lot of time in cars moving from place to place. Parents take safety into account and do not like their kids walking to school. We have to change the mindset of the community and help people understand that making healthy choices does not cost a lot, but in making healthy choices we can save ourselves and the community a huge amount of money. I commend the member for Castle Hill for moving this motion. It is an important issue that parliamentarians should be aware of and work hard on.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:30): By leave: I speak in favour of this motion. Obesity and diabetes are two issues of great concern, particularly for the Western Sydney community. More than 50 per cent of its residents are overweight or obese. We know that being overweight or obese leads to higher rates of diabetes. Locally, the Liverpool region has the highest rate of diabetes, so I am glad that New South Wales is continuing to deliver its commitment to increasing health standards across the State, but particularly in Western Sydney through its Make Healthy Normal campaign. This initiative is about helping save people's lives and preventing health issues, specifically diabetes, before they occur.

In particular I thank the member for Castle Hill for moving the motion today. The Make Healthy Normal campaign aims to educate people on what is normal, how to make healthy choices and particularly what leads to obesity. Some of the key messages include choosing smaller portions, choosing meals with fewer kilojoules, eating more fruits and vegetables, drinking more water, being active every day, sitting less, and moving more. We sit behind our desks far too often; we should move more than we do. This campaign tackles the roadblock of cost and accessibility to information about reducing obesity for people in Western Sydney. This campaign does not only provides hints and tips on how to lose weight and stay healthy but it also provides full meal plans, exercise plans, strategies and advice for free, allowing more people to kickstart their health.

Estimates show that by eliminating obesity from the population we can potentially reduce the incidents of Type 2 diabetes by more than 40 per cent. If overweight people can lose just two kilograms they can reduce the risk of developing diabetes by 30 per cent. Further benefits can be achieved in people who are overweight when they lose just four kilos, which can eliminate the risk of developing Type 1 diabetes. This is an important focus of the campaign, but it is also a key focus at the Office of Preventive Health at Liverpool Hospital. Since the office was opened by this Government in 2012, it has done some amazing work in trying to tackle diseases such as diabetes and obesity before they develop. I know Minister Skinner was adamant to open the office in Liverpool and it is doing wonderful work.

I commend the member for Heathcote, who has joined us in the Chamber. He has been championing community health in his local area through his Healthy Heathcote initiative. He offers a 90-day challenge to his community to get fit and healthy. He is a shining example of the change that can be made by getting involved in Healthy Heathcote. This Government is providing better futures for those in Western Sydney and across New South Wales by giving them the tools to live a healthy life. I am proud that the New South Wales Government is offering the Make Healthy Normal program.

I thank everyone for getting involved in the project. We walk the walk and talk the talk. I thank member for Oatley Mark Coure for chairing the Parliamentary Friends of Diabetes in this place and Roza Sage, the former member for Blue Mountains, who has taken on a role in Diabetes NSW, which offers diabetes checks in Parliament House. I encourage everyone to have a diabetes check. I was part of the Diabetic Foot Conference at Liverpool Hospital and after seeing the complications that come from having diabetes, I encourage everyone to have a diabetes check and to live a healthy lifestyle.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (12:34): In reply: I thank every member of Parliament who has contributed to this debate. There have been some exceptional contributions. We have some of the best debates in this place when we are addressing important issues. No issue is more important than the health of our society and the health of young people. Recently it has been assessed that if no further action is taken to reduce obesity rates in Australia, it is estimated that the adult obese population will reach 7.2 million people by the year 2025, which translates to an additional 2.4 million obese people in the population. The direct and indirect costs associated with obesity and related diseases over 10 years would cost \$87.7 billion.

I do not want to focus only on the cost, regardless of the fact that it is alarming. I will focus on the importance of health. I mention a comment made by the member for Port Stephens. She gave me a slap, and quite rightly so, and asked if I had just woken up to the fact that we have this pandemic of obesity and overweight people. I was astonished when I read that more than 50 per cent of the population of Western Sydney is overweight or obese. It was a defining moment for me, which is why I moved this motion. I take the slap on board. The statistics highlight the reason we need to have this conversation.

The Make Healthy Normal introduced by the Minister for Health seeks to generate a community-wide conversation about being overweight and obese the implications of being overweight and obese. We can go further. Each of us has the ability, as we communicate with our respective communities, to put together a small pack in our newsletters. I will create a similar message to the one that has been created by the Cancer Council. When we see yellow daffodil symbols we all recognise that it resembles the importance of Relay For Life and raising money on behalf of the Cancer Council. I will draw on that example to create an advertising campaign so that members of Parliament can promote the message to members of their communities that it is not normal to be overweight.

We must make healthy normal and ensure that people look after their own health. As the member for Balmain said, canteen school guidelines must be updated so that kids know what is healthy. There is no better way than to educate young people, such as the green, amber and red light principle that is now in canteens. If we instil in children's minds what is healthy at a young age they will carry that knowledge with them throughout their lives, and hopefully they will lead healthy lives. I will take that up with the Minister for Education because it is a good point. I greatly appreciate the support for this motion and the contributions that have been made by all members.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Castle Hill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

GLENDALE TAFE

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:39): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the tremendous work that Glendale TAFE does for the vocational education sector in the Hunter region.
- (2) Notes that the Government has reduced the working hours of part-time teachers since March 2011.
- (3) Notes that students at Glendale TAFE utilise VET FEE-HELP loans.
- (4) Notes the positive impact metal fabrication and welding courses have had in providing vital skills for many students.
- (5) Calls on the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills and Minister for Small Business to restore funding and reverse job cuts at Glendale TAFE to ensure that student outcomes are not negatively affected.

I wish things had changed for the better for TAFE since I foreshadowed this motion, but if anything things have got worse. On Thursday 28 April, non-teaching TAFE employees across the State, including those on Hunter campuses, called a strike to protest against yet another Government statement of disdain for the public education provider. The protest was against an impractical and blatantly disrespectful proposal to employ non-teaching staff—administrative workers, laboratory assistants, librarians and storepersons—on a part yearly basis. These staff form the backbone of TAFE NSW, ensuring the smooth operation of TAFE so that teachers can teach and students can learn.

I understand that this Government has contempt for protests, but these people are merely trying to protect their livelihoods. From what? On 20 April the Minister for Skills released a report compiled by Boston Consulting Group which, once again, declared that TAFE is uncompetitive and inefficient. The report compared TAFE's efficiency and competence with just two private providers. One was Navitas, a skills provider that caters predominantly for international students seeking entry into tertiary education. Comparisons with Navitas are not very valid because there are limited TAFE faculties that actively compete with Navitas range of courses.

The other comparison was with the beleaguered Australian Careers Network. The offices of that organisation were recently raided by the Australian Federal Police following an investigation by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] for unconscionable conduct. The ACCC is currently seeking to recover \$106 million in taxpayer funding from that organisation. The Minister's office released a statement claiming that the information and opinions expressed in the report were not those of the Government or of the Minister's office. If that were the case, why did the Minister release the report in the first place?

This Government's ongoing assault of the public sector, and zealous attempts to restructure TAFE without properly funding the changes it forcibly implements come at the expense of students and employees. The Government has revealed the disregard it has for the people who are invested in TAFE—hardworking Australians. Since March 2011, the hours of part-time teachers at Glendale TAFE have been cut due to lack of funding. Teachers have been threatened with having the hours in a full-time working week increased without a pay rise to match. Public Service Association members are currently negotiating with TAFE NSW as well as fighting the implementation of the employment terms that would reduce some permanent teachers' positions to permanent part-time positions, with 22 weeks of forced unpaid leave.

Added to this is the forced rollout of the EBS—software that has failed miserably. The software was supposed to help TAFE cope with student enrolments and payments under the ludicrous Smart and Skilled voucher system, which was supposedly implemented to make TAFE competition ready. It has done the opposite. The cherries on this sour cake are the fee hikes that students have been slapped with. A Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care costs around eleven times what it cost three years ago. Three years ago it cost just \$1,500 at Glendale TAFE. Some TAFE institutes have seen price rises of 7,000 per cent on certain courses.

Taking everything I have mentioned into consideration, it is a wonder TAFE can operate at all, yet somehow it does. Despite the Government's attempts to bend vocational education and training [VET] funding in favour of private competitors, regardless of how many of these competitors are under investigation by the ACCC—at the last count three in Sydney alone—is it not time that we took stock of what is happening to this once fine institution? How are those teachers and staff—each integral to the transfer of vocational and technical courses—being affected? How are the students being affected, and in many cases turned away by VET's tarnishing reputation? The courses that Glendale TAFE has provided in my electorate are essential to our local economy and to the greater Newcastle and Hunter economies. In just the same way TAFE institutes around the State and country are crucial to Australia.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (12:45): I oppose this motion. While it is pleasing to hear an Opposition member finally saying something positive about TAFE, I remind this House that the Opposition's entire TAFE campaign is built on lies and misinformation. Let us look at the facts. It is those opposite who are the biggest threat to TAFE. Rather than setting out a positive vision for TAFE and vocational education and training in this State, Labor has spent all its time campaigning outside healthy, thriving campuses telling prospective students that it is a bad time to enrol in TAFE. Labor's campaign is one of lies and misinformation. It has claimed that this Government has cut TAFE funding in half, when it is investing \$1.99 billion in TAFE—a \$122 million increase on last year.

Labor claims there is a mass student exodus from TAFE this year, and that apprenticeships and traineeships have declined because of Smart and Skilled. Let us expose this lie, as well. Enrolments in 2016 are in fact up, with more than 315,000 students training at TAFE in just the first four months of 2016. The number of commencing students is up by 27 per cent compared to the same time last year. There has been a 14 per cent increase in Certificate IV to Advanced Diploma level commencements, while enrolments in Certificate IV alone has increased by 18 per cent. This is an excellent result for TAFE, which those on this side of the House like to see, as it represents a significant increase in the number of enrolments in vocational education and training at TAFE NSW.

Apprenticeship and traineeship approvals are increasing again, following declines recently reported by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research [NCVER]. Apprenticeship commencements in air conditioning and refrigeration trades increased by 17 per cent. Enrolment numbers of electricians and plumbers both increased by 7 per cent. Traineeship approvals are up 12.6 per cent for the first quarter of 2016 compared to the first quarter of 2015. New entrant traineeships have grown by more than 10 per cent—6,890 for the first quarter of 2016 compared to 6,118 for the first quarter of 2015. Industries such as building and construction, communications, furnishing, light manufacturing, textiles, hospitality, and utilities and electro-technology are all performing strongly compared to the same period last year.

Ms Prue Car: What about the teachers?

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: I have news for the member opposite: It is all about the students. It is not about her union mates. It is all about the students.

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: This is about students not the teachers. It is about the Teachers' Federation for you guys. How much are they contributing to your campaign?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! I call the member for Clarence to order. Members on both sides of the House will cease conversing across the table. The member for Upper Hunter will be heard with due regard, as was the member for Wallsend.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: This is all good news. Let us expose that lie about skyrocketing fees. A Certificate IV in Access to Work and Training is only \$220. A Certificate II in Construction is \$870. A Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance is \$1,440. If a student is Aboriginal, has a disability, or is a young person on welfare, from social housing or in out-of-home care, he or she does not pay a cent.

The New South Wales Government pays an average of 90 per cent of the cost of foundation skills, 75 per cent of Certificate II and Certificate III, 70 per cent of Certificate IV and 60 per cent of diplomas. For a Certificate IV in Commercial Cookery, the New South Wales Government contributes more than \$11,000 per student. For a Certificate III in Carpentry and Joinery, the New South Wales Government contributes more than \$12,000 per student. On the one hand, Labor opposes the right of students to choose their own training provider, but, on the other, Labor supported private training providers when it was last in government. Funding for private training providers in New South Wales grew under Labor. It doubled from \$100 million in 2005 to \$200 million in 2010. In 2015-16 under this Government, \$56 million in funding followed students training with private providers.

Labor claims that the New South Wales Government is selling off 27 TAFE campuses, relying on an old leaked document from last year to prove its case. Let us expose this lie too. TAFE NSW will only divest those assets that are unused or no longer fit for purpose, with all proceeds to be reinvested into new TAFE assets. Eighteen of the assets on this alleged "hit list" are surplus vacant land and buildings—not TAFE campuses, as claimed by Labor. Labor left TAFE in a mess, with operating costs 40 per cent to 60 per cent higher than in other States, locking young people out of training and education opportunities. Labor allowed money to be wasted on administration costs in TAFE, rather than investing in education and training for students in New South Wales. Labor and The Greens believe that all VET courses should be free. They are quite happy for this Government to fund courses like basketweaving, bookbinding and even hula hooping. This ignores the reality that responsible economic management is required.

Within the next three years, New South Wales will need 25,000 new skilled workers in the disability sector to support the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS]. This Government has responded, investing \$10 million last year to fund 2,000 additional new training places in qualifications that support the NDIS rollout. We need to focus funding on creating more places in those courses that will actually lead to a job. Hula hooping is wonderful, but you do not get paid a lot of money for doing it. If the taxpayer is going to support it, the money should go towards supporting jobs. Labor's ideology is one of propping up inefficiencies at the expense of training opportunities. Labor fails to place the student at the centre of vocational education and training. I will remind them just one last time: I am opposing this motion because TAFE is about the students, not about Labor's union mates.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:52): I support the motion moved by the member for Wallsend, which states:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the tremendous work that Glendale TAFE does for the vocational education sector in the Hunter region.
- (2) Notes that the Government has reduced the working hours of part-time teachers' since March 2011.
- (3) Notes that students at Glendale TAFE utilise VET fee HELP Loans.
- (4) Notes the positive impact metal fabrication and welding courses have had in providing vital skills for many students.
- (5) Calls on the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills and Minister for Small Business to restore funding and reverse job cuts at Glendale TAFE to ensure that student outcomes are not negatively affected.

I commend the work Glendale TAFE does for the vocational education sector in the Hunter region and particularly for those in my electorate of Charlestown. In Charlestown, an increasing number of people are equipping themselves with trade qualifications, and it is TAFE that is enabling them to do so. Between 2006 and 2011 there was an almost 20 per cent jump in the number of people in Charlestown with a trade qualification. Glendale TAFE provides the people of the Hunter with options and opportunities. It provides school leavers with a range of career paths to pursue. It provides people of all ages with the opportunity to reskill, gain new qualifications and follow a new path of employment.

With the reduction in mining jobs and the industry restructuring occurring in the Hunter, it is more important than ever that the people of the Hunter have this opportunity—but cutting teaching hours in courses like metal fabrication and welding reduces the skills of the Hunter workforce at a time when it is vital workers are able to reskill. The Baird Government is not only reducing the working hours of teachers at the TAFE, they are making it harder for the people of the Hunter to gain qualifications that enable them to find employment. These cuts therefore only contribute further to the increasing rate of unemployment in the Hunter. TAFE is particularly important in providing a pathway into skilled employment for young people from low-income backgrounds. In the New South Wales section of the Annual National Reports of the Australian Vocational Education and Training System, it is noted:

In 2011, almost 47 per cent of TAFE NSW students were from the two lowest quintiles that measure high disadvantage.

That is why Labor proudly introduced the Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (TAFE Funding Guarantee) Bill 2015. This bill guarantees that at least 70 per cent of the Vocational Education and Training budget will be allocated to TAFE and caps contestable public funding for private education providers at a maximum of 30 per cent—preventing the Baird Government from shifting public funding from TAFE to private providers. However, while this side of the House is committed to investing in and ensuring ongoing funding for TAFE, those on the other side of the House continue to divert public funding away from TAFE to private providers.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): If the members for Clarence and Londonderry want to have a private conversation, they should take it outside. At the moment we are listening to the member for Charlestown—and she will now be heard in silence.

Ms JODIE HARRISON: Unfortunately it is in the Liberals' DNA to assume that private is better. They simply do not understand the importance of TAFE. TAFE provides access to courses that private providers simply do not and will not. Private providers do play a role in our education system and high-quality providers are valued, but TAFE cannot be denied desperately needed funding that is instead being given to profit driven companies. I congratulate the member for Wallsend for bringing forward this important motion and I commend it to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! The members for Upper Hunter and Terrigal will be called to order if they continue to interject.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (12:57): I also oppose the motion moved by the member for Wallsend on the vocational education sector. The New South Wales Government is focused on building a strong, modern

TAFE that will continue to innovate and train students not only for the jobs of today but for those of tomorrow. Let us not ignore how the New South Wales Government is enabling TAFE to address the skills shortage in New South Wales. TAFE NSW is investing in modern, industry-standard facilities, establishing specialist industry centres of excellence and developing online learning portals to provide students with access to training on the latest equipment and technology. This helps to ensure industry has the skilled workers needed to meet the New South Wales Government's record \$60 billion infrastructure building program.

Whether it is in regional NSW or in the city, TAFE NSW is leveraging this Government's record investment in infrastructure to deliver innovative training, leading to job opportunities for students and skilled employees for industry. The New South Wales Government continues to make major investments in TAFE NSW campuses. The 2015-16 budget includes more than \$100 million in new and ongoing major capital works: \$46 million in ongoing major projects and \$61 million in new major works. There are 13 major capital works projects underway around the State as we speak. For example, we have made a multimillion-dollar investment in a new state-of-the-art automotive technology and engineering centre that will open at the Wetherill Park college in 2016. This will be the largest automotive and heavy vehicle training hub in Australia, providing students with access to state-of-the-art equipment and technology.

The New South Wales Government has made further investments in TAFE facilities in Western Sydney, in the Hunter and in western New South Wales, including at: Kurri Kurri campus in the plant and heavy vehicle training centre, an investment of \$12 million; Maitland campus in the centre for dry wall plastering and associated trades, an investment of nearly \$10 million; Tamworth campus in the community services, health, plumbing and disabilities facilities, an investment of \$11.1 million; Albury campus in new connected learning facilities, an investment of \$7.1 million; and Nepean College's Kingswood campus in health and support services facilities, an investment worth \$26.4 million. That was opened by the Minister for Skills just last week.

This is a major investment program for a public provider that demonstrates that TAFE is well supported. The Government will have a significant investment plan for TAFE NSW in the coming years. This includes: expanding the reach of TAFE NSW into regional areas by building a new network of connected learning centres that provide more training options; increasing digital capability with integrated facilities to enable access to training—at home, in the workplace, anywhere, anytime to help students balance family and workplace responsibilities—modernising and consolidating TAFE's specialist centres in key locations across New South Wales so that training in technical and high-risk areas is provided to industry standards; and providing access to a wide range of flexible and blended training and targeted support services across New South Wales. Those opposite oppose this plan. They want the TAFE of yesteryear, which offers courses that industry no longer supports and that delivers training via the old "chalk and talk" model. This motion should be opposed.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (13:01): I am always happy to support well-considered motions moved by the member for Wallsend, including this motion on Glendale TAFE. I recognise the member as a great grassroots advocate for her electorate. She is in tune with what her constituents think. Like TAFE campuses across the State, Glendale has been hugely valuable in delivering high-quality vocational education and training to thousands of people year after year. Many thousands of people in my electorate of Lake Macquarie have attained trade qualifications at Glendale campus, and I have no doubt that many thousands more would like to be able to do the same in the future.

But Glendale campus, like others, is struggling to retain its status as a premier place of education and training due to the gradual erosion of funding, cutbacks to courses and staffing levels, and the skyrocketing costs now associated with this sort of learning and development. In particular, welding and metal fabrication courses at Glendale have provided valuable skills to a great number of young tradespeople over many decades, but the future of those courses is threatened by funding cuts and cuts to staffing levels. The comments of the member for Upper Hunter would be wonderful if they were true, but we have heard the exact opposite from our constituents.

In the Hunter region we have an economy that is still largely underpinned by older, traditional industries such as the mining industry, which the member for Upper Hunter knows about. But we can also see the future, with new, emergent, clean industries including in clean energy production. We are once again going through change—something not new to the region—and, as it did in the past, TAFE if given a fair go will ably deliver for our area and for New South Wales. I do not think I have to remind the House of the important role that TAFE plays in our communities. But clearly some members need convincing that TAFE is more than a service industry that can and should compete against private providers, who have the luxury of picking and choosing the most profitable courses to deliver.

In 2006, the Allen Consulting Group report commissioned by the then Government found that over the next 20 years—and we are now in the middle of that period—\$6.4 million worth of benefits would flow into the economy for every \$1 million invested in the TAFE system. Despite this, the working hours for part-time teachers has been reduced almost consistently over the past five years. I reiterate the concerns I have expressed previously

in this Chamber about the increases to course fees and the reduction in course choices. I also repeat the concerns I hold about the private sector contracts that are undermining the TAFE sector and which, as we have experienced in the Hunter, are often going to companies or providers with no affiliation with or connection to the Hunter region and with questionable bona fides. Large numbers of my constituents have complained to me about what is happening to our TAFE system, and certainly none has welcomed the changes.

New South Wales needs a strong public-sector organisation that will continue to offer vocational education and training to all, regardless of their background, where they live or their ability to pay. TAFE has done this effectively in the past and the struggle it is now having is due not to a failure of the model but to the dogged pursuit of a conservative ideology that falsely believes competition will always deliver better outcomes. TAFE has been a great friend to New South Wales, underpinning its ability to lead the nation across all sectors for many years. Yes, it needs to grow and adapt to a changing world, but it has always done that and can continue to do so if supported by the Government. I commend the motion and thank the member for Wallsend for bringing this matter before the House.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:05): It is clear from the debate on this motion about Glendale TAFE that one side of the House gives priority to bricks and mortar and the NSW Teachers Federation while leaving the students a poor last. On this side of the House we will back the students every time, and that is why I oppose this motion. The New South Wales Government is investing \$1.99 billion in TAFE NSW, an increase of \$122 million on last year's investment. The New South Wales Government's \$2.3 billion investment in both vocational education and training [VET] and TAFE is a record investment. It is 13 per cent higher than TAFE expenditure in Labor's last budget.

Under this Government, TAFE's share of total VET expenditure in New South Wales increased from 82 per cent to 85 per cent this year. Under Labor, more funding was provided to private providers—I suggest that those opposite should not speak with forked tongues about this—and direct funding doubled from \$100 million in 2005 to \$200 million in 2010. Those opposite should not paint us with the same brush as they deserve to be painted with. Claims that the New South Wales Government has cut funding to teaching units across TAFE are misleading. We are investing more in TAFE NSW, but we are seeing valuable teaching dollars being diverted to costly, wasteful back-office overheads. We are trying to cut overheads so that more funding goes to students. Those opposite want TAFEs to be fully stocked with teachers but with no students because they think that would be efficient, but we want students to learn in the workplace or online because that is what they want.

During sixteen years of Labor TAFE was allowed to run up an overheads bill, with somewhere between 40¢ and 60¢ in every dollar of funding going to administrative costs. That is what those opposite are good at doing: They waste taxpayers' money while delivering minimal outcomes for students. What was Labor's solution to this problem? Those opposite kept funding it, which shows a total disregard for not just responsible economic management but also the students they are supposed to look after. The New South Wales Government will consider ways to reduce those overheads so that more money goes to students through additional teaching resources. This comes at a time when TAFE must use its resources better to remain competitive and sustainable. If TAFE is not sustainable it will fold. That is what would happen under those opposite because they would throw money at a poorly thought-out model. TAFE NSW is facing competition from every direction. The uncapping of university places in 2012, and more recently universities offering an entry-level Australian Tertiary Admission Rank as low as 30, presents an immediate threat to TAFE's future viability.

TAFE NSW must put the students first. The students of today want additional training options outside just the brick-and-mortar institutions, at a pace and time of their choosing—not that of Labor or the Teachers Federation. Students want a blend of formal and informal learning using state-of-the-art technology that matches their own experience in the real world. We have computers and the internet; we are not working in the nineteenth century. If TAFE does not move forward and become a nimble, flexible and efficient education business, it will no longer be relevant or sustainable in the future. TAFE must be flexible. It relies on having an agile, flexible workforce so that it can respond to peaks and troughs in student demand and the job market. Part-time teachers are an important resource and valued staff members. By nature, their hours fluctuate week to week and term to term, depending on demand. That is why they are called "casual" teachers. Part-time casual teachers are an important resource and valued staff members. By nature, their hours fluctuate week to week and term to term depending on demand. That is why they are called casual teachers.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (13:09): By leave, what the Government fails to understand is that Labor and The Greens' argument is about delivering quality outcomes to students. The Government has been trying to model TAFE on a commercial basis. That is why it had the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] do the costings. The Government came up with a commercial outcome so that private colleges could compete with TAFE. Private colleges had been unable to compete with TAFE because it delivered a service of the highest

quality. Let us examine what the Government has done. It has worked really hard to destroy full-time equivalent teaching positions and replace them with part-time positions.

Why is this important? It is important because we know that TAFE teachers have the highest qualifications in Australia and they develop and write high-quality courses for their students. Education systems around the world copy New South Wales TAFE courses. When the Government casualises the workforce the permanent teachers leave and years of industry and teaching experience disappear. Many private colleges steal the TAFE curriculum because it is so good. The Government has undermined the quality of TAFE courses by ensuring that highly qualified and skilled teachers are no longer in the system. It has cut teacher working hours in order to fit the commercial model and reduced course delivery hours.

We know that it is getting harder and harder to meet units of competency when delivering courses. So teachers are told to sign off on students who have not achieved the required outcomes. If members have any questions about how that works in the commercial sector they should look to Victoria, where one college was deregistered because of its terrible work standards and 10,000 qualifications were cancelled. The students received a letter in the mail saying, "We are very sorry you turned up at a college that we registered but that course was not good enough so your qualification is now worth nothing"—and the New South Wales Government is modelling our vocational education system on that sector.

The Government does not understand that trade skills cannot be taught online. Teachers need to teach those skills face to face in a facility that has the right equipment. The Government is heading down the wrong path. We saw it fail in South Australia, Victoria, England and the United States of America but the New South Wales Government is continuing down this path. We know the outcome; the evidence is there for everyone to see. One has only to listen to the daily media reports about how bad the current system is. The Government is defending it not because of the students but because it is ideologically driven to create a commercial model and to destroy our TAFE system—which is one of the best in the world.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (13:13): By leave, I commend the member for Wallsend for her motion. As has been noted by members on both sides of the House, the member puts thought into these issues. This is not a radical motion but it captures the heart of the matter. It was interesting to hear a member of The Nationals suggest that any member would be anti-student. That is crazy.

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: It is if you support bricks and mortar over students.

Ms TAMARA SMITH: It is obviously much more nuanced than that. As former teachers, the member for Wallsend and I—as well as every parent—know that teachers are at the heart of education. I think it is worth repeating Dr John Kaye's recent comment, made poignant by the sadness of his passing:

This is the time for education to no longer be treated as a commodity. Education is a right, TAFE is not a business and students are not profit centres.

That is the heart of this debate. It is The Greens' position that skills Minister John Barilaro's announcement of the private tenders for training and employment placement is cold comfort for young people in our regions who are facing mounting vocational education and training costs and massive cuts in Federal Government support. We know that more than 80,000 students have left TAFE in the past three years. That is not something we can ignore. The State Government has pledged \$8 million to be delivered through private organisations to help young people in the regions access education and employment. Therefore, the option on the table is a privatisation program that has led to a 77 per cent increase in tuition fees from 2013 to 2014 in inner regional areas such as the Northern Rivers and the mid North Coast.

In addition, basic literacy, numeracy and jobseeking courses have increased in price by more than 64 per cent over the same period. Even if one considers this to be a business, the economies of scale for the so-called consumer are pretty shocking. It is hard to see how young people who are struggling to pay rent and put food on the table because of the Federal Government's cut to income support will be able to engage in the State Government's Regional Vocational Education and Training (VET) Pathways program. If the Government were serious about providing opportunities for young people in the regions it would reverse the privatisation of TAFE and lobby its Federal counterparts to reverse the brutal cuts, not hand more money to private organisations to fix the problems it created.

Under the Smart and Skilled reforms half of TAFE's secure budget has been delivered to the private sector. We cannot go past that. Our great public school system and TAFE colleges knock some of the rough edges off socioeconomic disadvantage and celebrate diversity. Importantly, they are central to a culturally, economically and politically successful society that can innovate and thrive in the greenhouse century. This is about public education; it is not about pointscoring. TAFE is public education. I commend both the work of the member for Wallsend and her motion.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (13:17): By leave: I was not going to speak in debate on this motion but I have to contribute because Government members' assertions about TAFE are straight-out lies. I am here to correct some of the lies being told by the Government. What is the truth? Let us look at what Smart and Skilled is doing to the New South Wales TAFE system. Let us examine the Government's budget. It has resulted in 80,000 fewer students attending TAFE. There are 43,000 fewer students in TAFE since the introduction of Smart and Skilled. Members opposite seem to have a hatred of TAFE teachers. I say to them: TAFE teachers teach our TAFE students—surprise, surprise! The Government has sacked 4,600 teachers and support staff.

Add to that a computer system that will not let people enrol or graduate and leaked Cabinet documents that show the Government is trying to sell off 27 campuses, and you have a TAFE system that is in a complete mess. The Government is ripping the heart out of TAFE in New South Wales. There has been a 22 per cent increase in total course fees in this State when youth unemployment in areas like the Hunter is at an all-time high. Will members opposite tell students in the Hunter that despite the fact that youth unemployment is a problem the Government is taking the axe to TAFE? The member for Shellharbour can tell members what happened to her TAFE at Dapto. It suffered death by a thousand cuts. The Government shut the TAFE and opened a shopfront.

Mr Geoff Provost: You don't have to yell.

Ms PRUE CAR: I am not ashamed about being angry on behalf of New South Wales TAFE students. The Government opened a shopfront and Minister Barilaro said that it was good because it had wi-fi. So does McDonald's! What the Government is doing to TAFE is a disgrace. The number of apprenticeships and traineeships is plummeting, course fees are going through the roof, and the Government is sacking more and more teachers every day. Do members know who is suffering? Our students are suffering, our businesses are suffering, and our economy is suffering. If members opposite wanted to rescue TAFE in this State they would impose a limit on contestability with regard to private providers in the vocational education market. TAFE is the public vocational education provider in this State.

The clearest indicator of where members opposite stand with regard to public vocational education is the private provider they have used as a comparator over the past two weeks. They compared TAFE to an organisation that is being investigated for fraud and which has been raided by the Australian Federal Police. Minister Barilaro compared that private provider with TAFE. If members opposite have a glass jaw about this it is because the Government is ripping the heart out of TAFE, and we need to rescue it before it is too late.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! The behaviour of members on both sides of the House during this debate has been absolutely deplorable.

Mr John Robertson: The member for Clarence has been appalling.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! I do not require the assistance of the member for Blacktown. Nor do I need any help from members on the Government benches.

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:22): In reply, I thank members representing the electorates of Upper Hunter, Charlestown, Heathcote, Lake Macquarie, Clarence, Wyong, Ballina and Londonderry and The Greens and Independent members for offering their support to the TAFE sector. That is what this debate is all about. I referred to the former and the current mayors of Lake Macquarie because Glendale is in their patch. They know the area extremely well, as was evident from their speeches. I thank them particularly for their contributions.

I have been involved with the TAFE sector for a long time. My brother, who was a bricklayer, was WorldSkills manager for New South Wales. He also taught at TAFE colleges at Coffs Harbour and Singleton, and was the head teacher of bricklaying at Newcastle TAFE. As a result, I have spent a great deal of my life attending functions to raise money for WorldSkills competitions. I also taught modern history at Newcastle TAFE before coming into this place. Given that background, I know a little about the TAFE sector and I appreciate it. I know that TAFE colleges provide a quality education while ensuring that students have fun. Studying at TAFE provides an alternative pathway for many students who do not fit into the normal school environment.

Like other TAFE colleges, Glendale TAFE is a valuable resource. The member for Upper Hunter and I agree about the viability and importance of TAFE as a quality vocational education provider, and I am happy to say as many positive things about TAFE as he did. We have wonderful TAFE teachers. As the member for Wyong said, those teachers often have an industry background and long-term experience in their field of expertise. They also have teaching qualifications, so they know what they are doing. Often they know more about what they are doing than those working in the private vocational education sector. The member for Wyong also said that the good TAFE teachers are being poached by private providers. That is a pity, but it is often because they have been faced with TAFE job cuts or they have gone from permanent to part-time work. They also need to earn a living.

Members have been emotional during this debate, and I can understand why. We have experienced TAFE cutbacks in the Hunter, and I know they have been imposed throughout the State. The member for Charlestown talked about how the students and people of Charlestown have equipped themselves for the future by undertaking TAFE courses, including those offered at Glendale TAFE. The member for Heathcote provided some wonderful examples. I agree with what he said about courses being offered in regional areas, and I hope they continue to be offered. Of course, people living in regional areas such as Singleton experience difficulties accessing TAFE courses. Like the bricklaying course my brother taught, many courses are no longer offered.

While some great courses are offered, they are inaccessible. People living in the Upper Hunter cannot undertake some courses because they are too far away or the public transport on offer does not allow them to attend a college. The member for Lake Macquarie said some wonderful things about the high quality of the qualifications offered at Glendale TAFE, and we both mentioned the metal fabrication course offered in the Hunter. Some of the blokes I went to school with became bricklayers, boilermakers, and fitters and turners. We still need those tradespeople in the Hunter because we are still building train carriages, and we want to build more. Many of Newcastle's boilermakers have moved to Sydney to work in the construction industry. I thank all members for their contributions to this debate and for their support. I urge everyone to support this important motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Wallsend be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes36
Noes48
Majority.....12

AYES

Dr McDermott	Mr Atalla	Mr Barr
Mr Chanthivong	Mr Crakanthorp	Mr Daley
Mr Dib	Mr Harris	Mr Hoenig
Mr Kamper	Mr Lalich (teller)	Mr Lynch
Mr Mehan	Mr Minns	Mr Park
Mr Parker	Mr Piper	Mr Robertson
Mr Warren (teller)	Mr Zangari	Ms Aitchison
Ms Burney	Ms Car	Ms Catley
Ms Doyle	Ms Finn	Ms Harrison
Ms Hay	Ms Haylen	Ms Hornery
Ms Leong	Ms McKay	Ms Mihailuk
Ms T. F. Smith	Ms Washington	Ms Watson

NOES

Dr Lee	Mr Anderson	Mr Aplin
Mr Ayres	Mr Barilaro	Mr Bromhead (teller)
Mr Connolly	Mr Constance	Mr Coure
Mr Crouch	Mr Dominello	Mr Elliott
Mr Evans	Mr Fraser	Mr Gee
Mr George	Mr Grant	Mr Gulaptis
Mr Hazzard	Mr Henskens	Mr Humphries
Mr Johnsen	Mr Kean	Mr Maguire
Mr Notley-Smith	Mr O'Dea	Mr Patterson (teller)
Mr Perrottet	Mr Piccoli	Mr Provest
Mr Roberts	Mr Sidoti	Mr Speakman
Mr Stokes	Mr Taylor	Mr Toole
Mr Ward	Mr Williams	Ms Berejiklian
Ms Davies	Ms Gibbons	Ms Goward
Ms Hodgkinson	Ms Pavey	Ms Petinos
Ms Skinner	Ms Upton	Ms Williams

PAIRS

Mr Foley
Mr Rowell

Mr Baird

Ms K. Smith

Motion negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:20): Welcome to all of our guests in the gallery this afternoon. Today it is the birthday of the member for Bankstown—happy birthday. I extend a very warm welcome to the members of the Children's Medical Research Institute, including former member for Strathfield Virginia Judge, who was part of a luncheon which I hosted in the Speaker's dining room. It was a fantastic event. Thank you, Virginia, for organising that. Professor Roger Reddell who was also in attendance took my advice not to stay for question time—wise man. They were my guests.

I welcome to the gallery high school captains from Pittwater High School, Barrenjoey High School, Narrabeen Sports High School, Northern Beaches Christian School, Mater Maria Catholic College, the German International School Sydney and Galstaun College, guests of the Minister for Planning, the member for Pittwater. I also welcome Mark Barton, Allen Munro and John Setttee from Landmark, and David Thorn from Wallendbeen. I have family in Wallendbeen—it is a beautiful place. They are guests of the Deputy Speaker, the member for Lismore. I also acknowledge 45 students and their teachers from Koorringal High School in the gallery today, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Corrections, Emergency Services, Veterans and the Centenary of ANZAC, the member for Wagga Wagga. I also extend a very warm welcome to Codey Swadling from Orange and Bryce O'Connor, students from the University of Sydney.

Question Time

EAST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:22): My question is directed to the Premier. Has the East Hills Public School actually received the \$18,000 for a covered outdoor learning area that you approved to convicted money launderer Carl Trad or are the children at this school being punished for the conduct of others?

The SPEAKER: That question certainly contains a clear imputation. It is up to the Premier whether he takes that question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:23): Between all the muck within that, if the genuine question is about an update on that project, I am happy to give the Leader of the Opposition that information.

WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (14:23): My question is directed to the Premier. How is this Government delivering for the people of Western Sydney?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:23): That is how you do it. What a fantastic member for Mulgoa we have. Unbelievable—they have never seen a member like it.

Ms Noreen Hay: Why do you hate the rest of them?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: She does such a fantastic job. I am on the bandwagon: "Noreen for Premier." I am on that one too.

Ms Noreen Hay: I am happy to replace you any time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is pretty good. That is quite funny.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is a fantastic opportunity to talk about Western Sydney. I am delighted to do that. This State, indeed Western Sydney, finally has a Government that understands and prioritises Western Sydney. I acknowledge the unbelievable achievement of the Western Sydney Wanderers this year.

Mr John Robertson: You barrack for Sydney FC; you wear the blue.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I did not see the member for Blacktown out on the paddock. The Wanderers did an unbelievable job this season. We are proud of their achievement. We know that next year is the Year of the Wanderer. The former member for Granville, David Borger, endorsed what is in the Federal budget for Western Sydney. We acknowledge his support for the great work happening in Western Sydney. When we travel to Western Sydney, it is hard not to be excited. It is absolutely incredible. In transport, we have announced the Parramatta Light Rail, which will be a game changer for Parramatta and Western Sydney. In the north-west the tunnelling for the Sydney Metro is complete. It is underway; we are doing it. I know Opposition members do not like public transport. They cannot stand it and do not want it. It is no wonder The Greens are winning more seats. They want more public transport. Labor wants less.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Since we came to office we have delivered 8,700 extra weekly transport services. This Government is delivering for the people of Western Sydney. Everywhere we turn there are new roads. They are alongside the public transport. The M4 widening is under construction under this Government. In addition, we have contracts to duplicate the M5 East, which is a project Labor got wrong. We are fixing it and making it even better; we are making it work. It is underway. Together with the Federal Government we are spending \$3.5 billion around the Western Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek. It will change the lives of people and provide a great opportunity to continue to deliver more roads.

Everywhere we turn new schools are coming to life under this Education Minister. Arthur Phillip High School, a public school in Parramatta, is a \$100 million project. It will make a huge difference. We have taken 1,800 jobs from the head office of the Department of Education and Communities and moved them to Parramatta in Western Sydney. The Opposition love it. There is an additional 1,000 teachers in Western Sydney as a result of the difference we are making. They are doing a great job. I pay tribute to our teachers for the great job they are doing across this State and in Western Sydney. I acknowledge the high school student leaders in the gallery who are guests of the member for Camden. It is great to have them here. What about health in Western Sydney? We cannot believe it.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections, particularly from Opposition members.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Everything that is happening out there cannot be true, but under this Health Minister it is. Look at how excited the member for Campbelltown is. He is on fire; he loves it. He cannot believe it. We are working on hospitals in Campbelltown, Blacktown, Mount Druitt and Nepean. [*Extension of time*]

There is so much good news. We know how much an upgrade was needed at Westmead Hospital. This Government is delivering a \$900 million upgrade as well as the Children's Medical Research Institute. It is great to have them here. All the work they are doing will change people's lives. In respect of art, it is about time that Western Sydney had key art facilities. We are proud to be delivering the Powerhouse Museum. It is a great museum that we are making even greater. It will be on the Parramatta River and we are proud to be delivering it. It is a great news story but I have seen something that worries me a little bit. Labor are reverting back to type. That is, they are announcing projects that are not costed and not funded. They do that well. The Leader of the Opposition wants to build a convention and exhibition centre at Sydney Olympic Park. We know their history with convention and exhibition centres. Look at the member for Wollongong; she herself is a convention and exhibition centre. She wants one in Wollongong.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. Perhaps the Premier could tell us how his new stadium at Moore Park is going.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has been relevant. There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He wants to upgrade Spotless Stadium but has not put a dollar towards it. He has no idea how to fund it. We are proud of what we are doing in Western Sydney. Whether it be transport, roads, education, health or arts, we are making a difference to the people of Western Sydney and we are proud to be doing it because that is what a responsible Government does.

The SPEAKER: I welcome students from Macarthur Anglican School, Elderslie High School, Camden High School, Magdalene Catholic High School, St Gregory's College, and Broughton Anglican College, who are guests of the member for Camden.

ST CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL, PANANIA

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (14:31): My question is directed to the Premier. Has the St Christopher School at Panania received \$20,000 for a shade structure that was originally approved for the La'u Samoa Society or are the children at this school being punished for the conduct of others?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:31): Happy birthday. Does everyone know that the Labor Party has a tactics meeting in the morning? Its members work out what questions they are going to ask. They think they will make life difficult for the Government. They do because I have no idea what they are doing. They have smear one day and then they ask minute questions about small projects, which are important projects for the local schools. We are happy to listen to them and understand what their concerns might be but, as I told the Leader of the Opposition, if there are concerns about that specific project—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: It was a simple question.

The SPEAKER: Order! What is the member for Maroubra's point of order?

Mr Michael Daley: Standing Order 129. Have they received the money or not? It is a simple question.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: After Parliament I am happy to have the Education Minister provide an update to the member for Maroubra, if that is what he wants.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not a debate. The Premier has been relevant. Does the member for Bankstown have a point of order?

Ms Tanya Mihailuk: Point of order: I would like to assist the Premier, because he approved the grant.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no standing order that allows members to assist the Premier. The member for Bankstown will resume her seat.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: As I said, I am happy to find the details of that project. Members on this side of the House are proud of what we are doing for public education in this State. Under this Education Minister we were the first State to sign up for Gonski, which provides benefits across all departments in the education sector. We are proud to be delivering it. We are proud to deliver record amounts into new infrastructure. We have catered for 26,000 additional students.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has been relevant to the question. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We are proud of what we have done in our schools but, most importantly, we are proud of our teachers. Every member in this House tells teachers that we are proud of what they have done.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not a debate. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We are proud of the member for Keira, for when he was a teacher. We are proud that the member for Wyong was a teacher and then principal. The Government is very proud of what it is doing in our schools. It will continue to invest in students. It will continue to invest in new schools. That is exactly what this Government has done every day since it come into Government.

WESTERN SYDNEY CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (14:34): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. What is the Government doing to promote Western Sydney's vibrant culture and give unprecedented access to our museums and theatres?

The SPEAKER: Order! The interjections will cease. I warn members that they may be asked to leave the Chamber for the rest of the day if they continue to interject.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Justice and Police, Deputy Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (14:35): On behalf of The Nationals I congratulate the member for Canterbury on her valedictory speech last night. I wish her well for the future. I thank the member for Parramatta for his excellent question.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Wollongong to order for the first time.

Mr TROY GRANT: As the Minister for Arts, I have come to understand and learn—whether it be through film, television, theatre, art or music—that the stories of Sydney's west should be told. Unfortunately those stories were gagged for far too long by Labor. Members of the Labor Party often look down their noses at popular tastes. As the Minister for Arts I have spent a lot of time in the wonderful communities in Western Sydney and I have learnt that the diverse communities are rich in cultures, which should be promoted through the arts. There is much talent in Western Sydney. The actors, writers and directors in that area are taking over the silver screen at the Sydney Film Festival, which has been sending screenings to the Casula Powerhouse and to audiences closer to home.

Our television shows are taking on Los Angeles. Our producers, actors and directors—supported by this Liberal-Nationals Government—are telling their stories and being heard all over the world. Partnerships are being created in Western Sydney, including with the Opera House, which is digitally streaming its shows and lectures in the suburbs of Western Sydney. That is a demonstration of the wonderful results that can arise from partnerships. Artists in Western Sydney are building partnerships with our flagship organisations—the Australian Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and other wonderful institutions located in the central business district. Shows that are created in Western Sydney do not stay there but travel throughout Sydney and interstate. This can occur thanks to the extra \$7.5 million that this Government has injected into Western Sydney talent and jobs. Government funding has given talented people the means to create projects that travel.

Our prime cultural institutions are also being encouraged and supported to go west. The Art Gallery of New South Wales is taking some of their programs to teachers and students in Western Sydney to create a great relationship. The Australian Museum is working with juveniles in detention in Western Sydney and offering programs to at-risk youth. The Government is very proud to have funded the National Theatre of Parramatta, which has just launched its first show. According to the reviews and the local member, audiences absolutely loved it. As the Premier alluded, the Powerhouse Museum is being relocated to the Parramatta Riverbank, which will give new life to that area. It will takeover an old car park and turn the area into a vibrant hub. The collection on display will increase by 40 per cent. It will be the best museum of applied arts and sciences in the world. That is something that this Government is enormously proud of. It is expected that one million visitors from nearby schools and from around the world will visit this state-of-the-art museum in the heart of Sydney, where it should be.

Even the Leader of the Opposition supports this. I thank him for supporting this move of the Powerhouse Museum. Unfortunately, that is the only thing he has got right with respect to the arts. He was the shadow Minister with responsibility for the arts. He put out a press release on 11 April—when I read it I thought it might have been 1 April—which was entitled, "My Top Ten Priorities for Western Sydney". You would dead-set think that it was written with a couple of strokes of green crayon. He has promised to build a Taj Mahal and plonk all the arts institutions and companies into one suburb to the exclusion of all other suburbs. The Leader of the Opposition does not understand the communities of Western Sydney. What he is planning to build is a white elephant—not a holistic strategy. His own document shows that all this will be funded with \$100 million. The Leader of the Opposition will get all the organisations and institutions and plonk them into some white elephant in a suburb somewhere. That is an example of the lack of substance that we have already seen from Labor. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Maroubra for the first time. I call the member for Keira to order for the second time.

Mr TROY GRANT: Labor Party members are trying to achieve some sort of headline, but if you scratch the surface of what they say you find that there is not much substance—if you shake it, not much falls out. This is a shocking, disgraceful plan. Not so long ago, the Leader of the Opposition, in this very Chamber, criticised me and this Government for the lack of funding for the arts in Western Sydney. The funding base for arts and culture inherited by this Government was 9 per cent. Those on the other side of the Chamber criticise us for a lack of funding but in just the last year as the Minister for the Arts I am very proud to say that I have increased program funding for the arts in Western Sydney by 40 per cent. That is an achievement that those on the other side of the Chamber would only dream of.

If you look at history you can get a clear understanding of where Labor was heading. We should not be surprised about this announcement for a \$100 million fund for a music bowl and arts facilities, because about 20 years ago another Labor luminary, Premier Bob Carr, promised to do something for the arts in Sydney. He promised something called the Walsh Bay project. Did Labor deliver that project? No. That was 20 years ago. What we see from those opposite is history repeating itself. The dud arts Minister and Premier, Bob Carr, is being repeated in the dud Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:43): My question is addressed to the Minister for Veterans Affairs. What is the Government doing to assist veterans' transitions from military service ?

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. Some of the remarks that I have heard from members on the Opposition benches were inappropriate. I am referring to the member for Bankstown and others.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (14:43): I thank the decorated member for Seven Hills for his very good question. I think it is important for us to acknowledge that the member for Seven Hills, in his capacity as a police officer, was twice decorated. I think it is appropriate for us to pause and, for the benefit of those in the gallery, have a show of hands from all those members of Parliament who have served in the military. I note that the member for Prospect has his hand up. That is fantastic. I am delighted to see that he has not taken that off his resume. For the benefit of the people in the gallery, on Anzac Day the member for Prospect made a very nasty mistake, which upset a lot of veterans. He was wearing the Australian Infantry—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: Madam Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order and stop shouting.

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The Minister was asked a very serious question that is confronting veterans in our community—we all know a lot of them—yet he has gone straight on to attack and—

The SPEAKER: Order! It is very early in the Minister's response. I will listen further. If there are any personal attacks on other members, I will certainly sit the Minister down.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Today we are launching a policy on veterans, so it is very important that the community recognises those veterans who are worthy of this benefit. As I said, on Anzac Day the member for Prospect made a mistake. He has made an apology for his inability to get the decorations the Army offers correct. Unfortunately he has also made a—

Mr David Mehan: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for The Entrance will wait until the House comes to order. The member for Kiama who will come to order.

Mr David Mehan: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister has not addressed—

The SPEAKER: Order! Yes, The member has made a valid point. I ask the Minister to return to the leave of the question.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: They are all trying to defend a member of Parliament who wore a decoration that he did not earn. The funny thing is—

Mr John Robertson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Is it the same point of order?

Mr John Robertson: It is, Madam Speaker. What is very clear is that there was a serious question about veterans, as has been highlighted. Despite—

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Minister to take heed of the advice that has been given from this Chair—that is, that he return to the leave of the question.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I just think it is funny that the member for Prospect says in his resume that he was a specialist in the war. His specialty in the war was fraud!

The SPEAKER: Order! On several occasions I asked the Minister to return to the leave of the question. I now ask him to resume his seat. I call the member for Prospect to order.

MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:48): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the member for East Hills has been forced to the crossbench, why is the Premier allowing the Liberal Party logo and a gigantic display of his head on a billboard right outside his electorate office?

The SPEAKER: Order! I advise members to remove those props. If they do not the members holding them will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:49): I note that the member for Prospect has raised that, so: Attention! At ease.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fairfield will remove the props or he will be placed on three calls and removed from the Chamber. If he continues to defy my ruling he will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: This is wonderful. The best that Opposition members can do is to hold up a photo of my head on something somewhere. In relation to any old billboards that might be out there, feel free. If they want to take them down, take them down. I do not care. I understand that it is difficult being in opposition. It is really hard; I understand that. We have been in opposition and I understand how hard it is. But I will just give the Opposition a little tip: whether it is East Hills or any other electorate in this great State, what people are interested in is how the State is progressing. Maybe the Opposition, rather than waving around dinky little signs, should raise some of the real issues. Maybe the Opposition should say to the Minister for Family and Community Services, "I have seen that kids—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Is the Premier saying that Glenn Brookes is still his man in East Hills?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has been relevant. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I have made my position on that matter very clear, publicly and in this Chamber.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. His behaviour is inappropriate.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is up to the Opposition to decide, but all I am saying is that issues such as kids at risk of significant harm—how we are tracking on that—are the sorts of issues the Opposition should be raising. The statistics were getting worse. I would have thought that is a fundamental issue, and I understand the Minister has been implementing a range of policies that are starting to change those statistics. That is a positive thing; that is a great thing. Those, to me, are the sorts of issues I would have thought an opposition would be focused on.

If the Opposition wants to go on with the sort of silly theatre it has been going on with instead of addressing real issues, it can. But what we on this side are going to do is exactly what I have just gone through. We are going to continue to build the roads the community wants. We are going to continue to build the hospitals our doctors and nurses deserve. We are going to build the schools to help our teachers to educate our kids. We are going to do everything to protect vulnerable kids—because that is what a good government does.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Has the Premier completed his answer?

Mr Mike Baird: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (14:51): My question is addressed to the Minister for Medical Research, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. What cutting-edge reforms is the Government implementing to help eliminate domestic and family violence?

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Medical Research, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (14:52): I thank the member for Oatley for his question and his support for the Government's initiatives to prevent domestic and family violence. We know that domestic and family violence is often characterised by a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviours, and perpetrators often repeat these behaviours in successive relationships. We want to prevent people from being kept in the dark about these patterns of abusive behaviour. If we are going to break the cycle of violence we need to intervene early and prevent future violence.

On 13 April, I was proud to stand with the Commissioner of Police, Andrew Scipione, and Assistant Commissioner Mick Fuller to launch the pilot NSW Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme. I acknowledge the support for the scheme from the wonderful members whose electorates have pilot sites: the member for Oatley who has asked the question, Mark Coure; the member for Cronulla, Mark Speakman; the member for Heathcote, Lee Evans; the member for Holsworthy, Melanie Gibbons; the member for Miranda, Eleni Petinos; the member for Tamworth, Kevin Anderson; the member for Kiama, Gareth Ward; and, may I say, the excellent member for South Coast.

The scheme is the first of its kind anywhere in Australia and just one of the New South Wales Government's strategies to intervene early and help reduce domestic violence. The disclosure scheme aims to increase the safety of both women and men potentially at risk of domestic violence. It allows persons who have concerns about their current or former partner to apply at a participating police station to receive information on whether that current or former partner has a history of domestic violence or any other relevant offences. However, it is often other loved ones, like a parent, sibling or close friend, who may notice that something is not quite right in a new relationship.

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

Ms PRU GOWARD: Under the scheme concerned third parties, such as a friend, a family member or a professional already working with a family, can make an application. The scheme is being trialled in four NSW Police Force local area commands: Oxley Local Area Command—in the Tamworth area; Shoalhaven—in the Nowra area; Sutherland—in the Engadine-Sutherland area; and St George—in the Kogarah-Hurstville area. The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme [DVDS] has been designed to be simple and efficient, and to work alongside the current New South Wales legal framework and service system.

We have worked and consulted closely with experts from police, Justice and the domestic violence sector to tailor our scheme specifically for our communities. The police will receive and review disclosure applications, and undertake safety assessments and criminal record checks to determine whether a relevant conviction exists that requires disclosure. People aged 16 years and over, who live in one of the pilot local area commands, will be eligible to make an application. Disclosures will be made in person by the police to the person at risk.

We know that domestic violence is underreported, and so not every person who may be violent or use power and control over a partner will have a criminal past. That is why we are investing \$2.3 million to partner with expert domestic and family violence non-government organisation [NGO] services to provide help and support to people who may be at risk. A support worker will help people seek assistance or plan for their safety, and to decide whether to remain in the relationship, regardless of whether the check shows that their partner has a history of violent offences. These specialised support services will be offered to all applicants of the scheme. They will be present at the time of disclosure, but most importantly will continue to work with the person at risk after a disclosure.

We are giving choice and control back to people at risk, so they can make informed decisions about their relationship and so they can get the help and support they need. Specialist services working with police are: Sutherland Shire Family Services—in the Sutherland and St George local area commands [LACs]; Tamworth Family Support Service—in the Oxley LAC; and The YWCA NSW—in the Shoalhaven Local Area Command. The services will also provide after-hours support to victims in crisis, before linking them to other local specialist services. [*Extension of time*]

The DVDS is providing the Police Force and our effective NGO support services with yet another tool in this critical fight against domestic violence. The scheme will be evaluated over the two-year pilot period and the evaluation will consider the level of demand, impacts and outcomes of the scheme. This scheme is about preventing people from being kept in the dark about a partner's violent past and giving them the support to make informed decisions about their relationship.

The DVDS is one of a number of initiatives working to intervene early to reduce the trauma and suffering caused by domestic violence. I am proud that New South Wales is leading the nation in tackling domestic violence. We are designing and investing in policies to support those at risk of domestic violence. To break the cycle of violence we need to intervene early and prevent future violence, and we on this side of the House are firmly committed to breaking the cycle of violence. We will continue to be the champions of strong social policy that makes people's lives better.

RETURN OF GOAT ISLAND TO ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) (14:58): My question is directed to the Premier. I have asked the Premier before and today I make one final appeal: Will he return Mel-Mel, the place also known as Goat Island and the home of Bennelong and Barangaroo, to the Aboriginal people of New South Wales?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:59): I thank the member for Canterbury for her question. I acknowledge on her last day that she has been a tireless advocate for her community. We have not agreed on everything politically, but we all say to her: Well done on your contribution to this Parliament. The member has previously asked me this question in this place, and my honest answer is that I know this matter is being considered by government. I have had no further briefings in relation to this matter, but I will be happy to chase up the details of where the discussion is at and meet with local elders to

discuss the proposal. The proposal has merit and there are numerous issues to be considered as part of the proposal. I will be happy to take up this matter. I should note that I hope the Opposition loses the Federal election.

Ms Linda Burney: I should note that the Liberals have not preselected a candidate to run against me.

The SPEAKER: Order! I rule that comment out of order.

FEDERAL BUDGET AND WESTERN SYDNEY

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (15:00): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning. How does the Federal budget support the New South Wales Government's plans for Western Sydney?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (15:01): I thank the member for Camden for his question and I acknowledge on behalf of the Liberal members in this place that he is not only a fine local member but also a fine Whip from whose hand it is always wonderful to receive discipline.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has the call and will return to the leave of the question.

Mr ROB STOKES: I also acknowledge school leaders in the House from the people's republic of Pittwater—it is good to have them here. Obviously the Federal budget, particularly in the context of planning for Western Sydney, is enormously important and exciting. However, there has been acknowledgement of the terrific contribution made by the member for Canterbury and I wish to add a final reflection on that from my perspective. The member for Canterbury asked me my very first question in this place. That was a special moment for me. Wherever our future careers may take us, we will always have Macquarie Street. The Baird-Grant Government was re-elected with a mandate to boost the New South Wales economy and provide more opportunities for jobs and for investment as we rebuild this great State.

We are committed to making our cities more liveable, more productive and more innovative, where skilled workers can live closer to their jobs and cut their commute times so they can spend more time with their family and friends and on building their local communities. As Western Sydney, in particular, continues to grow and boom, this Government will vigorously promote existing centres outside of the Sydney central business district [CBD]. Sydney is a polycentric city. While we have some terrific cities in our regions, the cities within Sydney itself are crucially important. The development of Parramatta, Liverpool, Penrith and Campbelltown will be fundamental to our shared success as a central city and ensure that the challenges and opportunities provided by growth and change are spread equitably throughout our city.

Equally, the Federal Government's focus on the importance of Sydney as a global city was reinforced by the details released as part of the Federal budget. There is strong alignment between the priorities of both governments to deliver for the people of Sydney and, in particular, to recognise the increasingly important and pivotal role of Western Sydney as an economic and cultural power house. As planning Minister I welcome the 2016 Federal budget's focus on jobs and growth. As the New South Wales Government continues to pursue sensible reforms to improve the planning system, the budget announcements with regard to the Smart Cities Plan and the national cities agenda are vital and timely.

The Commonwealth Government confirmed funding for key western infrastructure projects, including the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan totalling \$2.9 billion, of which more than half a billion is committed to be delivered next year. Through the asset recycling initiative the Commonwealth is providing a total of \$2.19 billion towards important transport infrastructure projects that help to support population growth, particularly in the west. There will be an additional \$1.7 billion for the Sydney Metro, \$98.4 million to improve the capacity and efficiency of the rail network and \$78.3 million towards Parramatta light rail. It has been delivered through the terrific, and dare I say very handsome, transport Minister. The news on housing approvals is exciting and shows a pattern of growth across the city. [*Extension of time*]

Mr Michael Daley: It is all that testosterone.

Mr ROB STOKES: Yes, the member for Maroubra is handsome too. I note the Minister for Family and Community Services suggested that I have not commented on his good looks, so I put on record that Mr Hazzard is also very handsome. What excites me, even more than the Minister for Family and Community Services, are the latest housing approval figures, which show that the building boom is continuing across New South Wales and is driven in the heart of Sydney, in Western Sydney. Data released last Tuesday stated that for the past 12 months to March 2016 New South Wales approved 68,326 dwellings, 18 percent higher than the same time last year.

This is the eleventh consecutive 12-month period of more than 60,000 approvals, a total never achieved since records began. The last peak of approvals was in December 1994, under a Liberal-Nationals regime, reaching 57,500. Approvals have increased 90 per cent compared to the 12 months to March 2011 under the former Labor

Government. Western Sydney is driving the boom in housing approvals, accounting for approximately one-third of all New South Wales approvals. We are not only promoting and helping to facilitate housing growth, we are proceeding with the strategic planning for communities in Western Sydney where our future population growth will occur

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:08): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport.

Mr Brad Hazzard: The handsome Minister for Transport.

Ms JENNY LEONG: That is the Minister's decision, not mine. Given strong community support and the fact that the CBD and South East Light Rail line has a stop at both the top and the bottom of every hill along the route, except for Surry Hills, will the Minister consider a stop at Wimbo Park, the former Olivia Gardens site, to ensure good accessibility for the community?

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:08): I thank the member for Newtown for her question. I thank the members for Newtown and Coogee for their advocacy on behalf of their communities on this challenging project. It is a great project and one that the city will be proud of when it is complete. It has posed challenges and I will touch on that briefly. I indicate to the member for Newtown that the advice from Transport at this stage is to not proceed with a stop at Wimbo Park because there is a stop at Ward Park. The advice from Transport relates to the fact that there are a number of other transport options in the area at this time. However, I do not think that it is unreasonable to look at future-proofing. I am not committing to that, but I give that undertaking to her today. It is a beneficial project for the Surry Hills community and for those who live in South-Eastern Sydney. This week I have been concerned about some of the conduct that has surrounded the project. Earlier this week we had to remove a number of big fig trees to facilitate the trams—

Mr Michael Daley: You are concerned about people's conduct? You're kidding.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Let us think about the spike that was put into trees earlier this week that could have resulted in someone being killed. Member opposite and the Leader of the Opposition want to incite people over infrastructure projects, then interject in this House. I am not going to cop it. It is somewhat interesting to note that a press conference was called on trees and that the Leader of the Opposition stood next to a tree that is not being removed. In the two weeks leading up to a Labor Party press conference someone hammered nails with ribbons attached into trees that will not be removed. It seems a little circumstantial. My warning is that in this State—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

Ms Anna Watson: Sit down.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not require the assistance of the member for Shellharbour.

Ms Jodi McKay: The Minister is making an accusation in this House. He should spell it out so we can answer it.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: What are you saying?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Lights, camera, no action. Labor holds press conferences that incite protest action on trees that are not being removed. This Government is going to plant 1,800 trees. The point is that these fig trees must be removed in order to facilitate light rail to Kensington. Full stop. I make the point that this Government is planting 1,800 trees. I have said previously that it is unfortunate that we have to remove trees to build a project.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Newtown that this not an argument or debate.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The point I make is this, we are concerned that spikes have been put into trees endangering people working on the site. That is not an unreasonable position. It is a shameful act. I say to those opposite: You run your scare campaign saying we are clear-felling Moore Park when we are not, and you do not like it.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: While you are up, why don't you tell everyone that you are asking me to build it to Maroubra?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat so that I can hear the point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: There is a clear imputation that we are inciting.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. No individual member has been impugned.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are continuing to work with the project team to make sure the project is a success.

The SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

Members

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: On behalf of the Premier: I inform the House that:

- (1) On 4 May 2016 Andrew Robert Gee resigned as Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier and Regional Roads; and
- (2) On 5 May 2016 Kevin Anderson was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier and for Roads and Rail.

Petitions

PETITIONS

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

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**.

Safe Schools Coalition

Petition requesting that the Government prevent the use of the Safe Schools Coalition program in government schools and support for holistic anti-bullying approaches, received from **Mr Kevin Conolly**.

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**.

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**.

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

Victoria Road Precinct Rezoning

Petition requesting that the Government reject the proposed major rezoning and development of the Victoria Road Precinct, Marrickville, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Morpeth Recreational Land

Petition requesting that the Government purchase and reinstate land at 24 Edward Street, Morpeth to its original use as recreational land to protect the heritage of Morpeth, received from **Ms Jenny Aitchison**.

The SPEAKER: Committee reports will now be proceeded with.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 17/56

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

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:16): I thank the House for the opportunity to speak about the Legislation Review Committee's seventeenth digest for this current Parliament. Ministers introduced six bills in the last sitting week of Parliament, two of which were cognate bills. Of those six bills, the committee made comments on three and prepared reports on three regulations. The Crimes (Serious Crime Prevention Orders) Bill 2016 and the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Organised Crime and Public Safety) Bill 2016 are cognate bills. Together they introduce powers designed to assist police and law enforcement agencies in dealing with serious and organised crime. One of the key reforms is the introduction of crime prevention orders that will disrupt criminal activity. They are modelled on similar orders introduced in the United Kingdom. The bills also introduce public safety orders, which are aimed at preventing certain individuals from going to places where they are likely to present a serious risk to public safety.

With regard to the Crimes (Serious Crime Prevention Orders) Bill 2016, the committee acknowledged that the new orders are intended to help law enforcement agencies to deal with serious crime and to improve public safety. However, the committee expressed concern about provisions in the bill that impact on various rights and liberties, such as freedom of movement, property rights, privacy and the right to work. After careful consideration, the committee referred the bill to Parliament for further consideration of the broad definitions of what constitutes "serious crime-related activity" and being "involved in serious crime-related activity", of the wideranging provisions that could be included in such orders, and of the potential for orders to be in place for a lengthy period. With regard to the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Organised Crime and Public Safety) Bill 2016, the committee made a number of comments concerning the introduction of public safety orders. The committee also commented on issues concerning freedom of movement, privacy and property rights.

The Fines Amendment Bill introduces reforms to the administration of State fines by the Office of State Revenue. The committee noted two issues. First, it expressed concern about the bill reducing the amount of time before civil enforcement measures against a fine defaulter may commence. The bill reduces the time from six months to 21 days. Secondly, the committee noted privacy concerns about the bill authorising credit reporting agencies to disclose personal details of fine defaulters to the Commissioner of Fines Administration. The committee referred both issues to Parliament for further consideration.

In this week's Legislation Review Digest, the committee also reported on three regulations. The Children (Detention Centres) Amendment (Use of Force and Drug Testing) Regulation and the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Amendment (Use of Force and Drug Testing) Regulation both authorise a juvenile justice officer and correctional officer to use force to allow a medical practitioner to carry out necessary medical treatment on a detainee or inmate. The regulations also clarify that juvenile justice officers may use saliva tests and urine samples when testing detainees for drugs. The committee noted the impacts of these amendments on personal rights and liberties. However, it also noted that the intention of the regulations is to provide clarification and guidance on the use of force in correctional and detention centres. The committee also commented that a medical treatment where force is authorised must be treatment for a life-threatening or a serious condition.

The third regulation the committee reported on was the Health Records and Information Privacy Amendment (Exemption) Regulation. The regulation exempts persons and organisations that are participating in the Commonwealth Government's My Health Record system from the operation of Health Privacy Principle 15 in the NSW Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. The committee noted that creating an exemption to the existing Health Privacy Principles in New South Wales could interfere with a person's right to privacy, particularly because health records can contain very sensitive information. However, the committee noted that the intention of the amendment is to improve health outcomes for patients. It also noted that individuals

will receive information on how to opt out of the system if they wish to do so. I thank committee members and staff for their input and I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:18): I support the comments made by the chair of the Legislation Review Committee on Legislation Review Digest No. 17/56. I will make a few comments about one of the six bills and two regulations examined by the committee. The Crime (Serious Crime Prevention Orders) Bill 2016 and the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Organised Crime and Public Safety) Bill 2016 were dealt with cognately. The committee undertook an extensive examination of the two bills and found a number of instances that trespassed on various rights and liberties. In referring the bill back to Parliament, the committee noted that the broad definitions of "serious crime-related activity" and "being involved in serious crime-related activity", meant that wideranging provisions could be included in orders and that there was the potential for them to be in place for a lengthy period. Given that, the committee believed that the bill should be referred back to Parliament for further consideration.

The bill was passed quickly by this House on Tuesday and it is now before the upper House. When speaking on the bill the Minister in this House did not address any of the comments made by the Legislation Review Committee. The committee performs an important function in scrutinising bills so that the people of New South Wales can be assured that our rights and liberties are properly safeguarded by the Parliament. It is a matter of simple courtesy that when the Legislation Review Committee refers a piece of legislation back to Parliament the Minister with carriage of the bill will address the issues raised by the committee are at least seen to be noted. That is the appropriate way to proceed, but the Minister did not do that in respect of this controversial legislation. I hope that when the bill is returned to this place the Minister addresses the issues raised by the committee. Having said that, I support the report and thank the committee secretariat and the members of the committee for their work.

Report noted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Committee reports having concluded, the House will now consider the matter of public importance.

Matter of Public Importance

APPIN MASSACRE 200TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:24): I begin by wishing my colleague Linda Burney all the very best for her future. I thank her for her contribution to this Parliament. I also support her call to have Goat Island returned to the traditional custodians and her call for the Barangaroo conservation establishment. I thank the Premier for giving that the focus it needs and for taking that matter up on behalf of the Parliament. On Sunday 17 April I joined Aboriginal elders and distinguished guests, including His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the member for Canterbury and the member for Liverpool among many others, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Appin massacre at Cataract Dam.

I was honoured to attend the ceremony, although it was to observe one of the most tragic and dishonourable acts in our State's history—an act that resulted in the massacre of men, women and children of the Dharawal nation 200 years ago at around 1.00 a.m. on 17 April 1816. It is important that the full story become part of the official record, as has been spoken of at length previously, so that future generations know the truth about the actions of the then Governor, Lachlan Macquarie, and his officers. Governor Macquarie initially appeared as a sympathetic friend to our First Nation people. In the *Sydney Gazette* on 7 January 1810, Macquarie expressed his desire for a benevolent policy towards Aborigines when he stated:

I need not, I hope, express my wish that the Natives of this Country, when they come in the Way in a peaceable Manner, may not be molested in their Persons or Property by any one; but that, on the contrary, they may always be treated with Kindness and Attention.

This professed benevolent policy was short lived. The Governor's orders caused the violent deaths of more than 14 men, women and children at Appin and came to symbolise a far more brutal fact of British imperialism and a dark chapter in the history of our nation's first people that has left a near incurable and festering wound in the souls of many generations. Governor Macquarie's diary is kept at Sydney's Mitchell Library, which is next door to Parliament House. On 10 April 1816 he recorded:

I have this day ordered three separate military detachments to march into the interior and remote parts of the colony, for the purpose of punishing the hostile natives, by clearing the country of them entirely, and driving them across the mountains.

By the order of Governor Lachlan Macquarie, Captain James Wallis and his troops ambushed the people of the Dharawal as they slept in their camp near William Broughton's farm at Appin. The troops opened fire, killing 14 Aboriginal men and women and wounding five others. Captain James Wallis noted in his journal advising Macquarie:

I regret to say some had been shot and others met their fate while rushing in despair over the precipice. The dead include the Gundungurra leaders Durelle and Kanabygal.

Other reports note that upon arrival at the camp Captain Wallis's troops slaughtered the men, who were mostly elders, and then cut off their heads and took them back to Sydney. Wallis returned to Sydney, but the remaining troops continued to hunt down local Dharawal people and slay them until they found the camp where the women and children were staying. Reports state they shot and trampled some under their horses and drove the rest over the cliffs at Broughton Pass. Too often we have heard comments to validate or substantiate these savage past acts, such as, "They were the times back then," or, "That is just how it was." There has never been an acceptable or appropriate time in history to take the life of another in nothing less than a callous act of genocide, nor will there ever be.

Macquarie failed in his quest to rid this great land of the Dharawal. Today the Dharawal prevail as a rich and proud part of our region's history and our community, and are an invaluable part of our Australian culture. Over time we have seen traditional lands covered by cities and towns, and much culture is hidden, but paintings, rock engravings, middens, grinding grooves and remnants of bush ovens, and stories and lore still held and passed on by the Dharawal remind us that long before the Europeans came Aboriginal people were nurtured by and cared for this land. I thank all the organisers of the commemoration. I close with a poem. These are the words of Aboriginal poet Jonathan Hill, referred to by the Deputy Premier on a number of occasions:

Today we stand in footsteps millennia old.

May we acknowledge the traditional owners and their custodianship

whose cultures and customs have nurtured,

and continue to nurture, this land,

since men and women

awoke from the great dream.

We honour the presence of these ancestors

who reside in the imagination of this land

and whose irrepressible spirituality

flows through all creation

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (15:30): I acknowledge the member for Campbelltown, who has been a tremendous supporter of his local community in his short time in this place since being elected. I also acknowledge the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Leslie Williams, who attended the commemoration of the Appin massacre on behalf of the Government to pay her respects. The memorial of the 200th anniversary of the Appin massacre took place on 17 April. This annual gathering was held at a memorial site at Cataract Dam close to the place of the massacre. Aboriginal people experienced trauma and racism in many different ways. In the worst cases there were violent conflicts and incidents between colonists and Aboriginal people such as those that occurred at Appin, known as the Appin massacre.

In 1816 in response to escalating hostilities Governor Lachlan Macquarie ordered military detachments to be dispatched to deal with the Aboriginal community. Captain James Wallis was assigned to the Airs and Appin areas known as the Cowpastures. Early one morning Captain Wallis and his men came upon the Dharawal men's camp at Appin. They attacked the men, killing all. Subsequently, civilians continued to hunt down the Dharawal people. They found the camp where families were staying and shot or trampled them to death with their horses and then drove the remainder of the Dharawal people over the cliffs at Broughton Pass. It is estimated that at least 14 people were killed as a result of the massacre. However, many believe the number to be higher. The Appin massacre has been described by many Aboriginal people, community members and historians alike as a day in history that significantly changed the lives of the entire Appin community, especially the Dharawal people.

I take that a step further and say that on reflection the day significantly changed the lives of not only that community but the wider community across the State. It is important to allow for reflection on these horrendous deeds, and to acknowledge and remember them. We must work together as a community to ensure that this type of racism, hatred and refusal to understand will never occur again. I commend the Dharawal people and the Winya Myamly Reconciliation Group on the work that it continues to do to raise awareness and commemorate the significance of the Appin massacre. Making a commitment to reconciliation is important for all of us. We have a shared history and we have to come to terms with the past to move forward together for our future generations.

The process of reconciliation can be difficult. It requires understanding the events from other perspectives. It involves recognising that tragic events in history in which we were not personally involved continue to be felt today by Aboriginal people and all members of our community. We can see the impact of those

events on our society and in the cultures and families of Aboriginal people and all Australians. The Appin memorial ensures that we all remember the tragic events of 1816 and the impact they had on the community, especially the Dharawal people. The memorial also demonstrates the strength and resilience of the Aboriginal culture and identity. I acknowledge the member for Macquarie Fields, who works closely with the member for Campbelltown. In his short time here he has been a tremendous advocate for his local community and the Aboriginal community.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (15:35): I am delighted to speak on this matter of public importance to remember and pay respect to all the lives lost at the Appin massacre 200 years ago on Dharawal country, which encompasses the Macquarie Fields electorate. I commend my friend the member for Campbelltown for raising this matter of public importance and for his eloquent words. I also commend the member for Camden for his kind words about this important issue. It is important not only for locals but also for the State. I commend all members across the political divide who have spoken about this part of our nation's history—however difficult those events were. Being able to reflect on our history, to understand events and to acknowledge that mistakes were made that had deadly consequences for our First Australians is an important part of our nation's moral development and the relationship between all Australians.

The Spanish-American historic philosopher George Santayana once said, "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it." It is inconceivable to think a concerted directive to kill many of our fellow Australians could be repeated in modern Australia today. Nevertheless, let us not be mistaken that because a disastrous event happened 200 years ago it no longer matters. The Appin massacre still matters today; it will matter tomorrow and every day. It matters because of those who lost their lives and it matters to their descendants who are alive today. We must recognise the difficult and harsh realities of our history and continue our reconciliation and healing process with Indigenous Australians.

The Appin massacre should not be a mere footnote or reference in our history books. It should be a deliberate reminder of our past wrongs and a reminder of the strength of our Indigenous culture. Despite the loss of many innocent lives, the local Indigenous culture has survived. Indeed, it continues to strengthen—and long may that continue. The efforts of local Indigenous elders such as Uncle Ivan Wellington, Aunty Glenda Chalker, Aunty Frances Bodkin, the Bell family and many others have no doubt contributed to maintaining our local Indigenous identity.

I recently visited Ingleburn Public School, where proud young Indigenous men performed a traditional smoking ceremony to welcome us to their land. The primary school kids were fascinated and we were all reminded of the richness and resilience of our Indigenous culture. The descendants of the Dharawal people are proud and I feel most privileged to represent an electorate that sits within Dharawal country. The process of reconciliation is an ongoing one and our nation—indeed, our State—will take a long time to reach its full potential unless we continue to work on that reconciliation process. I commend this matter of public importance to the House. We all have a shared responsibility in the reconciliation process and will continue to pay our respects to the descendants of this dreadful event.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:39): In reply: I thank and acknowledge the member for Camden for his strong advocacy on behalf of the local Dharawal people during his time in this place and when we were councillor colleagues and mayors. I thank my friend and strong advocate the member for Macquarie Fields as well as the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. I thank the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for her support on that special day. I thank the organisers and, in particular, the sisters of the Winga Myamly Reconciliation Group and our local elders, Uncle Ivan Wellington, Aunty Joyce, Aunty Glenda and Aunty Margaret, as well as the other elders who were in attendance on that day. It was an important event in our calendar. Taking a step towards reconciliation reduces the gap. I thank the House for its indulgence and I appreciate the support of all members in this Parliament for what is a very important issue for us all in this nation, particularly our first nations people.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): The matter of public importance having concluded, community recognition statements will now be proceeded with. With the concurrence of the House, community recognition statements will continue until 4.30 p.m.

Community Recognition Statements

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE HOAD

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:41): I pay tribute to and congratulate George Hoad, Myall Lakes Citizen of the Year, for hosting his annual charity Art in the Garden open day on Sunday 24 April at his Killabakh property. The garden rooms and the ornaments are magnificent. George is also the president of the Australian Gardens Association. It was great to take my wife, Sue, my daughter Caroline and grandson Lachlan

to see the gardens. We had a wonderful day. More than \$7,500 was raised for his favourite charity, Ronald McDonald House Newcastle, which is celebrating 25 years of service, care and accommodation for sick children and their families across the mid North Coast. Ronald McDonald House is an important place for many people from the Myall Lakes electorate when they go with their children to John Hunter Hospital.

EASTER REBELLION CENTENARY

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:41): I recognise various events in Sydney that commemorated the centenary of the Easter Rebellion that occurred in English-occupied Ireland at Easter in 1916, commencing on 24 April. The first of the events I acknowledge occurred on Easter Sunday this year at the monument and grave of Michael Dwyer and his wife, Mary, at Waverley Cemetery. Dwyer was an Irish rebel in the 1798 rebellion who conducted a five-year guerrilla campaign in the Hills of Wicklow. He was one of the first Europeans in Liverpool with a land grant at what is now Warwick Farm. Each year the Irish National Association conducts an Easter commemoration at Dwyer's grave.

The President of the Association is Dennis O'Flynn. This year's commemoration included a mass whose celebrants were Bishop David Cremin and Bishop Terry Brady. The guest speaker was Maurie O'Sullivan and there were also speeches by Paul Maskey, the Sinn Fein Abstentionist member for West Belfast in the House of Commons, and Irish Consul General Jane Connolly. I was joined at the event by my colleagues Hugh McDermott and Senator Deborah O'Neill. The second event, which was organised by the Aisling Society of Sydney, was the reading of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic, read in 1916 by Patrick Pearse. This year it was read on Easter Monday on the steps of the Sydney General Post Office with an address by society secretary Jeff Kildea.

TRIBUTE TO MARCUS COLLIGAN

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:43): On Monday night I was delighted to be able to tend to my electorate and ministerial duties at the same time when presenting Marcus Colligan with the Emergency Services Award at the Rotary Club of the Hills-Kellyville awards night. Marcus serves our community as a member of Marine Rescue NSW and is a volunteer with the West Pennant Hills Rural Fire Service, an area of my electorate that is particularly susceptible to bushfires given the presence of the Cumberland Forest. It is a matter of great pride that Baulkham Hills has such a strong volunteer ethos. I hope to see this ethos continue for many years.

MAITLAND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT AGENCIES

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:43): I am proud to congratulate some fantastic organisations in Maitland that are doing an enormous amount of work to combat domestic violence. Jan McDonald and her team at Carrie's Place continue to work tirelessly supporting victims of domestic violence. Jo Gollan deserves a special mention. She is the organiser of a variety night that will be hosted in Maitland in September to raise funds to help Carrie's Place support as many women and children as possible who find themselves in need. Craig McGregor, President of the Maitland Business Chamber, has been working with local sporting groups with great success. Maitland will be wrapped in a white ribbon for White Ribbon Day. It is fantastic to see so many of our sporting groups getting on board with this important issue. I congratulate Mark Jennings and his team at Jennings Print on their support for Carrie's Place and the ongoing sponsorship they provide. I make special mention of Domestic Violence NSW Chief Executive Officer Moo Baulch and Karen Willis from Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia for their support.

KIAMA WARATAH MARCHERS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:44): On Tuesday 19 April 2016, I was very pleased to attend the official launch of the picture book, *Annabel-Louise and the Kiama Waratah Marchers of World War I*. The author is Dr Grace Masselos and the illustrator is John Cornwell. The book was inspired by Alan Clark. I also acknowledge those who helped and gave support in the creation of this book, including Michael Dalitz, Ken Donnellan, Shirley Campbell, Ruther Harrison, Michelle Hudson from Kiama Library, Margaret Lumsden, My Chocolate Shoppe in Terralong Street, my good friend James Parrish, Lynda and Brian Weir, Susan-Lee Walker and Mary Wilkinson. In this book we read about how the Waratah Marchers responded to the call for duty in World War I and how it affected Annabel-Louise and her family. It is written from the perspective of a young person. I congratulate the author of this book on her wonderful work in remembering the Waratah Marchers from the South Coast and the contribution they made to the war effort.

PORT STEPHENS NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:45): The NSW Seniors Festival saw many senior residents getting out and about across Port Stephens. I was fortunate to emcee Rockin' the Bowlo at Raymond

Terrace Bowling Club. It was hosted by the amazing team at Integrated Living. More than 100 senior residents from across the electorate enjoyed a terrific lunch and rock-and-roll dancing to a rock-and-roll band. I thank Kate Callan, Josie Gilbert and the team at Integrated Living, who did a stellar job pulling the event together with support from Port Stephens Veterans and Citizens Aged Care, Community Transport, Regis the Gardens at Salamander Bay, the Rotary Club of Nelson Bay and a host of sponsors who donated to the raffle and prizes.

Another exciting event was launched on the other side of the bay—the Gray and Thespian Mardi Gras. Unfortunately, I could not enjoy the activities first-hand but it is common knowledge that it was a terrific success. I thank the Hawks Nest-Tea Gardens Progress Association and the Myall Coast Chamber of Commerce for their creativity and energy. I also thank the Myall Coast Entertainers, Myall U3A, Hawks Nest Golf Club and Great Lakes Council for their support of the event.

TRIBUTE TO LEWIN FITZHAMON

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (15:46): Lewin Fitzhamon of Albury celebrated his 100th birthday on 21 April 2016. Born in England, Lewin's father was a notable film director and his mother was an actress. As a teenager he worked as a cinema operator in London. In 1940 he married Doreen McBrain before he went to war, serving in the British Army as a signaller in General Montgomery's 8th Army and being present at the Second Battle of El Alamein. He walked in tank tracks to avoid landmines and wrote at the time:

I stand on the battlefield, sometimes alone to mend telephone cables torn apart by our own tanks. I have no mates, they were all killed and I had three captains in 21 days.

After the war he worked for the General Post Office in London for 23 years. His only daughter, Sylvia, immigrated to Australia in 1968. Two years later Lewin and his wife followed and settled in Canberra, where he worked for the National Library of Australia. Lewin moved to Albury in 1982 to be closer to his family. After his wife died in 2004 Lewin moved to the UPA Murray Aged Care Home, where he celebrated his 100th birthday surrounded by his family and friends.

PROFESSOR PHILIP CLINGAN HONORARY DOCTORATE

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) (15:47): I place on record today my congratulations to Illawarra oncologist Professor Philip Clingan, who has been recognised for his contribution to cancer research, education and treatment by the University of Wollongong. The university presented him with an honorary doctorate. His contribution to cancer research has saved countless lives. He has helped raise millions for cancer research and equipment. When Wollongong Hospital needed a positron emission tomography [PET] scanner, Professor Clingan led the charge and, with a bipartisan effort from local members of Parliament and strong support from the community, a great victory was achieved for the people of the Illawarra. I extend my best wishes to Professor Phil Clingan on receiving his honorary doctorate but I also extend to him on behalf of the Wollongong community our thanks for his dedicated service. I acknowledge that the member for Kiama worked with me and other members in a bipartisan way during the campaign for a PET scanner. It shows what can be achieved when we work together—so I am waiting on the Unanderra lifts.

NAISDA DANCE COLLEGE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:48): It was a pleasure to attend last month the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association [NAISDA] Dance College located at Kariong on the Central Coast. I joined the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Leslie Williams—I acknowledge her presence in the Chamber—and the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast, Scot MacDonald, to announce a funding grant of \$59,600 to assist the college to continue building on the existing abilities and talents of the students at NAISDA. The New South Wales State Government is committed to assisting in the promotion of cultural heritage across the Central Coast, and NAISDA is a showpiece of excellence in promoting Aboriginal cultural heritage. We are fortunate to have such talent located on the Central Coast. I also note that the Central Coast is finally the permanent home for NAISDA—it has been for quite some time. I acknowledge the Minister's ongoing support.

TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR JACKIE GREENOW

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:49): I acknowledge the work of Councillor Jackie Greenow, OAM, who, in October last year, became Penrith City Council's longest-serving female councillor. In Jackie's 21 years serving our community as an Independent councillor she has always been a strong advocate for women, including me, in local government. Councillor Greenow has a significant and unwavering passion for our area, particularly the St Marys community. On council she is active in her role as chairperson of the Penrith International Friendship Committee, representing Penrith City Council on the Access Committee, the Heritage Advisory Committee and a whole range of groups.

Councillor Greenow has been appointed a Life Member of the Australian Local Government Women's Association for her dedication and commitment to women in elected and unelected office in local government. In 2013 Councillor Greenow was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for "service to local government, and to the community, particularly to people with disabilities". On a personal note, Jackie has been a role model for me in local government and as a member of Parliament. Congratulations, Jackie.

KOGARAH AMBULANCE SUPERSTATION

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:50): Work is well underway on Kogarah's new NSW Ambulance superstation, which is due for completion in 2017. The multimillion-dollar facility is part of the New South Wales Government's \$150 million Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy investment, which signifies the first time in more than 16 years that a NSW Ambulance station has been built in metropolitan Sydney. The Kogarah superstation, which will have parking bays for up to 14 ambulance vehicles, will be a key hub for local paramedics and support staff. This purpose-built, modern facility will sit at the heart of Kogarah. It will service the St George area and will be supported by smaller, standby stations, creating a network of NSW Ambulance resources that are better placed to support the communities of Kogarah and St George. The site on Rocky Point Road is an ideal location for a new superstation, with its proximity to major roads such as the Princes Highway and to St George Hospital.

WESTERN SYDNEY WANDERERS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:51): Congratulations to the Western Sydney Wanderers on their outstanding 2015-16 season, which saw the team finish second in the regular season, qualify for next season's AFC Champions League campaign and reach the grand final after the most memorable comeback in A-League semifinal history by defeating the Brisbane Roar 5-4. They were, however, gallant in defeat, 3-1, against 2015-16 champions Adelaide United. The Wanderers Medal 2016 event was held on Tuesday 3 May. Players of the Year were, for the Hyundai A-League, Mark Bridge; for Westfield W-League, Erica Holloway; for the Foxtel National Youth League, Lachlan Scott; Power chair, Jacob Cross; Hyundai A-League Members' Player of the Year, Mitch Nichols; the Rod Allen Award, Mitch Nichols; the Hyundai A-League Golden Boot, Brendon Santalab; and for the Chairman's Award, Yousef Kabbara.

The Guardian Funeral Wandercrew Volunteer of the Year was Colin Smith. The medal evening was hosted by Channel 7 Sports presenter Mel McLaughlin. Entertainment was provided by singers Matt Cornell and Rob Mills, with comedian and proud Western Sydney Wanderers fan Rob Shehadie providing the comedic relief. I thank the coaching and support staff, management, players, volunteers, sponsors, board of directors and fans for yet another history-making season.

BOB AND JOY KINNEY SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Assistant Minister for Education, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) (15:52): I take this opportunity to recognise Bob and Joy Kinney on the very special occasion of their sixtieth wedding anniversary. Married in Japan, the two ex-military personnel met late in 1955 when Joy's ship arrived in Japan on Christmas Eve. All off-duty personnel were invited to attend a New Year's Eve function, where the two met and danced the night away. Four months later they walked down the aisle, on 26 April 1956, in Japan and eventually called Australia home when Bob was posted back to Australia later that year. In 1994, after floating all around the Australian countryside, the couple decided that Port Macquarie should win, hands down, and become their home town. Throughout the years Bob has been heavily involved in the Lions Club. Joy has also been involved in Lions Club, View Club and Meals on Wheels. I express my appreciation for their involvement in our community and extend my congratulations to them on the marvellous achievement of 60 years of marriage. I send my best wishes to them both.

ERIN CLEAVER

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (15:53): I acknowledge one of my younger constituents, Erin Cleaver from Whitebridge High School, who is striving to qualify for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Less than three years ago Erin had never competed seriously on an athletics track. But Erin is a natural. Her development was so rapid that she competed in the IPC Athletics World Championships in Doha, Qatar, last October, placing fourth in long jump and sixth in the 100 metres. Now, at only 16 years old, Erin is aiming to book her place on the Australian Paralympic team. Erin is hoping to qualify for the long jump and the 100 metres track race, and also looms as a likely member of the Australian relay team. Erin has mild cerebral palsy, diagnosed with right-sided hemiplegia when she was one. I wish Erin the best of luck in qualifying to represent Australia at Rio.

SUTHERLAND HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:54): On 25 February 2016, 50 Sutherland Hospital volunteers were recognised with service awards. Volunteering has always been at the heart of our shire, and this community-minded spirit is exemplified by those 50 volunteers who were recognised for their collective 460 years of service. The volunteers provide assistance in many areas, including patient services, administration, retail outlets, fundraising, general duties and chaplaincy services. Of particular note is Jannali resident Betty Millson, who was recognised for her 40 years of service. This is a remarkable achievement and I commend her for her years of invaluable work. I also particularly acknowledge the award recipients from the Miranda electorate—namely, Beverley Williams, Toni Madani, Deborah Allison, Patricia Beatton, Christina Larter, Pamela McKenzie, Dominic Vozzo, Karen Greig, Warren Watkins, Mary Turner, Kerry Nicholson, Margaret Simpson, Beverley Patman and Bunny Smith. The gift of time is priceless, and I thank each of the volunteers at Sutherland Hospital for their diligence and dedication to our community.

WYONG MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (15:55): While it was not the new Wyong Art House's official opening, the Wyong Musical Theatre Company's production of *Oliver!* was a fitting initiation for the new theatre. It was also a fantastic beginning to the Wyong Musical Theatre Company's 20-year anniversary. This very professional organisation has a reputation for incredible productions, and *Oliver!* was no exception. There were reportedly frantic last-minute preparations to get the new venue ready, with the cast bumping in at the very last minute. But with seasoned veterans and talented youngsters combining with an outstanding orchestra, this show was always going to be a success. It is fitting that this excellent amateur organisation now has a venue to amplify its members' wonderful abilities, giving opportunity to enthusiastic local talent. Highlights included *It's a Fine Life*, *Who Will Buy?* and—my favourite—*Food, Glorious Food*. I was particularly taken with the young members of the cast, who looked and sounded like seasoned professionals. Toni Williams, who played Nancy, and Marc Calwell as Fagin were standouts, as always.

LOWER CLARENCE ARTS AND CRAFTS ASSOCIATION

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:56): The Lower Clarence Arts and Crafts Association recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, and I offer it my congratulations. This amazing group raised enough funds, with assistance from both State and Federal governments, to build the Ferry Park Gallery at Maclean. This new gallery houses the most amazing array of local crafts and pieces of artwork. Artists and artisans from the local area, as well as from further afield, can either hold exhibitions at the gallery or have their work on continuous display there. The Ferry Park Gallery is well worth a look. I wish president Jenny Thomas, her executive and all the members continued success.

SOUTH SYDNEY PCYC

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:56): I draw the attention of this Parliament to the important work of the South Sydney PCYC and to its significant contribution to the Redfern community through its encouragement of young people to be active in life and assisting them to develop their skills, character and leadership. Under the guidance of the new club manager, Gary Davis, and the regional general manager, Geoff Yates, the newly refurbished club has worked hard to revitalise the strong connection with the local community that it has enjoyed for many years. I was pleased to be able to visit the PCYC recently and have a tour of it. I acknowledge the work that officers of the NSW Police Force do at the club. The programs on offer to young people range across education, sport, recreation, culture, life skills and outreach work. I congratulate Gary, Geoff and the officers based at the PCYC in South Sydney on their incredible efforts to revitalise the club. I wish them all the best for the future and I look forward to supporting them.

COOTAMUNDRA SENIORS WEEK LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (15:57): The 2016 NSW Seniors Week Local Achievement Awards celebrated the achievements of seniors in a range of categories. I recently presented 2016 NSW Seniors Week Local Achievement Awards for community service to people from across the electorate of Cootamundra. Recipients included Mrs Roma Sinclair, Mr Terry Carroll and Mrs Diedre Carroll from Grenfell; Mr Errol Schmetzer and Mr Rex Bryant from Temora; Mrs Dorothy Nash from Young; Mrs Pam Halliburton from Junee; and Mrs Jenny Armstrong from Cowra. I congratulate them on the significant and valued contribution they each make to their respective communities. I commend these wonderful seniors for demonstrating diversity of talent, generosity of spirit and limitless energy in our community. There are many more wonderful seniors right across the Cootamundra electorate who deserve awards. I encourage local communities to get on board and nominate seniors in the electorate for next year's awards.

TRIBUTE TO ALEN WALE

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (15:58): Alen Wale was born on 9 July 1961 and sadly passed away on 24 March 2016 after a long battle with illness. He was laid to rest at the Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens in Leppington. Alen was the youngest son of George Edward and Alice Catherine Wale. Alen was a long-time, faithful and active member of the Australian Labor Party, a member of Cabramatta branch. In his younger days, Alen was an active sportsman, playing cricket and soccer for Cabra-Vale Diggers Club. He was a good student, graduating from Cabramatta High School and completing his tertiary studies at the University of Wollongong. Alen's working life was spent at the State Rail Authority and RailCorp. Although his working life was full, he continued his love for sport, becoming a cricket and soccer coach, mentoring many young people in sports and politics. Alen was a proud foundation member of the South Sydney Rabbitohs and a Chelsea FC fan. Alen was only 54 years old. He is survived by his 105-year-old father, Ted. Alen will be sadly missed by all. Vale, Alen Wale.

LEGACY FUNDRAISING IN ORANGE

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) (15:59): I draw the attention of the House to the community-minded work of Max and Suzy Glasby from Scrumptious on Summer in Orange. They were behind the generous idea of donating all their coffee takings on Anzac Day to Legacy. Suzy and Max's idea was picked up by other cafes in Orange, with Soho on Summer and Byng Street Cafe and Local Store jumping on board this year. In total, the three Orange cafes raised \$7,100. This money will be distributed around the Central West to assist widows and dependants of servicemen and servicewomen killed or injured during or after their Defence Force service. Legacy is now hoping to expand the fundraising program across Australia. Thank you to Max and Suzy Glasby. The New South Wales Parliament acknowledges and thanks you for this wonderful community initiative.

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES YOUTH SUMMIT

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:00): On 22 March I was honoured to join a group of my parliamentary colleagues and community and religious leaders at the Inclusive Communities Youth Summit conducted here in Parliament House. The event was coordinated by the Together for Humanity Foundation and brought together students from 13 schools across New South Wales, including students from a diverse age range as well as from a broad spectrum of religious and cultural backgrounds. School delegates participated in workshops to develop various proposals that were then presented to the politicians, religious leaders and members of the media, who then provided feedback.

I especially thank and congratulate the Together for Humanity Foundation team led by Rabbi Zalman Kastel, the national director of the organisation, for such a well-run and engaging event and for their ongoing work. I publicly acknowledge the outstanding work they do in building genuine and cohesive relationships between communities. As a former board member, I will continue to advocate for the work of this organisation in developing and promoting intercultural and interfaith understanding. I am proud see the Together for Humanity Foundation continuing its great work, especially with young people, in building a oneness within our community.

TRIBUTE TO NEIL STUDDERT

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (16:01): I take this opportunity to speak about the late Neil Studdert, a well-respected Australia Post employee and gentleman from Muswellbrook, who sadly passed away in March this year. Neil was Muswellbrook's postie for more than 60 years, delivering the mail to the community—always with a smile and happy to have a chat. Neil was 76 years old and was employed by Australia Post until his passing. Neil's service to the community as a postie was recognised by Australia Post last year. In fact, Neil was the longest serving employee of Australia Post. In recognition of Neil's service to the community, I am endeavouring to have a commemorative plaque installed in his honour. On behalf of the Upper Hunter electorate, I thank Neil for his dedication and commitment to Australia Post and the community. Vale, Neil Studdert.

NEWCASTLE SENIORS WEEK LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (16:02): One of my constituents, Azalea Thomas, was the recipient of a Newcastle Local Achievement Award during 2016 Seniors Week. Mrs Thomas is a hardworking community-minded woman who has spent her life trying to improve the lives of children with a disability. A university-qualified teacher, Mrs Thomas originally worked in a preschool with disabled children, helping to prepare them for the next step into the school system. While the preschool has closed, she is still often called upon by other preschools to observe the way a child plays and then assist their parents to develop a strategy to help them prepare for school. Mrs Thomas has helped children with stutters, brain injuries and learning difficulties. Mrs Thomas has never charged for her services; instead she sees the children's improvement as her reward. I congratulate Mrs Thomas and thank her for her work in the Newcastle community.

CAMDEN ELECTORATE SCHOOL LEADERS

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (16:03): I draw the House's attention to some outstanding school leaders who joined me in Parliament today: David Clement, Elizabeth Hinchey, Jordan Evans and Claire Villanueva from Camden High School; Ernst Nel, Tate Lindsay and Emma Bywater from Macarthur Anglican School; Mitchell Carter, Tanmay Kulkarni, Sean Mabin, Lewis Moroney and Jake Roberts from St Gregory's College; Julian Krpez and Keira Davidson from Magdalene Catholic High School; Mai O'Regan and Michael Stapleton from Elderslie High School; and William Brown and Jasmine Blencowe from Broughton Anglican College. They are outstanding leaders within our school communities. I acknowledge them and their schools. I am sure we will hear more from them in the future.

BOLD BOOK LAUNCH

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:04): I draw the attention of members to the recently released BOLD anthology, a collection of stories written by older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. More than 50 writers contributed to the anthology, including former High Court Judge the Hon. Michael Kirby, transgender advocate Sally Golding, Indigenous woman Auntie Dawn Daylight, Dr Jo Harrison, an attendee of Sydney's first Mardi Gras, and former Greens parliamentary leader Bob Brown. I was pleased to attend the launch of BOLD at the Better Read Than Dead bookstore in Newtown, where I joined contributors Melissa Hardy, Kate Lilley, David Urquhart and Helmut Bakaitis, who shared their insightful and personal BOLD stories with us. I congratulate the anthology's editor, David Hardy and Hannah Mae Cartmel, from the publisher, Rag & Bone Man Press, for bringing together this collection of stories. I thank them for ensuring that these important stories from LGBTI elders in our community are documented and form part of our rich and vibrant history.

PARRAMATTA LIONS CLUB

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (16:05): It is a privilege to bring to the attention of this House the great work done by the Lions Club of Parramatta. For 58 years the club has been serving the local and wider community of Parramatta through the efforts of members who volunteer their time in giving back to a much-loved community. Membership numbers have grown in the past few years and currently there are 31 members. Some of the notable partnerships that the club has formed in recent years whilst undertaking service projects include: the Christmas party and presents and capital purchase of equipment for Christmas in July at the Allowah Presbyterian Children's Hospital at Dundas; Walk 4 Hope in Parramatta Park for Huntington's NSW; the annual Step Up day at Parramatta Park for Down Syndrome NSW; Father Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets in Merrylands and the biannual Kids Big Fun Day Out. I acknowledge a few of the club's outstanding members: Lion Enrico Beretta; Lion Eric Rode; Lions Scott and Leeanne Hurren; and Lion Lim Kok Lim. I congratulate Lions Club of Parramatta President Jon Copson.

TRIBUTE TO JESSE THOMPSON

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:06): I congratulate Mr Jesse Thompson, of Hassall Grove, on being selected to participate in the New York City Marathon as part of the Indigenous Marathon Project. Jesse was selected out of 183 candidates to participate in one of the world's biggest marathons. Jesse is a member of the Ngunnawal people and says running is his way of empowering his community to end a destructive cycle. He wants to demonstrate to his people that change is possible. He has said, "We can break this cycle of violence and drugs to lead long, healthy and safe lifestyles." I wish Jesse all the very best of luck in the marathon and commend him for his support for our Indigenous community.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS AWARD

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:07): I congratulate Bobin artist Peter Schouten, AM, whose artwork is now owned by the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney after being selected for an acquisition prize. The artwork was part of Australia's leading contemporary botanical art exhibition, Botanica, which returned to the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney this month. Each artist was given a list of plants the First Fleet brought with it to Farm Cove. There are 87 varieties of plant to choose from and Peter decided to paint them all. Peter has specialised in Australia's natural history since 1976 and is acclaimed worldwide for his paleo artwork creating representations of creatures that have never been photographed as they are either extinct or extremely rare. His artworks grace the walls of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, the Natural History Museum in New York, the Naturalis Museum in the Netherlands and David Attenborough's own private collection. I congratulate Peter.

ROAD SAFETY WEEK

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:08): It is Yellow Ribbon National Road Safety Week. Today I pay tribute to Peter Frazer of the Blue Mountains, his family and friends, and our community for their efforts in promoting SARA, Safer Australian Roads and Highways. "Stop driving blind" is the campaign

message for 2016 to focus on eliminating distractions while driving. Last year 1,209 people were killed and more than 30,000 were seriously injured on our roads. This week the SARAH campaign asks people to stop for a moment to remember and drive so others survive. I acknowledge the change and effort in this area that has come from the incredibly sad loss of Sarah Frazer in 2012.

ILLAWARRA ACADEMY OF SPORT

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:09): On Thursday 5 May 2016 the Illawarra Academy of Sport celebrates its thirtieth anniversary at a special reception at Kiama Municipal Council Chambers. Since its inception in 1985 the Illawarra Academy of Sport has been the pioneer for the regional academy model in Australian sport, and a great success story for the Illawarra. The academy has allowed countless numbers of talented young athletes across our region to punch above their weight and achieve excellence and success in their chosen sport. In its 30 years of operations, this academy has offered over 5,000 scholarships to talented young athletes in the Illawarra, Southern Highlands and South Coast area which it services.

I acknowledge the dedication and determination of its inaugural Illawarra Academy of Sport chairman, the late Tom Penrose, and his successors the late Ted Tobin, OAM, Graham Hamilton and the current president, Mr Brian Weir, PSM. Through their vision and leadership, the Illawarra Academy of Sport has pioneered the regional academy model in Australian sport and remains the leader in regional academy programming in New South Wales. I also acknowledge the enormous contribution of local parents, volunteers, sporting organisations and Illawarra Academy of Sport staff and the members for Wollongong and South Coast for their long-held support for the academy.

TRIBUTE TO SISTER ELHAM GEAGEA

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:10): Last night the Australian Lebanese Historical Society paid tribute to the extraordinary service of Sister Elham Geagea, a Maronite sister of the Holy Family with strong community connections to Dulwich Hill in my electorate. Sister Elham arrived in Australia 20 years ago and since that time has committed herself to improving aged care in the Lebanese and wider communities. She has served as the Director of Nursing at the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family Village in Marrickville, headed the Maronite Aged Care Committee and overseen the expansion of the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family Village in Dulwich Hill. Sister Elham has won many awards in honour of her service and dedication to the community, and she is an example to us all. The Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, attended the wonderful event last night and offered his congratulations and thanks. I too offer my deepest thanks and tribute to this remarkable woman.

TRIBUTE TO HARRY MASKELL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:11): I congratulate Wamberal resident and surfing champion Harry Maskell, who took out both the junior and open titles at the Magoo Charity Classic Long Board competition at Soldiers Beach, Norah Head on the Central Coast. This is the first time in the 17-year history of the surfing titles that this has been achieved. Harry Maskell is the Australian junior stand-up and paddle-boarding champion and will contest the world championship later this year. Our congratulations to Harry and we wish him the best in the world championship. I acknowledge that the Magoo contest has raised more than \$500,000 for cancer care and research on the Central Coast since the contest's inception.

TRIBUTE TO BILAL EL MOHAMED

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) (16:11): A gathering was held recently to offer support for a new local business in Unanderra, Cutting Edge Barber, after owner Bilal El Mohamed discovered his new shopfront had been vandalised during his first week of trade. In true Wollongong spirit people turned out by the dozen for the "I'll support you" campaign at the Central Road business, with a loud and clear message to those responsible for the damage. I extend my best wishes to Bilal on his new venture and I congratulate him on his resilience in light of these actions. The gathering to show support was attended by people like Omar Nemer, the owner of Samaras Restaurant, who turned out his business food truck to feed the masses. I thank all those from our community who got involved for reaffirming why Wollongong is such a great community of which to be a part.

TRIBUTE TO BLADE GADD

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (16:12): I commend the effort and determination of Glenmore Park 15-year-old Blade Gadd, who was recently recognised for his golfing acumen. Alongside his brother, Josh, Blade has been training at the prestigious Western Sydney Academy of Sport over the past three years, having been selected in the golf program due to his natural talent. As one of 11 regional academies of sport within New South Wales, the Western Sydney Academy of Sport provides gifted young athletes with unparalleled training opportunities. To date Blade has demonstrated an outstanding aptitude for golf, having qualified and reached the top eight for State matchplay along with competing in the Western Sydney Junior Masters and the Srixon

International Junior Classic. Blade's determination is highlighted by the fact that he dreams of one day competing in the US Masters at Augusta. Blade truly is a role model for other young men and women to emulate not only in my electorate of Mulgoa but also right across the State. It is a huge encouragement to see a young man striving to attain personal excellence, and I commend Blade for this. The people of Mulgoa are proud to call Blade one of their own. I wish this young man all the best in pursuit of his dreams.

HALAL EXPO

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:13): I wish to recognise the Halal Expo 2016 in Australia. The New South Wales component of the expo was held on 9 and 10 April this year. On 9 April the International Halal Conference was held at the Novotel in Sydney on the theme "Islam, Halal Industry and Australia". I was able to attend part of that event. A number of Australian and international speakers addressed the conference. On Sunday 10 April a family festival was held at the Fairfield Showground. The director and chief organiser of the expo, whom I should particularly acknowledge, is Syed Atiq Ul Hassam. I should also acknowledge that I was invited to attend the event by Dr Ali Sarfraz. The conference aimed to create awareness about the significance of halal products and services within and outside the Australian Islamic community. It was also an opportunity for local and overseas halal industry participants, certification bodies, Islamic leaders and others to meet and speak, and to discuss important issues. The organisers should be congratulated on holding this event.

EORA ELDERS OLYMPICS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:14): Last month I had the honour of opening the Eora Elders Olympics, a special sports competition for Aboriginal elders in Sydney that is partly funded by the New South Wales Government. The Eora Elders Olympics at the Hurstville Aquatic Centre marked the start of the New South Wales Seniors Festival 2016. The New South Wales Government is proud to support Aboriginal cultural celebrations and this event was a great opportunity for elders to enjoy being physically active, maintain strong social connections and display pride in their culture. The Eora Elders Olympics saw about 100 Aboriginal elders from across the Sydney region come together to compete in a range of sporting contests, including traditional Aboriginal games as well as classics like tunnel ball and relay. Information stalls at the event provided attendees with advice on disability services, health checks, nutrition and healthy lifestyle. The event is run in collaboration with the local Aboriginal community, aged care providers, and other supporters.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:15): Today I recognise Roxanne McMurray from SOS Save Our Women's Services. Ms McMurray visited Parliament House today to share a new collection of stories about survivors of domestic violence, including one woman from my own electorate. I pay tribute to all the women who bravely shared their stories. The stories described in detail the impact of the horrific and terrible things these women experienced as victims and survivors of domestic violence. Ms McMurray explained the importance of sharing the stories of survivors firsthand rather than hearing of deaths from coronial and death review team reports. I thank each of the women for telling us about their lives and I hope this will inform domestic violence policy in this State into the future.

TRIBUTE TO SUSANNE LATIMORE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (16:16): Today I take the time to recognise a local constituent of mine, Susanne Latimore, for her efforts in raising money for the Redkite Foundation. The Redkite Foundation provides financial and support services to children who are fighting cancer and their families. Susanne's connection to Redkite is personal. Her son, Manning, was diagnosed with cancer at the age of 10. During his battle Redkite supported Manning and Susanne through their darkest hours and in moments of need. Thankfully, young Manning won his battle with cancer. It was fantastic news for the Latimore family which has now pledged to help others suffering from cancer in our community. Susanne, along with her sister, Belle, have decided to start a fundraising initiative by creating a cycling challenge from Berowra to Foster. The 300 kilometre cycling event aims to raise money to fight cancer and provide an event where family members of those suffering from the disease can come together for support and share their experiences. So far 18 people are taking part in the inaugural challenge. I am publicly committing to participating in the challenge this year. I thank Susanne not only for her hard work but also for her resilience and dedication to help those in our community in need.

ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:17): I had the pleasure of attending the Assyrian New Year celebrations on Sunday 3 April 2016, in my local area. The new year celebrations took place at Fairfield Showground, which had a fantastic turnout, with approximately 20,000 people in attendance. The local Assyrian community welcomed in the new year with traditional dancing, theatrical performances and fireworks displays. I would like to thank Mr Hermiz Shahen and Mr David David, from the Assyrian Universal Alliance, for all the

preparation they do to organise this special event. The new year is one of the most important celebrations on the Assyrian calendar. It is a celebration that dates back several millennia to 6766 BC, when the Assyrians believed the world would be cleansed and created by the gods in preparation for the new year and the return of spring.

PORT MACQUARIE POET TOM MCILVEEN

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Assistant Minister for Education, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) (16:18): Port Macquarie poet Tom McIlveen has notched up an extraordinary 12 months of success. Tom has had a remarkable 12 months after being awarded a Golden Laureate award in Tamworth last year for the best written poem of the year. He then went on to win the Australian championships, held in Victoria, for best written poem, *If God Only Knew*, based on an account of growing up in an orphanage where Tom spent part of his childhood. His latest accomplishment was at this year's Tamworth Country Music Festival where he won a coveted Golden Damper trophy, awarded for the best performance of an original poem.

Tom's chosen poem, *Eugene*, was based on real life events, and described a conversation between a father and his son, who had just returned from Vietnam, not only physically wounded but also emotionally traumatised. The prolific writer has won about 30 national written competitions over the past five years and continues to write with a passion that borders on an obsession for Australian verse, history and culture. He is also a keen Toastmaster and president of the group Port Macquarie Minstrels and Poets. I congratulate Tom McIlveen on his success. May his poems continue to entertain and inspire for years to come.

PORT STEPHENS ANZAC DAY SERVICES

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:19): I recognise the wonderful schools in Port Stephens who hosted Anzac services that I was honoured to attend. St Brigid's Parish School at Raymond Terrace, Irrawang Public School at Raymond Terrace, Medowie Christian School, and Raymond Terrace Public School all hosted very special Anzac services. At each school the student leaders led services or addressed attendees in a heartfelt and considered manner. All the students at each of the schools showed respect for the solemnity of the occasion. At each service I was reminded of the close ties our community has with defence, with many active serving Royal Australian Air Force members living in our communities. At each school there were children whose parents could not always be there on their special days because of their duty to our country. Congratulations to the schools, staff, students, parents and carers for paying tribute to former service men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice and for recognising the ongoing service of all current serving men and women. It was a privilege to witness the spirit of the Anzacs shining bright in our schools.

FERNBANK RETIREMENT VILLAGE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:20): Fernbank Retirement Village is located in St Ives, within my electorate of Davidson, and is marking its 30 year milestone in 2016. Celebrations commenced with a cocktail party on Thursday 17 March. Fernbank is a unique and picturesque retirement village in a 10-acre garden setting. With a range of independent living units and serviced apartments, Fernbank offers residents an essentially maintenance-free lifestyle in an environment of security, companionship and independence. Its residents also enjoy wonderful local facilities including golf, bowling, shopping centres and medical facilities. Congratulations to Fernbank on reaching its 30-year milestone. I have been privileged to visit Fernbank on a number of occasions as the local member of Parliament. I always enjoy speaking with its residents. I wish them all the best for this year and beyond.

FAIRFIELD NURSERY SCHOOL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:21): I congratulate Fairfield Nursery School on celebrating its sixtieth anniversary on Saturday 30 April 2016. I was honoured to attend the school and present it with a congratulatory certificate, and to thank the wonderful staff for the great work they do in this area. The Fairfield Nursery School is a not-for-profit organisation. I commend its dedication to all the children who attend it. They are integral to producing the wonderful children and adults that we have in Fairfield today.

COWRA ARTS AND CRAFT SOCIETY

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (16:22): Since its inception in the 1970s the Cowra arts and craft shop has supported local schools, show societies and various local fundraising efforts with donations towards awards and equipment and it continues to support the community in this way. The shop provides pathways for members to become involved in various charitable projects and other organisations within the community. The Cowra arts and craft shop plays an important role in keeping valuable skills alive, with members passing on the knowledge and expertise of past generations to ensure that techniques and heritage are passed on to the next generation.

The shop provides an outlet for local men and women to sell their handicrafts in Cowra, as well as providing opportunities for members, many of whom are retired, to meet and interact with other members and customers. Over the years the flooring in the shop has become worn and damaged, and the society has been hampered in its management of the business by a lack of technology requiring a dedicated laptop and software for the secretary and treasurer for accounts and bookkeeping. I am delighted to say that last Friday the Deputy Premier and I presented the Cowra Arts and Craft Society with a cheque for \$7,672 to assist with new flooring and technology. We wish the society many more years of great service to the local community.

CAT PROTECTION SOCIETY OF NSW INC.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:23): I draw the attention of this Parliament to the important work carried out by staff and volunteers at the Cat Protection Society of NSW Inc. currently located on Enmore Road, Newtown. The organisation has been desexing and rehoming cats since 1958. It now rehomes around 1,000 cats each year, desexes a further 2,000 to 3,000, and has a no-kill policy, ensuring every cat lives a full and happy life. As well as offering a rehoming service, the society is involved in community education and advocacy for pet friendly policies and better animal welfare laws and regulations. I congratulate chief executive officer Kristina Vesk, feline services manager Nerida Atkin, the team of around 20 dedicated staff and the 150 or so volunteers who foster cats, staff the society shop, or care for the cats in the Enmore Road shelter. I thank the board members—president Kaye Isbister, vice-president Nita Harvey and directors Angelika Elliott, Sue Schreiner, Grace Tam and Guy Farrands, who also volunteer their time to the organisation.

TRIBUTE TO TOBY HURFORD

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) (16:24): I congratulate Forbes junior cricketer Toby Hurford, who was presented with a Bradman Coin for Outstanding Bowling at the Bradman Cricket Carnival recently held at Bowral. Toby played for the Lachlan representative team in the carnival during the school holidays. The pace bowler, whose fast ball has been likened to lightning striking on the Western Plains, also captained the Forbes unbeaten under-14 team this summer. He also took nine wickets in six games for the Lachlan team. Toby had two standout performances against the Bathurst and Wagga Wagga cricket teams, claiming three wickets for 13 runs. In the Bathurst game, he claimed the major scalp of a batsman who had scored two double centuries in recent games. The Lachlan team made it through to the semifinals of the competition, at which it defeated the Wagga Wagga team. I congratulate Toby. He has a wonderful future in cricket and the New South Wales Parliament looks forward to hearing more about his achievements.

WINDALE MEN'S SHED

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:24): I draw to the attention of the House the tenth anniversary of the Windale Men's Shed. I attended the very enjoyable anniversary celebrations last Thursday. Retired and unemployed men at the shed offer mentoring and skill development to young people. It was established in the early 2000s under the Community Renewal Scheme because Windale was identified as one of the most disadvantaged suburbs in New South Wales. Since then, it has gone from strength to strength while working on many important projects for the community, including at local schools. I congratulate the 2016 committee members who organised the anniversary celebrations: President, Roger Greenan; shed manager, Kerry Thompson; vice president, Mick Malone; secretary, Carole Lawrence; treasurer, Keith Hewett; and committee members Rob Lawrence, Grahame Inkster, Warwick Baker, Peter Egan, and William Burg. I also congratulate those who manned the sausage sizzle.

VISAKHI CELEBRATIONS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (16:26): I draw the attention of the House to the Visakhi celebrations that are held throughout India and Australia. I congratulate the Punjabi Council of Australia, which for the eleventh time celebrated Visakhi in Parliament House. During the celebrations the council presented awards to some notable Punjabis from various backgrounds who provide leadership in their communities and who are a great inspiration to our young people. I congratulate Mr John Robertson, the member for Blacktown, who hosted the event. I thank the Hon. Navdeep Suri, the Indian High Commissioner to Australia, who was the guest of honour. The President of the Punjabi Council, Dr Moninder Singh, did a wonderful job. I congratulate all the other members of the Punjabi Council, especially my friend Rajwat Singh, who was the master of ceremonies. I acknowledge the great contribution that Punjabi people make throughout New South Wales and Australia. They are hard-working and entrepreneurial, they have family values, and they are an asset to this State.

TRIBUTE TO WAYNE FULLERTON

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:27): I recently had the pleasure of meeting Mr Wayne Fullerton, who provides emergency food and shelter to people in need in the local community, some of whom are sent and some who simply arrive at his motel. Wayne also provides food thanks to donations from a local church and

Toukley Neighbourhood Centre. A former addict himself, with the help of Toukley Uniting Church Wayne runs a support program that helps men, women and children affected by drugs and domestic violence. Housing NSW sometimes sends people to use the motel when they are homeless, but unfortunately there is still a shortage of accommodation. It has been 10 years since Mr Fullerton beat his habit by going into rehabilitation and having counselling, and he is now keen to help others in the same situation. Mr Fullerton says that just one night's shelter and a meal can make all the difference to someone down on his or her luck. Knowing someone cares can help people turn their lives around. It is good to know that in my electorate we have caring people like Mr Fullerton.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE CASSAR

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:28): I congratulate George Cassar of Caffreys Flat, a Simmental-Fleckvieh cattle breeder. George has been invited to attend the Conference of Americas being held in Tabasco, Mexico, at which he will be presented with the prestigious Olmec Award. George is the president of the Fleckvieh Society of Australia. This is not the first international award that George has received for promoting the breed. He received the Fleckvieh Pioneer Award in 2009 in Germany. He also presented a paper on Fleckvieh breeding in Beijing in 2011. I commend George for his support for the breed in Australia.

SPORTS TRIVIA CONTESTS

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:28): I acknowledge the contribution being made to the economy of the Central Coast by pub trivia contests. No event is more hotly contested on the Central Coast than the sports trivia contest held at Sidelines Sports Bar and Grill at Erina. Sidelines was established by one of my constituents, Mr Troy Melville. Troy has worked hard to build up this business, and in doing so he has created a couple of local jobs. Sidelines has become home to several supporters' clubs that follow international sports teams. The doors are sometimes opened in the early hours of the morning to cater to crazed fans looking to watch their teams play. Sidelines recently celebrated its first birthday. That is a fine effort, given the statistics regarding small businesses in Australia. However, it is the sports trivia that has drawn some of the biggest crowds. On the first Monday of every month fans get together to test their knowledge of a wide range of sports topics. The current champions, the F-ewes team, is captained by Andy Carr and a man with a genius for sport trivia, my staff member Marc Pooley. I commend them for their achievements and I wish Troy and all sports trivia enthusiasts on the coast all the very best.

OLYMPIANS MAX AND CHLOE ESPISITO

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:29): I congratulate the Espisito siblings, Max and Chloe from Casula, on qualifying to represent Australia at the upcoming Rio Olympics in August. Max and Chloe will both be competing in the modern pentathlon, which includes fencing, 200 metres freestyle swimming, show jumping, pistol shooting, and a 3,200 metres cross-country run. It is exhausting just reading out that list let alone competing. Chloe and Max come from a family with an athletics history. Their father, Daniel Esposito, was a competitor in the modern pentathlon at the 1984 summer Olympics. Although this is a huge event for Chloe and Max, they are not strangers to this level of competition. Chloe represented Australia in the same event at the 2012 Olympics, where she finished seventh, making her the first Australian modern pentathlete to finish in the top 10 at an Olympics since 1964. Max has also represented Australia at an international level, winning gold at both the 2013 Oceania Championships in Kazakhstan and at the 2014 International Youth Championships in Great Britain. I again congratulate Max and Chloe on their hard work and dedication to their sport. The Liverpool region, New South Wales and the rest of Australia will be cheering for them at the Olympics.

TRIBUTE TO NORM AND LAUREL HARRIS

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:31): I acknowledge Norm and Laurel Harris, who have lived in the Blue Mountains since 1992. Prior to retiring, Laurel was an associate dean in the Faculty of Nursing at Sydney University. Norm had enjoyed a successful career with Westpac and prior to retiring was a project manager. They have dedicated their life to environmental causes, and were key members of Gordon Falls Bushcare. Familiar figures at Gordon Falls, they could often be found weeding, planting and mowing the reserve, much to the delight of other Leura residents and visitors. Visitors to the site will note the mountain giants—the eucalyptus oriades—planted by Laurel. Eucalyptus oriades or mountain ash forests dominated much of the Katoomba-Leura area, but unfortunately only remnants now remain. Laurel's planting is a significant contribution to their sustainability. Norm's passion for the environment is demonstrated by his vision to complete stage one of the Grand Cliff Top Walk from Wentworth Falls to the Marked Tree in Katoomba. I congratulate these two remarkable seniors.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): It being 4.31 p.m., the House will now consider the petition signed by 10,000 or more persons listed on the business paper.

*Petitions***AERIAL CULLING OF WILD HORSES**

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (16:32): I have proudly tabled a petition with more than 10,000 signatures relating to aerial culling of brumbies in national parks. We must never forget what happened in Guy Fawkes River National Park. Many call it the brumby massacre of 2000. Hundreds of brumbies were slaughtered over a few days by three National Parks and Wildlife Service officers in helicopters. Because the terrain was rough and covered with trees, more than one bullet was required to kill many of the horses. There is extensive evidence indicating that many horses suffered a painful death. One unfortunate horse was found with 11 bullet wounds. The day after the slaughter ceased, horses were found still alive but dying in agony.

That is why this petition is so important to the people of my community. They have proactively supported the wild horses, and not only because of their cultural and heritage connection to our region—they are part of our history. Our high country horses have served this country well as police and war horses. That is why my community is so passionate about ensuring that aerial culling ceases in New South Wales. I congratulate Minister Speakman for honouring a Coalition Government election commitment that aerial culling would never happen again. The Kosciuszko National Park Draft Wild Horse Management Plan, which was released this week, states that no aerial culling will be undertaken to manage the wild horses in our parks, and particularly Kosciuszko National Park, which is in my electorate. That is a victory for Peter Cochran, Leisa Caldwell and Alan Lanyon. They deserve praise for their efforts in ensuring that the petition was debated in this Parliament.

This week, with the release of the draft wild horse management plan, we begin a new campaign to make sure that we look at horse numbers and innovative ways of humanely managing those horses in parks. The draft report refers to a 20-year target of 600 to 800. I can say absolutely clearly that I do not support that. It talks about reducing the numbers from roughly 6,000 to 3,000 over the next five to 10 years. I can say clearly that I do not support that and I will not support that, because I believe those wild horses have the right to remain in Kosciuszko National Park.

Let us make this absolutely clear: When members of the National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS] embark on a consultation period and say that from their perspective there should be no horses in the park, one must question whether it is a done deal before the consultation process is completed. I question that. My community questions that. The pro wild horse and pro brumby people question whether, throughout the consultation period, the end game was always to reduce the number of horses in the park. If we are talking about 600 horses, that means the near extinction of brumbies in the park. I do not support that. The report clearly showed that even the Independent Technical Reference Group wanted to include aerial culling because it is cost effective. I cannot support that. I congratulate the Government on not bowing to those who want to return to aerial culling. But I still have a problem with shooting horses in national parks and leaving their carcasses on the forest floor. I do not support that either.

The draft wild horse management plan is out for consultation. I encourage the 10,000-plus people who signed the original petition to make sure they contribute to consultation on the plan: Fight for the rights of the horses and their heritage and cultural value in our parks. We must what consider what is a sustainable number and find a way to maintain that number that is innovative and humane to horses and sets clear targets in rehoming, and we must search the globe for better management of horse numbers. I believe horses deserve to stay in the park. I will not hide from that. I have spoken in this House on a number of occasions since being elected to say that I am pro brumby.

If we are not pro brumby and do not speak up for those horses it will be left to some within agencies of this Government or future governments and we may return to the days of aerial culling. I cannot support that. I am making it absolutely clear that I will continue the campaign with my community to make sure that we determine a reasonable number for horse management in this State—a target that is realistic and one that is achieved by using evidence and science. The report talks about the need to put together a select committee to look at numbers because we are not sure about the numbers. How dare we even set a target in the first place!

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:37): I speak for the Opposition on this petition signed by 10,000 persons. Having the time and wherewithal to organise 10,000 community members to present a petition before this Parliament is no mean feat, so I congratulate the petitioners on doing that. As the Minister was talking about brumbies in the park I was reminded that I have been fortunate over the years to have on many occasions ridden horses and camped out in Kosciuszko National Park. I have spent some of the best days of my life doing that. I recall some people saying that there should be no horses in the park, brumbies or otherwise. There was a move to prevent people from organising horseriding tours through the park. Thankfully common sense prevailed and it is still possible to ride horses through one of the world's most magnificent parks, Kosciuszko.

While we were riding through the park we saw quite a number of wild horses, foxes, pigs and other animals running around that cause damage to the park. There are competing views about whether there should be brumbies in the park and there are competing views about what the number should be. It is an environmental conundrum because they do damage the park, but the method of culling is the question that the House is bound to consider. The petition refers to the possibility and intent of some Government organisations or entities to introduce aerial culling.

It was Labor that banned aerial culling of wild horses in 2000 after culling by professional contractors in the Guy Fawkes River National Park went terribly wrong. Aerial culling was supposed to be a humane way to remove a significant threat to native plants and animals, but it became clear that several serious issues of animal cruelty had occurred there and needed to be resolved. The environment Minister of the day, the Hon. Bob Debus, introduced the ban on aerial culling. For the 16 or so years since, no government has proposed reintroducing aerial culling because the management of animal cruelty in that method of culling remains unresolved and I do not think there is any way to resolve it.

Labor stopped the aerial culling of wild horses and introduced the ban on the culling of wild horses by ministerial decree. Labor continues to support that ban. Having listened to the Minister speak, it is unclear what has prompted this petition. Of course the petitioners have the right to present it, but I am not sure what has prompted it. But that is not the point. We have now heard from one of the Ministers of the Crown that the Government does not propose to reintroduce aerial culling of wild horses and the Labor Opposition supports that. The petition is therefore calling for something that has been in place for 16 years. No cull has been conducted in New South Wales for 16 years. If the Government wanted to introduce aerial culling—and we have heard now that it does not, or so the Minister says—I am sure it would not do that without extensive community consultation. Labor would not support that in any event. Labor supports the petition that has been presented to the House this afternoon.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for Heritage, Assistant Minister for Planning, and Minister for the Environment) (16:41): I thank the thousands of people who have signed the petition. Wild horse management is an emotive, complex issue. Deeply held views polarise stakeholder groups. Since the aerial cull of horses in Guy Fawkes River National Park in 2000 there has been no aerial culling of horses in New South Wales national parks. The Government does not intend to change that position. In December 2014 the Government ruled out aerial culling and brumby running or roping as wild horse control methods.

The Kosciuszko National Park Draft Wild Horse Management Plan is open for community feedback until 8 July. The draft plan takes into account a report by the Independent Technical Reference Group [ITRG] and an independent assessment of the heritage and social significance of wild horses in the park. We have also noted feedback from the initial stage of community and stakeholder consultation as part of the review of the 2008 Horse Management Plan. The ITRG provided independent expert advice. It included specialists in biology, ecology, soil science, statistics, vertebrate pest management, wild horse ecology, veterinary science and animal welfare. The chair is Dr Mark Lonsdale of Monash University and Charles Darwin University. The deputy chair is Dr Bidda Jones, RSPCA Australia Chief Scientist. Two ITRG members were nominated by horseriding and brumby advocate groups.

Horses cause serious vegetation and erosion damage to sensitive alpine, karst and sub-alpine areas, catchment areas and watercourses in Kosciuszko National Park. They also pose a risk to road safety. Horse numbers continue to increase, particularly in remote parts of Kosciuszko, where live trapping methods and removal techniques are difficult to implement. Aerial surveys in 2014 indicated an estimated 6,000 wild horses within the park. This increase is despite National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS] staff having removed more than 3,100 horses from the park since 2002 as part of a continuing trapping program.

In areas where removal is occurring, impacts from horses are reduced, but these areas are quickly repopulated if trapping is not continued. The draft plan outlines how NPWS, whose professionalism and integrity I support, proposes to reduce the overall population of wild horses in the park, using a range of humane and cost-effective methods, to a permanent and sustainable population. It identifies three locations in the park that could carry this smaller population with less environmental impact. The draft plan offers a framework for wild horse management with a view to delivering conservation outcomes in an efficient, humane and socially acceptable manner by proposing a range of control methods including trapping, mustering, ground shooting, fertility control and fencing.

NPWS regards domesticating or rehoming wild horses as an integral part of the overall wild horse management program. Rehoming provides an important community link to the challenges of wild horse management and acknowledges both the social and cultural values of wild horses to the community. Wild horses in the park have economic, tourism and marketing value to the Snowy Mountains region and this will need to be

considered in finalising the draft plan. The final point I make is that the draft plan is precisely that—a draft plan. It is now out for consultation, and the consultation will be genuine.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (16:44): Today I support my friend and colleague the member for Monaro and thank the Minister for his words that this Government will never, I hope, sanction the aerial culling of brumbies in any national park, let alone Kosciuszko National Park. I was the member who raised the concerns of the North Coast community, and I would suggest New South Wales and Australia, about the slaughter of wild horses in Guy Fawkes River National Park. There are photos on the internet and I have photos here of mares foaling because they were shot and whilst they were dying on the ground, and of horses with their shoulders blown out that were left to bleed to death. As the member for Monaro and Minister has said, these horses are part of our heritage. They are Walers; they were brought to this country in 1834

In fact, most of the horses then were related to the horses that were killed and slaughtered after the First and Second World Wars in the Middle East because they could not be brought home, which was noted in Anzac Day addresses and articles this year. I am amazed that there are still people within the National Parks and Wildlife Service who promote aerial culling of horses after the debacle in Guy Fawkes. These same people tell me that the red deer that are in Dorrigo National Park, which is a World Heritage area, need to stay there so tourists can see them. I made a statement in this House that the only reason that Dorrigo National Park has World Heritage status is that it has lantana, privet, foxes, cats, red deer and many other feral animals. It has World Heritage status because it has animals and plants from every part of the world, yet it is not maintained and managed.

Those people from the National Parks and Wildlife Service were supported by the RSPCA, which oversaw the culling operation. They were never prosecuted in court for the inhumane slaughter of those animals. They got off scot-free. It still burrs me to think about what happened and that it was basically excused by the Minister at the time. I hear what the member for Maroubra said: "We stopped aerial culling." The fact is that the then Labor Government allowed it to happen and it was done in a clandestine manner. The way those horses died would make anyone sick, yet the courts let people off because I believe lies were told in court. I commend the Minister for banning the inhumane slaughter of horses by aerial culling. There are other ways to cull them. I recommend that the Minister look at ways to get rid of the other feral animals that infest our national parks and end up on private property.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (16:47): By leave, I join my colleagues on this side of the House and virulently oppose the aerial culling of brumbies in our national parks, in particular the Kosciuszko National Park, which is an area I have had a long association with. Indeed, my former electorate of Burrinjuck took in a large part of the Kosciuszko National Park for an eight-year period and I am friends with many of the men and woman who live in those mountains. They remain close associates. In my capacity as the Parliamentary Secretary for Southern New South Wales I take a great interest in this matter. I am pleased that the Minister has ruled out any aerial culling. If this culling process must go ahead, he has been strong in his determination to ensure that it is undertaken properly. It will be quite a lengthy consultation period. I am sure there will be many contributors, particularly those living in the areas from Talbingo to Adaminaby and beyond, into Yarrangobilly, and Tumbarumba and beyond.

Obviously, Kosciuszko has delicate and sensitive areas within the park that need to be protected but, as the member for Coffs Harbour rightly pointed out, there are a lot of problems with weed infestations and feral animals which need to be controlled. Those of us who come from southern New South Wales have a very strong sense of heritage and history, particularly in relation to our wonderful brumbies. It is an emotive issue for some of us; they are part of our Australian history. If culling does go ahead, I would encourage those who are responsible for the culling to ensure there is not double-counting of the horses, which sometimes can happen. If the shootings do take place, each one of these animals should be double-checked and they should be buried.

They should not be left to become fodder for feral animals such as dogs, foxes and pigs, which would result in their numbers multiplying. We have big problems with feral animals in the parks and they also attack domesticated and other animals in the farming communities that are located in areas surrounding Kosciuszko National Park. I am very pleased that the Minister is taking this issue very seriously. I know that he will pay great attention to the comments that come forward as a result of this consultation process, but I felt that it was incumbent upon me to make my view very clear on this matter. If the horses are shot, stallions should be shot in the first instance, avoiding the mares, and those that are culled humanely should be buried.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Discussion on the petition signed by 10,000 or more persons having concluded, the House will now proceed to private members' statements.

*Private Members' Statements***MOTHER'S DAY**

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (16:51:3): With Mother's Day being celebrated this weekend, I thought it was long overdue that I put on the record my deep appreciation for mums in my electorate of Manly and across New South Wales. All of us are incredibly thankful for our mums. In many respects they are the unsung heroes who keep this State together. Those of us who have the privilege of having our mum in our life should realise how lucky we are. Indeed, I count myself the luckiest guy in New South Wales. My mum has always been there for me and has been an incredible support during the toughest times and in the darkest hours. I have always been inspired by the support shown by my mum, not just by putting her family before herself but also by being there for those in need.

My mum looks to those who are experiencing tough circumstances and reaches out to help. Through her work at Kairos, she has spent a lot of time working with and helping women prisoners. Mum also has done a great deal of work for Mother Maggie in Egypt and has encouraged people in this country to support the poor orphans in Cairo. There are now 30,000 orphans who are cared for and loved by an incredible group of people under the leadership of Mother Maggie. My mum has had an incredibly tough couple of years. Despite that, she still laughs, she still cares and she still inspires me. I want her to know how much I love her. I am sure that everyone in New South Wales will want to say to their mum, "Happy Mother's Day. We love you and we thank you for all you do."

SHELLHARBOUR SERVICE NSW CENTRE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:53:5): I also say happy Mother's Day to all mothers, not only in New South Wales but right across Australia. I congratulate my own mum, who is just amazing. We all think our mum is the best, but my mother is certainly the best. She has been through a lot in her life. She never complains or whinges, she just gets on with it, and I greatly admire her for that. I wish a happy Mother's Day to all mothers, particularly mothers in my electorate.

I wish to speak briefly tonight about the refusal of the Government to establish a Service NSW centre in the Shellharbour electorate. This is an issue I have raised in this place previously, as recorded in *Hansard*. In a series of replies to representations to the Minister for Finance, Property and Services it was revealed that the Government intended to close the Shellharbour Motor Registry last November. The Government has stubbornly refused to reconsider its decision not to establish a Service NSW centre in my electorate. I have placed a series of questions on notice seeking information on this matter. The information provided recently in the Government's response was very interesting. This information, particularly on the number of customers seen by Service NSW centres in the Illawarra, only reinforces the need for the Shellharbour electorate to have its very own Service NSW centre.

Figures supplied by the Government show that the current Shellharbour digital store has seen 8,000 customers in the period November 2015 to February 2016. The Government also conceded that the Shellharbour digital store remains only a temporary service. In other words, the current digital store located in Stockland Shellharbour could be closed. This will mean that Shellharbour residents may be left with no direct government services to renew their driver licence or to obtain permits or birth certificates. The Government indicated that it continues to review the need for the current Shellharbour digital store. The figures also show the customer numbers for all other Service NSW centres that have been established in the Illawarra. The Warrawong Service NSW Centre has seen more than 40,000 customers since it was opened in November last year until March this year.

The Corrimal Service NSW Centre has seen more than 20,000 in the same period. The Wollongong Service NSW Centre has seen more than 34,000, and the Kiama Service NSW Centre—one of the first to be established in the region—has seen more than 17,000 customers in the same period. The Kiama Service NSW Centre has seen the lowest number of customers of all the Service NSW centres in the Illawarra. I have asked the Minister to provide customer numbers by postcode. I have done so because I have no doubt that the inflated number of customers accessing services at the Warrawong Service NSW Centre originates from residents in my electorate. I remind the House that the Warrawong Service NSW Centre has seen more than 40,000 customers. Unfortunately, the Government asserts the number of customers by postcode is "unavailable".

This is a shocking admission. I have no doubt such figures are available; it is just that the Government is very afraid to release such statistics publicly. The reason is very clear: it will justify my argument that thousands of customers living in my electorate are using the Warrawong Service NSW Centre because it is their only option. As I have said, 8,000 customers have already been through the Shellharbour digital store. Add these to the

thousands of customers who currently access the Service NSW Centre at Warrawong and one would find a clear justification for a Service NSW centre to be established in my electorate.

I make clear that I do not complain that Service NSW centres have been established in other parts of the Illawarra. I simply emphasise that it is illogical to locate a Service NSW centre in all the electorates in the Illawarra with the exception of the electorate of Shellharbour. Every citizen of New South Wales is entitled to have direct access to government services. I simply cannot understand why the Government insists on treating my constituents like second-class citizens. Like it or not, my electorate has the fastest-growing population in the Illawarra. Housing developments are springing up like mushrooms across the area. My electorate is home to young families. They deserve the same access to government services that are clearly available to citizens in other parts of the Illawarra. I will not stop lobbying the Government and the Minister to see reason on this issue. The current situation is simply not fair. The Government must establish a Service NSW centre in the Shellharbour electorate.

TRIBUTE TO CLAUDE DURAND, OAM

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (16:59): I pay tribute to Monsieur Claude Durand, OAM, of France. Last Friday I was delighted to be joined by the Deputy Premier in Cowra in my electorate to lay wreaths of remembrance at the Cowra Cenotaph in memory of Monsieur Claude Durand, OAM, who died suddenly of a cardiac arrest in early March, and who was effectively the founder of Australian remembrance on the Western Front. Others to lay wreaths at the Cowra Cenotaph included Cowra Mayor Bill West, Bill Dooley, President of the RSL, and the Cochrane family from Billeroy in Grenfell. High school principals Toby Baker and Alana Ryan also laid a wreath. We were also joined by Cowra High School principal, Charles Gauci and Cowra National Servicemen's Association representative Tony Campbell and others. It was a moving ceremony.

I place on record a little about Monsieur Durand. Claude and Collette Durand were appointed as schoolteachers in the 1970s—Claude to the primary school at Bullecourt and Collette to the kindergarten in the neighbouring village of Hendecourt, where they lived. Bullecourt was the village beside which in the two battles of April and May 1917 more than 10,000 Australians fell, 5,000 were killed and 2,421 have no known grave. Many remain in the fields where they fell. On the anniversary of the Centenary of Anzac it is appropriate that the New South Wales Parliament pays tribute to Claude Durand.

Claude heard of the Australian battles. He taught himself English and translated the pages of C. E. W. Bean's Official History of the Bullecourt battles so that he might tell others. He contacted the Australian Embassy for information and was surprised to receive a call from the ambassador himself. There followed a period of great support from our embassy as Claude and Collette developed remembrance activities at Bullecourt; regular services were held, memorials were built and an enthusiastic mayor developed the town's museum. Local men went searching for the fallen diggers. Perhaps 20 now lie in Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries because of the Durands' encouragement.

In 1992 the couple was each awarded an honorary Order of Australia—a rare distinction for foreign nationals. Their work continued unabated. Every Anzac Day and Armistice Day the couple purchased their flowers and laid a tribute at each of the nearby war cemeteries. Perhaps the pinnacle occurred in 1995 at the reburial of Sergeant John James White, whose remains were found beside the new Australian memorial. He was the first Australian to be identified in 50 years. At 81 Myrle Prophet, who was 10 months old when her father went to war, made the only flight in her life to say farewell at a deeply moving service to the father she never knew. Now there was a family link to a digger from the fields. Claude and Collette, in addition to much preparatory effort, opened their home to his family and friends. The poignancy of the story was relayed in France, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Claude readily drove visitors to many places of interest, both locally and into Belgium. It was not uncommon to drive 250 kilometres so that visitors might be at the Last Post ceremony, Menin Gate, just for 15 minutes. In preceding days guests had the remarkable experience of living in a real French house in a real French village eating real French food with hosts dedicated to remembering those whose lives had been touched by the Great War. Over the years the Durands' visitor book expanded to volumes. The couple's patience was unequalled as they waited while visitors searched a cemetery or a battlefield. Hundreds of letters from inquirers were answered. Very few Germans came looking for their soldiers but those who did were offered the same respect and sympathy. One further example of the unique nature of the Durands' effect on remembrance is shown by the memorial built where the second German trench crossed the "sunken" road of the Bullecourt battlefield. As it is not an official memorial, private expressions are permitted. There were four in 1993; the additional memorial will be again extended for the centenary. Of the many now attached, two of the original plaques read:

To all my mates killed in action. RM Gunn 4th Bn.

To my darling brother, I will love you always(s). Mrs Gladys King, Port Melbourne Victoria.

Claude and Collette's legacy rests with thousands of ordinary Australians who came to understand the poignancy of messages such as these, who could walk a battlefield devastating to our country in emotional cost yet enjoy quietly offered hospitality and deep friendship from a couple who never forgot the Australians on the Western Front. It is stories such as these that really tug at the heartstrings of those of us who have within our constituencies so many descendants of men and women who fought so bravely for our nation and for our nationhood. I was so proud to be able to join the Cochrane family, who have been great advocates for the recognition of Monsieur Claude Durand—and rightly so. The New South Wales Parliament pays tribute to Monsieur Claude Durand, OAM, in France. Rest in peace, Monsieur Durand. The New South Wales Government salutes your service. Let us not forget.

NEW SOUTH WALES TAFE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:04): While I have been speaking out in this place about the Baird Government's cuts to TAFE since the election last year, I have been fighting alongside TAFE teachers and students for many years. I acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of my colleague, our hardworking shadow Minister for TAFE, and thank her for caring about students and teachers. I stand with her in supporting TAFE. I have been fighting alongside TAFE teachers and students to save TAFE because I know that the only way to ensure young people find work, the only way to ensure our economy has workers with modern skills, and the only way to ensure quality education outcomes are put ahead of private profits, is to protect the TAFE system we have now—a system that has long been the envy of the developed world.

TAFE teachers and students have been fighting because they know that TAFE is the best. It is the only provider of quality vocational and technical training. TAFE teachers and students know that the conservatives within the Baird Government will do anything to appease the big business shonks and opportunists in the private sector. That is because this Government and every one of its members are ideologically opposed to public education and ideologically opposed to giving working-class people the best possible start in life. We have seen what the private vocational training sector is capable of. It is filled with mostly rip-off merchants without peer. Private vocational training providers are being raided by the Australian Federal Police and are under investigation for serious malfeasance, but they are the crooks being put forward by this Government and the Minister for Skills as the preferred alternative to quality public education.

In the midst of a mini construction boom, what does this Government do? It cuts TAFE teachers. It cuts TAFE teachers who specialise in trades training and in the skills for which demand is the highest. Anna Patty reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* earlier this week that the Government is presiding over a complete gutting of construction and glazing staff at TAFE in Lidcombe. That is just beyond belief. TAFE NSW's South Western Sydney Institute will have its painting and decorating teaching staff cut from seven to four. We have a situation where, in the midst of growing demand for these trades, our Government is deliberately and systematically deskilling our workforce and eroding the collective capacity of Australian workers to undertake this type of work. This is a malevolent and despicable attack on Australian workers by the Liberal Party.

But Mike Baird is not the only one responsible for the cuts to TAFE. His Canberra mates are just as keen to undermine public education. Malcolm Turnbull and the Liberals are dead against public education. They also stand against public transport and against public broadcasting, so you have to wonder: Are they just against the public altogether? But I digress. Eighteen months ago the Federal Liberal Government abolished the Tools for Your Trade scheme. This provided \$5,500 to young people to get them started in a trade and to ensure they were able to secure an apprenticeship from an employer. When you are starting out as an apprentice, you cannot borrow your boss' tools. There is no toolkit on the worksite for you to dip into. You need to stump up the money for comprehensive, quality tools yourself. This allowance made sure that young people were ready to learn and ready to work.

But the Liberals do not care about young tradies making their way into the workforce. They are ideologically opposed to Australian workers having the skills and the resources necessary to compete on quality. This Government would prefer it if employees were forced to compete on price instead. The comprehensive deskilling of our workforce and the withdrawal of key support programs for new apprentices will undermine the entire workforce and ensure a race to the bottom on wages, safety and workplace conditions. That is this Government's endgame. Its ideology is focused on maximising profits for employers and big business.

That is why it habitually slashes public education and hands off taxpayers' money to shonky rip-off merchants in the private vocational training sector, and that is why it fundamentally does not care about the long-term impacts that this defunding and deskilling exercise will have on our economy and our society. I will not stop fighting for TAFE in this Parliament. I will not stop calling out the spivs, crooks and rip-off merchants in the private sector who want to profit from taxpayers' money—and I will not stop highlighting the criminality of the attacks on public education by Mike Baird and the Liberals.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II NINETIETH BIRTHDAY

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (17:09): As an unabashed monarchist I note that the ninetieth birthday of Queen Elizabeth II was celebrated on 21 April. As our Queen, Her Majesty has been a much-loved part of our lives and our history. I am sure that as a young girl the Queen did not envisage that she would one day become Queen of the Commonwealth. We are so happy that fate moved in mysterious ways and enabled her to take on the job. At the age of 25 and as a mother of two she took on the role after her much-loved father, King George VI, died. Due to the King's rapidly failing health, Princess Elizabeth was prepared for the inevitable, but I am sure that to be handed such responsibility at such a young age was overwhelming. At her coronation in June 1953 the Queen pledged to serve the Commonwealth. To this day she has continued to honour that pledge. I am sure all of us here today hope that she continues to do so for years to come.

The Queen has performed her duties to perfection, often in difficult times. Under the spotlight she has always been the epitome of professionalism and grace. Her Majesty has set a shining example to leaders around the world of how to behave and lead with humility and dignity. Most of us here have known no other monarch but Queen Elizabeth, so in some ways she seems to be immortal. In 2012 she celebrated 60 years on the throne as Queen of England and the Commonwealth. We wondered how many more years she would remain our Queen. She now holds the record as the longest reigning monarch. I am sure no-one will ever take that from her. She continues to conduct her duties and run her household with the vigour of someone much younger.

To her family she is simply a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, as we have seen in the official portraits commemorating her birthday. She is affectionately known as Gan-Gan by Prince George, which shows a side of her we rarely see. Even though she appears to be in the public eye every day, the Queen has always managed to maintain privacy in her family life. As all of us have, she has endured tragedies and disappointments. Her stamina never ceases to amaze us. At 90 years of age she could run rings round most of us with the daily duties she is expected to perform. Her Majesty is always on top of world events in her role as Head of the Commonwealth. A keen animal lover, Her Majesty has a very successful horseracing empire and her passion for her beloved corgis is well documented. When she has time, the Queen still manages to do some horseriding around her estates.

The Queen has begun to hand over some of her duties to her extended family, including her grandchildren, while remaining on hand in the background to offer advice based on her many years of experience of dealing with the public. Her devoted husband, Prince Philip, has assisted her in her achievements. God willing, they will celebrate 70 years of marriage on 20 November 2017. That is another milestone that most of us will never reach. At the age of 94 Prince Philip just keeps going, albeit a little slower.

There are always rumblings from sections of the community for Australia to become a republic, but whenever there is a royal visit those republicans fall over themselves to be seen with royalty. I ask the republican movement: Why change for the sake of change when the system has served us so well from our country's earliest days? I hope a monarch reigns over us for centuries to come. Australia has had a love affair with the royal family for many years, and especially with the Queen. As the line of accession goes, Prince Charles will be the next King and Prince William will follow. Prince George will be our King when his time comes. I say:

God save our gracious Queen

Long live our noble Queen

God save the Queen.

ULLADULLA HIGH SCHOOL ROBOTICS TEAM

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:14): I inform the House about the incredible achievements and success of the Ulladulla High School Robotics team, whose amazing journey came to a conclusion this past Saturday, at the 2016 International FIRST Robotics Championship in St Louis, Missouri. The FIRST Robotics Competition—with FIRST being an acronym of the worldwide not-for-profit "For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology"—was a mentor-based program founded to inspire young people and students to become science and technology leaders. The program builds students' self-confidence, communication and leadership skills and problem-solving capabilities, and shows them enjoyable, real-life applications for the maths and science lessons taught in their classrooms. The program is much more than just robots, and hopes to engage and motivate students to pursue career opportunities in science and technology.

The competition, now in its twenty-fifth year, encourages the concepts of "gracious professionalism and cooperation". Kindness, empathy, cooperation and respect in the face of competition are emphasised. Also emphasised is the idea that participants can only perform at their best if they also know that their opponents are performing at their best, with students encouraged to help other teams whose robots have broken down. The Ulladulla High School team consisting of Bailey McKay, Ethan Salafia, Hayden Findley, Jackson Matherson,

Jayden Lever-Coad, John Snow, Lara Horvat, Mason Lake and Riley Peuter began its "robotics journey" in March this year. With the guidance of teachers Matt Macdonell and Andrew Lake, mentors Andy Marshall and NASA engineer Tyler Evans, and a team from Macquarie University, the group built and entered their first robot into the FIRST Robotics Competition Australian Regional—aptly named by one media outlet "the Game of Drones".

The nine-man team renamed themselves "the House of Ulladulla", and travelled to Sydney to compete against other international teams made up of 50 or more members, with previous competition experience. The competition lasted three days and involved teams making alliances and navigating their robot through a field with drawbridges, defences, moats, castles and boulders. By means of a complex system of pointscore and ranking, teams were required to collect the boulders, or balls, and get them inside the castle's windows, whilst also defending their own castle and capturing their opponent's castle. Each match began with 15 seconds of robots operating independently before being controlled by drivers for the remaining two minutes and 15 seconds. To the credit of the House of Ulladulla, they became the first rookie team to win the competition and qualify for the International Championships in St Louis—what an achievement for Ulladulla High School.

However, the robotics quest was not yet over, with the students needing to raise \$50,000 to cover the cost of the trip, no mean feat for students from a school in an area which is perhaps not disadvantaged but where parents would probably not have a lazy \$5,000 or \$10,000 lying around in a bank account. I pay tribute to the wonderful Ulladulla community, who had only a month in which to raise \$50,000. I attended the huge fundraising dinner with silent auction and a raffle was held at the Ulladulla Ex Servos Club to help raise funds. We came close to raising the necessary funds—I think we raised about \$40,000. Google donated the \$6,500 needed for the entry fee, and the Baird-Grant Government generously provided \$7,500 towards this remarkable group of dedicated and innovative students. I wrote to the Premier to tell him that these guys were international champions who beat the Macquarie University team and the Barker College team.

The FIRST Robotics Competition wrapped up on Saturday, with the House of Ulladulla once again surpassing all expectations. Competing against 3,128 teams, 75,000 students and 19,000 mentors from 24 countries, over 10 rounds the team finished with the rank of 13, out of 150 teams, in their division. They were the highest ranking Australian team, as well as receiving the Highest Ranking Rookie Team Award. Despite missing out on the finals the team describe their experience as "having already won", and achieving a result better than anyone thought possible. With their time in the competition over, the group took a few extra days to relax and sight-see, before arriving home safely on Tuesday. Competing in the International Championships, however, was not the only goal and opportunity to arise from this robotic quest. Ulladulla High School is hoping to keep the program running for future students, while the nine who competed this year are already receiving offers for future prospects.

I could go on for a long time about this event and achievement. As local members we are often very proud of the achievements of those in our electorates. This made me prouder than perhaps anything else I have been proud of, because these are just normal kids who really tried to put this robot together. Of course, having been a teacher at that school for 26 years made the moment even more sweet for me. So I say well done to Ulladulla High School and to all the teachers and mentors. To be Australian champions and to win the rookie of the year award in the international competition is a big achievement. These participants will go places. I am so proud of them all.

COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:20): I again draw the attention of the House to the unreasonable attitude of this Government to the delivery of community health services in Miller at the HUB Community Health Centre. The HUB has been operating for about 15 years with a particular emphasis on preventative health. It has very successfully reached members of the community otherwise largely untouched by health services. I was involved in some of the original decisions that surrounded the establishment of The HUB. I have had previous directors-general of the department of health physically at The HUB singing its praises and lauding it as a model. In that context I find current assertions by health that The HUB is not doing what it was intended not just factually inaccurate but also personally offensive.

Health wants to privatise The HUB. It wants to farm out its functions to a non-government organisation. There is strong and resilient opposition to this course of action from the community. Residents such as Eileen Neale and Judy Arkley have been forthright in leading community opposition. There has been a plethora of letters and petitions opposing this privatisation. The most common refrain in relation to The HUB from the community is, "If it's not broken, don't fix it." That argument appears unanswerable. No cogent argument has been presented by health that there is a problem with The HUB.

The inadequacy of Health's position was graphically demonstrated at a meeting held at Miller on 31 March. The participants in that meeting included: me, then Councillor Anne Stanley for Liverpool City

Council, Judy Arkley and Eileen Neale, among others. Judy and Eileen were both resplendent in their "Save The HUB" T-shirts. The meeting also included a representative from the Department of Health. The Health representative said the change was not about money. It was not proposed that the non-government organisation would cost less money. Obviously the community and I will watch that carefully should the privatisation come to pass.

As best as I could follow it, three reasons were presented at the meeting as to why the privatisation to a non-government organisation should proceed. The first was that this was a way of future-proofing The HUB's services against future government policy changes. That, with respect, is unmitigated drivel. To say, "We'll privatise the service now because someone may do it in the future," is absurd. The fact that the member of State Parliament who was present when The HUB was established was also present at this meeting affirming his support for the service should have been relevant to this analysis. But it was not, because Health treats local members of Parliament with as much contempt as it does the local community. The argument of the Department of Health is hopelessly flawed. Its services are far more at risk of funding cuts if its non-government organisation funding is reviewed every several years rather than being delivered by departmental staff. No-one who is serious about this issue can disagree with that.

The second argument from Health was that this proposal is what was originally intended—that is, it was originally intended that the service would go to a non-government organisation. Unlike any of the Health bureaucrats dealing with the community on this issue, I was there at the beginning. This argument is not consistent with my recollection of what happened. And, frankly, to be confronted by this argument 15 years later, after 15 years of successful operation, is more than just a bit rich! The third argument was that the Government prefers, whenever possible, for non-government organisations to deliver services rather than government departments. It is rarely expressed as baldly as that, but it's a pretty good summary of where I thought the Government was at; and it is what Health said at the meeting.

What that does is to clearly reveal that this decision is about ideology. It is not about a rational analysis of service delivery or working out what best fits the community at Miller; it is about a blind adoption of ideology regardless of the empirical evidence. It is an appalling way to govern. The HUB is being sacrificed on the altar of ideological obsession. Of course the reason not verbalised at the meeting but previously discussed is that somehow The HUB is not core health business but merely community development work. This reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of The HUB. The prime focus of The HUB is preventative health. Health bureaucrats who do not see that as central to their role are in the wrong job. The meeting on 31 March did not go well, as anyone following my comments so far will understand. The most offensive aspect, however, was something else.

The community representatives present reiterated the already very clear position that they rejected the privatisation proposed by Health. Health said it was listening to the community but did not agree with the community view, and it hoped the community would be involved with the non-government organisation and Health and try to keep the non-government organisation honest. This really is the ultimate in bureaucratic arrogance. Having flatly rejected the community's position, the Health bureaucracy somehow expects a compliant community to be co-opted into some sort of community consultation with or about the non-government organisation. Having comprehensively rejected the community's position, Health expects the community to do exactly what it demands. It is hard to know which is worse—the complete intellectual inadequacy of Health's position or its arrogant hypocrisy. I will quote community representative Eileen Neale. Following the meeting she stated:

The Hub Community Health Centre is located amongst the lowest socioeconomic areas in New South Wales. Over the past sixteen years, it has significantly contributed to improving the poor health status of the community, reducing visible alcohol and drug use, mental health and other health problems associated with unemployment and general well-being.

Privatising this service is clearly "bad" public policy, as it will cost the government, community and economy much more in the short, medium and long term.

Progress and better community health outcomes can only be achieved through current structures and further resourcing from the South West Sydney Local Health District.

Ms Neale is correct. The position of Health is absolutely appalling.

AUSTRALIAN POLOCROSSE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (17:24): Australia is the largest polocrosse playing country in the world, with around 4,500 players. I was pleased, therefore, to open the 2016 Australian Polocrosse National Championships held at the Albury Wodonga Equestrian Centre from 18 to 24 April. Here was an opportunity to see Australia's top polocrosse players in action, including current Australian team members who represented the nation in South Africa for last year's World Cup. Three hundred and fifty players from all States of Australia gathered in Albury for these national championships. Ages ranged from under 12 to the masters. It was very much

a family affair. The atmosphere was exciting, with horses, riders, umpires, commentators and an irrepressible disk jockey working flat out in front of a large crowd.

Many on the sidelines wore distinctive jackets and colours of their home States. Children paraded State flags around the grounds. There were clothing stalls and coffee vans, and there were lots of country hats. At night people sat in camp chairs around the grounds while others were grouped round fires in braziers near the floodlit sports fields. Under the strong white lights one could see steam rising in clouds from the horses' backs when they came trotting off the field of competition. Socialising around the dining area and bar carried on well into the night, before players and families wandered back past flickering camp fires to their tents, their trucks and caravans.

To be there, at the tournament in Albury, it was immediately apparent that this was not polo. The camping ground was the domain of farmers and families from across regional Australia. This is their sport, created to be family friendly and affordable for people on the land. Special guest speaker at the opening ceremony was Marjory Stuart-Smith who, among other things, is the granddaughter of Marjorie and Edward Hirst, the founding family of the sport of polocrosse. Taking inspiration from a horse sport in England, the Hirsts travelled overseas to find out more. They brought home some ideas and began modifying various racquets and balls to suit a new type of equestrian game.

Apparently, they had to go back and forth to Dunlop several times during development of the desired kind of spongy ball. Something new was going on here. This Government has long backed the host of the championships, Albury Holbrook Polocrosse Club, and has supported its commitment to community and to health and fitness. In the five years since we took over the government benches in Macquarie Street we have provided four grants to this club—two to assist with the costs of running coaching clinics, in 2015 to support the Australian Polocrosse Junior Classic, and we have helped out with these National Championships. We should not ignore the economic benefits a tournament like this can bring to a regional centre. Around 2,300 people camped onsite for 10 days. They travelled from all parts of Australia, with their caravans, trailers and horses.

An estimated additional 3,000 people came through the gate as spectators. Local businesses ranging from hospitality through to service stations, veterinarians and tourism have reported a jump in trade. As an example, the official dinner, hosted by the major sponsor, the Commercial Club Albury, was attended by 485 players, coaches, managers, sponsors and guests. The 2016 Australian Polocrosse National Championship held at the Albury Wodonga Equestrian Centre was a terrific event, and I thank the members of the Albury Holbrook Polocrosse Club who hosted the tournament so well. In particular I acknowledge the exceptional work of the committee: President Liam Cardile, Treasurer Fiona Anderson, Secretary Rebecca Cardile, Vice-President Jess Fletcher, event secretaries Elissa Koch and Sara Grills, Sponsorship Manager Prue Ireland, and committee members Lucy and Charlie Grills.

Congratulations go to the male player of the tournament, Will Weston from Jugiong; female player of the tournament, Lucy Grills of Albury, and, let us not neglect the other category of participant, champion horse of the tournament was Berragoon Percussion, ridden by Abbott Grills and owned by Berragoon Australian Stock Horse Stud of Holbrook. New South Wales teams dominated the finals. Australian actor, Joel Edgerton, star of movies such as *The Great Gatsby*, once said, "Polo is like playing golf with a saddle...and there are a lot of moving parts." Maybe for polocrosse one would substitute "tennis" for "golf with a saddle", and a touch, perhaps, of Australian Rules Football, given the dramatic passing of the ball through the air from net to net. From simple beginnings back in 1939, a sport and a culture have developed which reflect great Australian characteristics such as a love of being outdoors, camping under the stars, an urge to compete in sport, an enjoyment of working with highly trained animals, and the thrill of living a little dangerously at times.

These Aussie characteristics are now, perhaps, honoured more on the page or screen, and sadly from the lounge, rather than in the outdoors. In Albury, in a glorious Autumn, the picture was reversed and we had the opportunity to celebrate those adventurous characteristics in full. I note again that the inspiration for polocrosse came from an equestrian exercise in England where, unsurprisingly, the horse play took place indoors. If you have not yet been to a polocrosse match, you might want to get this exciting sport onto your agenda soon.

TINONEE SOCCER CLUB INC.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:29): I support the Tinonee Soccer Club Inc. and I want to garner the support of the New South Wales Parliament to also support it. I congratulate the executive of the Tinonee Soccer Club Inc. President Laurent Gonfond—chef extraordinaire—Secretary Jason Ryan who seems to be the secretary of so many organisations past and present in Tinonee, Treasurer Sara Kerville and Registrar John Thompson. The Tinonee Soccer Club, with 200 members, is in the village of Tinonee. It has approximately 1,000 residents, which equates to 20 per cent of the population being members of the club. The club plays an extremely important role in the town of Tinonee.

The club's soccer fields are in a picturesque area with eucalypts and gum trees surrounding them in a beautiful place. The infrastructure, amenities and the fields need assistance and an upgrade. The club has been raising money for a project that will cost approximately \$27,000, which includes concrete slabs to assist patrons to go from the club to the field and for seating and other amenities around the grounds. The club also wants to install bike racks for the kids who ride their bikes to the field and provide shelter around the field so that people can get out of the elements when watching a game. The club has been working on this project for some time. It has made a number of applications for funding and I want to add my support.

Tinonee historically was a very important town on the North Coast of New South Wales. At one stage the old Pacific Highway, or the North Coast road, went through Tinonee and a punt took people and cars across the mighty Manning River over to Taree so that they could continue up the highway. Over time the village has changed and Tinonee was bypassed many, many years ago. The Tinonee community group is motivated and enthusiastic to look after its children and to improve the area. I ask the New South Wales Parliament to get behind them. The club has asked for a grant of \$15,000 to put towards this \$27,000 project.

The value of the volunteers is probably \$15,000 in itself. It is a worthwhile and important project not only to the town Tinonee but also to the Manning Valley. They want the New South Wales Government to lend support to a village like Tinonee. The Tinonee area is the poorest post code in Australia. It is a low socio-economic area, yet the community is willing to put in so much time, money and effort into raising the quality of the amenity of their area. It is also important because they are part of the competition with other soccer clubs from around the Manning Valley and wider district. Other clubs and their supporters come to the Tinonee Soccer Club's fields to play sport. They will want to enjoy improved facilities.

This is not extravagant or something that people will say is a waste of time and money. It is very important to the club. Jason Ryan seems to be the secretary of a large number of organisations, but over the past few years he has been the president of the Tinonee Public School P&C. That group has received a number of grants, including Communities Building Partnership grants and environmental grants. Nigel Sherrard is a great principal. I attended a parents' day one Saturday some time ago. The aim of the event was to get children and their parents to engage with the school and to brainstorm the issues facing the school. I urge the Parliament to support this request for \$15,000.

PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TO LEBANON

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:35): Once described as the Paris of the east, Beirut quickly found itself shedding that tag during a protracted and damaging civil war that lasted close to 20 years. Lebanon is a nation that is unique in its geography, religious mix, history and culture. One-sixth the size of Tasmania, it is a nation with a strong Phoenician history and culture. Of course, if I were to talk about the literary history, the arts, food or the music that somehow forces us to dance, I would be telling only part of the story. Led by Luke Foley, the Leader of the Opposition, I joined my parliamentary colleagues Tania Mihailuk, Julia Finn, Clayton Barr—or "Barrakat" as he became known—and the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane on a trip to Lebanon. We were accompanied by mayors Khal Asfour, John Faker and Deputy Mayor Karl Saleh as well as community representatives Gisele Doumit, Omar Yassine and Mustafa Hamad.

It was an incredible trip that was designed to encourage an exchange of ideas and forge stronger links between the two nations. We met with the highest level of political leaders, including those who have held the office of Prime Minister, President and Speaker as well as a number of Ministers, and the equivalent of our backbenchers and junior Ministers. In all meetings, we discussed our respective political systems, especially in relation to the current impasse over the presidency debate in Lebanon. We also met with heads of the various strands of faith and discussed such important matters as the interfaith work that takes place in Lebanon.

It is nothing unusual to see mosques and churches alongside each other in Lebanon and indeed, Pope John Paul II described Lebanon as "more than a country, it is a message of peace and coexistence between the East and the West". I spoke of my name in my inaugural speech, and it is incredible how often it comes up, usually accompanied by a raised eyebrow. As I said this time last year, the meaning behind my name is much more noble than the use to which it is put by some people to cause religious division. I raise it because in Lebanon I met many people with the same name, one being the nephew of a Maronite Catholic bishop. I am reminded of Juliet, who asked: What is in a name?

We had a beautiful experience at the Anzac Dawn Service at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Beirut. It was a poignant reminder of our two nations' shared history. While there, I made a special point of paying respect at the grave of Private Maxwell, a Lakemba man who died in 1943 helping to liberate Lebanon. Every meeting and visit meant so much, and I could talk about our trip for hours on end and still not do it justice. However, two things stood out for me. One was a visit I made to the area of Haddaddin in Tripoli, the neighbourhood of my paternal family. It is an area where poverty is evident, but richness in spirit overrides it all.

As I walked through the neighbourhood, a local barber sought me out. He asked if he could put cologne on my hair because he had done it when I was a toddler. The gesture caught me by surprise; with tear-welled eyes, I agreed. However, I did ask if he had something to help my hair grow back.

On another occasion, I visited the Zahle No. 3 Syrian Refugee camp with my colleague and member for Granville, Julia Finn. The visit had been organised with the assistance of the Melkite Diocese, currently headed by Bishop Darwiche, whose last posting was in Australia. This is an experience I will never forget. It was heartbreaking and inspiring at the same time. Whether that was because the camp had not received safe drinking water for two days and had to rely on downstream water that was contaminated with human waste, or whether it was the use of polystyrene in tents as insulation against the snow, the recycling of canvas advertisements to help reinforce the tents, the dust, the rocky terrain, the fences or the lack of furnishings with which we adorn our houses, I still felt optimism for these displaced people, these human beings, these refugees. Many families with young children and the elderly and able were looking for work as labourers anywhere nearby.

They are good people thrust into the most extraordinary of circumstances. I felt hope because amidst all of that we had a wonderful game of soccer. In all of the mayhem around us, they were concerned that my shoes and clothes would get dusty. They were worried my colleague would get dirty and they offered us their generosity in any way they could. In other words, despite all they faced they still thought of others. We entered one of the classrooms, which was a tent that had been converted as best it could, to see firsthand how people were doing what they can to ensure that kids in that awful situation do not become the lost generation. I was inspired because the classroom was awash with colour and was manned by volunteers from the surrounding villages.

There was not much by way of the technology and furniture we have in our classrooms, but it did not matter. They had more than that: The classroom was the strongest symbol of the power and value of education. As a teacher, my heart filled with joy. As a parent, my eyes welled with tears. As a politician, I now have personal anecdotes to counter those who wish to demonise refugees. My heart was captured by a five-month-old baby named Hayat, whose parents referred to her as a gift. In Arabic "Hayat" means life. As I held that little bundle of joy I considered her prospects in an uncertain future. That beautiful child with little fingers and a gorgeous smile who I played games with symbolised to me the essence of why we must do whatever we can to help people fleeing persecution.

With all of its complications and limited resources Lebanon is a nation of approximately four million people. It currently provides asylum and shelter to more 1½ million Syrian refugees registered through the United Nations. I do not shy away from the fact that I have been a very strong supporter of refugees and have often spoken proudly in the public domain about my experiences. Some months ago I spoke of my joy in hearing that we would take 12,000 refugees into this prosperous nation of ours. My disappointment is that as of 1 April fewer than 200 had been settled in Australia. There has been a great deal of squabbling and apparently many refugees are being processed, but the reality remains that we have not moved on our commitment in a practical sense. We can and must do more.

I am exceptionally proud to be Australian; however, our current policy towards refugees is not something we should brag about. In a week in which two people have committed self-immolation and having had my recent experiences, I cannot sit in this place and pretend that our policies are all sunshine. I cannot imagine the absolute desperation of someone who sets themselves alight. The fact is there will be those who criticise me for being a bleeding heart, but what are we if we leave our hearts, emotions and experiences at the front door? This trip was my first time back in Lebanon in more than 10 years. Amongst the many memories I will keep with me will be driving the winding roads into snow-capped mountains, seeing the wildflowers everywhere and overlooking that magical water of the Mediterranean. I loved the skyline that is defined by new buildings, which are symbols of hope and rebuilding, and the intertwining of minarets and statues of Mother Mary. I loved the opportunity to delve deep into the culture and to walk as a very proud Australian of Lebanese heritage.

BLACKTOWN PONDS LIONS CLUB

Mr KEVIN CONNOLLY (Riverstone) (17:42): On Monday 2 May I attended a dinner meeting to celebrate the issuing by Lions International of the charter for the Blacktown Ponds Lions Club, which is the newest Lions club in the country and was awarded its charter in March this year. This being the 100th year of Lions International, the framed charter is a commemorative edition to mark the occasion. Lions was founded in Chicago in 1917 and all charters are still issued from that club. The new club serves the rapidly developing suburbs of The Ponds, Kellyville Ridge, Stanhope Gardens, Schofields and surrounding areas in my fast-growing electorate of Riverstone.

It is wonderful that the Lions movement is responding to the new development and recognising the need for community involvement and community service by those who wish to share their social capacity, expertise and life experience for the benefit of others. The Lions motto is "We Serve", and they do. They have been serving

for 100 years and they are continuing to serve in various ways in communities throughout New South Wales. It is wonderful that people have the generosity to join an organisation not for their benefit but for the benefit of others. They know they will be asked to give of their time, effort and money. They do it willingly and happily in the knowledge that they are providing great outcomes for their communities.

The dinner was a genuine celebration, with entertainment provided by some very talented members and friends of the club. There were a number of singing and musical performances with some wonderful talent on display. I wish I knew the surname of Lion, Christopher, who gave a wonderful rendition of a song from *Les Miserables*, which is my favourite musical. He did it magnificently. There were others too. The formalities of the event were undertaken by former District Governor Greg Dunn who also provided some of the entertainment through reciting poetry and singing a stirring rendition of *Old Man River*. These people are multitalented.

I congratulate in particular the office bearers, president Paul McInnes, first vice president Vanessa Manalo, second vice president Mary Rose Salubre, membership chairman Rissa McInnes, publicity officer Mitchell Badelles and all of the other office bearers and committee members of whom there are a number. The event was also attended by Blacktown Deputy Mayor Jacqueline Donaldson, representing the Mayor of Blacktown, and Councillor Susai Benjamin, and by local barrister Michael Vassili, who happened to be the person representing the Labor Party in 2011 when I first ran as a candidate for the electorate of Riverstone.

I extend my thanks to all those in Lions and other service organisations who give so generously to make this world a better place. I am so glad that they have seen fit to create a new club to serve the community in my electorate for all of those new suburbs to which people are moving, where there are houses, streets, parks and shops but where community takes time to happen. It is wonderful to see people who want to help make it happen, to nurture it and to foster it. Even in new suburbs where everything looks brand new, neat and tidy, there are still human needs—people who for one reason or another need a helping hand extended to them. It is great to see that Lions, like Rotary, about which I spoke earlier, is reaching into these new areas and establishing clubs to ensure that the service they have provided—for 100 years in the case of Lions—is extended into the newest parts of my community. I thank them very much for doing so.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:46): There is clear evidence to show that access to quality early childhood education improves a child's academic performance and provides essential social skills that serve our kids for a lifetime. A recent study puts the academic advantage at a half to a full year of additional learning in reading and mathematics. Yet when it comes to preschool attendance New South Wales lags far behind other States, with the lowest participation levels and the highest fees in the country. The Australian Bureau of Statistics recently revealed that in New South Wales one in three kids aged four and five miss out on the 15 hours per week of preschool recommended by the Commonwealth Government. It is not good enough.

Parents in my electorate pay upwards of \$120 a day for child care, which is simply unaffordable and out of reach for many parents. The extraordinary expense of child care forces parents—and, let us be honest, it is mostly mothers—into hard choices about work and employment options. Lauren Sarti is a single mum raising three-year-old twins in Dulwich Hill. She would like to return to full-time work but has not been able to because the high cost of day care meant it was not worth her while. Financially, she was going backwards. She made a courageous decision to go back to school and do a Master of Laws, but she is now left juggling child care and her studies with few options for financial support.

It is not good enough that, just to get by, women like Lauren are forced to make hard choices including reducing the number of days their kids are in care. Finding child care remains one of the most stressful pressures facing young parents in my electorate and throughout the inner west of Sydney. Marrickville Council provides child care at seven centres across the area and the demand for places is extremely high with well over 2,000 families on the waiting list. Research conducted by the council in 2011-12 showed that each of its childcare centres is operating at full capacity with very little room for growth at the existing centres. To meet this challenge, Marrickville Council has thought strategically. I am proud of the decision it took last year to invest more than \$3 million to build a new childcare centre at Steel Park in South Marrickville.

The centre will offer an extra 60 places, which is a great start. It will help to relieve some of the pressure on the council's waiting list. But this is before we take into account the rapid growth planned by the Government for the area, such as the thousands of apartments planned along the Sydenham to Bankstown line and along Parramatta Road. When it comes to investing in early learning we cannot leave it to local councils to do the hard work, nor should we expect parents to pick up the bill for government inaction. As the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported in March, the Baird Government has underspent its early childhood education budget by \$100 million this financial year. That is in addition to deep cuts by the Federal Liberal Government, which pulled preschool

funding for three-year-olds and limited funding for four-year-olds. In the same *Sydney Morning Herald* article Lisa Bryant, an early childhood consultant, is quoted as saying:

What it comes down to is a simple equation ... the NSW Government does not spend as much, that translates to higher fees, which then translates to lower attendance.

It is clear that we simply have to invest more to get our kids into preschool. The Leader of the Opposition announced earlier this year that a Foley Government will do just that. Labor will guarantee 15-hours preschool a week for every child in New South Wales in the year before they start school. That important commitment will have a real and lasting impact on parents and children well into the future. I recently had the privilege of visiting the Goodstart Early Learning Centre at Marrickville with the shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education, and member for Port Stephens, Ms Kate Washington.

The centre is run by a wonderful woman, Sarah Benjamin, and is located on the grounds of Marrickville Public School in a beautiful heritage building. The centre has multiple learning spaces and each staff member brings their own interests and talents to their work. I was inspired by the centre's highly developed art program, with the children being encouraged to explore their blossoming creativity through painting, drawing and craft. The member for Port Stephens and I saw passionate educators at work and happy, engaged, contented children. If that is not worth investing in, I do not know what is.

HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:51): Tonight I inform the House about some of the benefits from the 2015 Community Building Partnership grants to the Holsworthy electorate. In the latest round of grants an amazing \$300,000 has been invested in the Holsworthy electorate. This means that local businesses and the community are benefiting from not only local construction jobs but also from new infrastructure. One of the most beneficial things about being a member of Parliament is working with community organisations and seeing them succeed in delivering much-needed services to our local community—and I love being involved in that.

In December last year I had the opportunity to phone all the successful Community Building Partnership grant recipients to advise them that they had secured funding for their organisations. Their responses were of gratitude and joy because they knew what could be achieved with this funding. The New South Wales Government is getting on with the job of ensuring stronger and better community organisations. It is great to be involved in giving grants to organisations such as the Menai Men's Shed—I know that many constituents of Temporary Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) are involved in that organisation. Over the past few years I have watched the Menai Men's Shed grow and develop. It is continually growing its membership base and offering new services to the community.

Unlike many women, most men are reluctant to talk about their emotions and that means they usually do not ask for help. Men generally are less healthy than women; they drink more, take more risks and suffer more from isolation, loneliness and depression. Becoming a member of a men's shed provides a safe and busy environment where men can discuss any of their issues in an atmosphere of old-fashioned mateship. Importantly, there is no pressure. They can just have a cup of coffee and a chat, if that is all they are looking for, or, as they say, talk shoulder to shoulder. A few years ago, as the member for Menai, I was proud to open the Alford's Point site, but with a growing membership it was time to have a purpose-built site. The Menai Men's Shed received a grant of \$18,815 to assist in the set-up of its new home at the Ridge Sporting Complex, Barden Ridge.

When I spoke with the president of Menai Men's Shed, Ken Howell, he said the funding they have received through this grant process will allow them to complete much-needed upgrades and renovations to their newly acquired facility at Barden Ridge, which is appreciated by its members. It is always a pleasure working with Ken and other committee members of the Men's Shed. I wish them all the best with their new home. Another significant recipient of the 2015 Community Building Partnership grants in the Holsworthy electorate was Disability South West, which received \$50,769 to buy and fit out a bus to transport people with disability in south-west Sydney.

When I spoke with Chief Executive Officer Sean Langshaw, he said the funding they have acquired through this grant process will provide much-needed assistance for people with a disability in that region. He also said that the funding will enable them to purchase a new 12-seater bus to transport people with disabilities, which he believes will help many people within the Liverpool area. I am fortunate to know Sean and I understand the work that Disability South West does for people with disabilities. Sean and his team are one of the most hardworking community groups that I know. They utilise every dollar as efficiently as possible to ensure that the people they are supporting get the most out of any funding they receive.

I know they have been looking to gain funding towards this bus for quite some time. I looked everywhere for the money and finally worked out that we could receive it through the Community Building Partnership grants. I am pleased that I was able to secure funding for them. Other grant recipients range from sporting groups to parents and citizens associations and organisations that assist people with disabilities. They include the Southern Districts Soccer Football Association, which received \$15,035 to build awnings at Ernie Smith Reserve at Moorebank; Life Education New South Wales, which received \$1,500 towards the modification of its van; and Liverpool City Council, which received \$40,000 towards funding an All Abilities playground in Chipping Norton and to upgrade the bathrooms at Wattle Grove Community Centre.

Moorebank Baseball-Softball Club received \$32,944 towards irrigation for the Moorebank baseball fields; the Australian Foundation for Disability received \$23,090 towards the expansion of its community participation facility; and the Autism Advisory and Support Service received \$11,910 for the purchase of sensory equipment and musical sculptures. The Holsworthy Public School Parents and Citizens Association received \$30,000 towards air conditioning and a new sound system for the school hall; the Fairfield Liverpool Cricket Association received \$18,500 towards a new pitch at Childs Park; The Shepherd Centre received \$3,500 to upgrade its Casula centre with solar panels and workbenches; and the Moorebank Liverpool District Hockey Club received \$3,500 for a sand pitch lighting upgrade. I thank all the organisations for submitting applications and for all the work they do in bringing their communities together.

BRAIN CANCER ACTION WEEK

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:57): I bring to the attention of the House that this week is Brain Cancer Action Week, which aims to increase awareness and raise funds for brain cancer research. Brain cancer is the least understood cancer in Australia, despite it being one of the most lethal. Every year around 1,600 people in Australia are diagnosed, which is roughly one person diagnosed every five hours. Annually 1,200 lives are taken, which means one person is lost to this horrible disease every seven hours. Brain cancer kills more people under 40 than does any other cancer and it kills more children in this country than does any other disease.

Despite significant increases in survival for Australians diagnosed with other types of cancer, there has been no significant improvement in brain cancer survival rates in almost three decades. Brain cancer also carries the highest individual financial burden of all cancers, with an average cost that is more than five times higher than the cost of breast cancer or prostate cancer. Brain cancer costs more per patient than any other cancer. Brain cancer also has a highly debilitating nature that affects people in their prime and often means family members cannot work if they have to care for their loved one. Despite these awful statistics, brain cancer remains one of the most understudied cancers and receives little research funding. That is why it has been great to see many prominent people recently drawing attention to and raising awareness of this deadly disease.

Last year Carrie Bickmore drew attention to the disease by dedicating her Gold Logie to her late husband, Greg Lange, who passed away from brain cancer in 2010. Carrie's Beanies 4 Brain Cancer campaign has raised almost half a million dollars and is assisting a research project at the Royal Melbourne Hospital Neuroscience Foundation. Closer to home, my constituent Paul Harragon participated in the reality TV show *I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out Of Here!* to raise awareness and money for the Mark Hughes Foundation. This foundation was established after Mark Hughes was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2013 and it promotes research and awareness and gives support to brain cancer patients and their families.

Mark was young and fit and he felt fine. Mark's symptoms started with a couple of days of an intense headache accompanied by blurred vision. He went and saw a general practitioner, who sent him for a precautionary CT scan. A follow-up scan confirmed a tumour. Mark underwent brain surgery at John Hunter Hospital, which successfully removed a posterior cerebral tumour the size of an avocado. Mark's recovery from surgery was unfortunately accompanied by double vision and hallucinations. His pathology results were not good and Mark had to fight for his life. He began six weeks of radiation therapy, six months of chemotherapy, 33 radiation sessions, six months of oral chemotherapy, and he continues to have regular scans. Luckily, Mark's tumour has responded well to the chemotherapy and radiation treatments and a recent scan has shown no sign of a tumour recurring.

Mark is now preparing to join his fellow former Knights players Paul Harragon and Billy Peden to tackle the Kokoda Track in the Coast to Coast Challenge in June this year and to raise \$50,000 for the Mark Hughes Foundation. I commend Paul, Mark and Billy for their efforts to raise funds for this worthy foundation and I hope it can help in finding a cure for this deadly disease. The Hunter Central Coast region office of the Cancer Council, based in my electorate of Charlestown, should be acknowledged for the amazing work it does to educate the general community as well as supporting cancer patients and their families, including those battling and recovering from brain cancer.

I particularly recognise the work of the many volunteers who educate, support and raise money to assist cancer sufferers and their families. Some of the ways they do this are through fundraising events, such as Loop the Lake, Dance for Cancer and Relay for Life. They are just a few of the fundraising events that are very well patronised in the Hunter. I note that next Wednesday the Speaker is hosting a Biggest Morning Tea event in the Speaker's garden to also raise money for the Cancer Council. I trust that members will spend some time this week thinking about how we in this place can help to improve research into brain cancer and so reduce its incidence and improve the lives of brain cancer sufferers.

HARWOOD BRIDGE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (18:02:1): I was very proud to be present at Harwood with the New South Wales Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the Hon. Duncan Gay, and my Federal colleague Kevin Hogan to announce the successful tenderer to build one of the most significant pieces of infrastructure on the Pacific Highway upgrade, the new Harwood Bridge. This is another key milestone in delivering a fully duplicated Pacific Highway and it would not have been possible without the support of the Federal Government and support for the project by the Federal member for Page, Kevin Hogan. The successful tenderer is Acciona Ferroviaria Joint Venture. I congratulate them on their successful bid and look forward to the work commencing and, of course, being completed on time and to budget.

The new bridge is a major part of the Australian and New South Wales governments-funded \$4.36 billion Woolgoolga to Ballina project. This is the last leg of the upgrade and involves 155 kilometres of highway upgrade. The new bridge will be 1.5 kilometres long and will be built 70 metres downstream of the existing bridge. It is the longest of more than 100 bridges to be built as part of the Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway upgrade. I commend roads Ministers Chester and Gay for their commitment to this project. It has been long awaited and talked about for decades, but it took the Federal Coalition and the New South Wales Liberal and Nationals Government to commit the funding and prioritise the project.

That is why we now have about 38 kilometres of the 155-kilometre project being built, with an additional 53 kilometres being prepared for major work. The bridge will remove a traffic hotspot and will be designed to cater for future demand. The existing bridge was built about 50 years ago and will have an anniversary later this year. It was a marvel when it was first built and it replaced the three ferries that were used to move cars across the Clarence River. We have come a long way in 50 years with this twenty-first century new bridge.

The current Harwood Bridge is lifted around five times a week to allow vessels to pass underneath. This creates lengthy traffic hold-ups and is last-century infrastructure. The new bridge will have a significant 30-metre clearance above the Clarence River—about the same height as the top of the lift span on the current bridge. It will remove the need for bridge lifts and will allow traffic to flow continuously along the highway, as you would expect in a contemporary environment. The new bridge will contribute around 200 jobs to the 2,500 direct and 4,500 indirect jobs being created on the Woolgoolga to Ballina section of the upgrade. The Pacific Highway upgrade has been the biggest job creator in the local area in decades.

A recent survey of the Pacific Highway workforce between Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour revealed that 35 per cent are local workers. This will be replicated for the last section of the construction and we will see solid employment for locals in our region for the many years required to complete the project. This is an historic moment in the history of the region as the current bridge has been a landmark in the area and construction of the new bridge marks the continuing growth on the North Coast. Communities across the breadth of the Clarence electorate will benefit from this massive infrastructure project. It will open up enormous opportunities for a range of businesses, small and large.

There will be demand for accommodation, meals and entertainment for the earth-moving contractors, trucking business, quarries, fencing contractors, subcontractors of all kinds and for retail businesses in our towns. Jobs and prosperity will be brought to my electorate as a result of this significant public investment. The New South Wales Nationals are delivering significant infrastructure projects to regional New South Wales because, together with the Liberals, we have sensibly managed the budget and have been able to deliver much-needed infrastructure to regional New South Wales. These projects are creating jobs for country people and are bringing prosperity to our regions. This marks a huge turnaround in our fortunes and I thank both the Federal Coalition Government and the New South Wales Government for delivering for my electorate of Clarence.

BOOKS IN PRISONS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:06): I wish to address the House about a matter that I cannot help but regard as absurd. It is absurd because of how narrow-minded the Government is regarding the rehabilitation and care of prisoners in New South Wales. I was recently contacted by a constituent, Mr Curran, who is a member of the New South Wales Quakers. Mr Curran attempted to gift a friend and former neighbour who is in prison a

book about an Australian pioneer and their life's work. What seemed a simple task soon proved impossible when he received the book back in the post with a printed note stating, "Books are not allowed," and listing a small number of things that could be sent to a prisoner.

When he phoned the prison for further information he was advised that books cannot be sent because there is a library on site, and that only in rare circumstances might another book be allowed in—but only to assist prisoners undertaking study. Let us consider this for a moment: Books are not allowed. When a court resolves to send someone to prison for an offence the punishment is a loss of liberty—not a loss of dignity. The transformative power of the written word has been reflected on far more poetically than I venture to attempt here today.

I pause to reflect on one of my favourite books—one of the few I read as a young student—*Animal Farm* by George Orwell. I think George Orwell is probably one of the most prescient and enduringly relevant writers of modern times. As a young, opinionated man, before I contemplated embarking upon a political career, I found works like *Animal Farm* and *1984* a stark reminder of just how precious our liberties are and how easy it is to take them for granted. So why are we denying incarcerated persons in New South Wales access to such important material? Surely access to reading material would form an important part of a prisoner's rehabilitation.

This is important not just for the interest of the prisoner but also the wider community that benefits from a reduction in recidivism as a result of rehabilitation. I understand that some material may not be appropriate for a prison setting due to the sentiment it may express and that policies must be in place for the security of prisoners and the protection of Corrective Services officers. But I have real difficulty in comprehending how softcover reading material could be of such concern. I took it upon myself to contact the Minister for Corrections, believing this surely was just an error.

I received a reply from the Parliamentary Secretary for Corrections referring me to the wrong clause of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014 and advising me that prisoners had to request permission for a book to be sent to them. If this is the case why then was Mr Curran plainly advised that "books are not allowed"? Could it be that the Government is afraid that the serfs will learn language and rise up or is it the case of one standard on paper and another in practice? What possible excuse could the New South Wales Government have for preventing inmates gaining access to reading materials, especially when similar governments right around the world recognise the importance of reading to the rehabilitation of prisoners? The Government is always trying to hammer a nail with a sledgehammer. It should take the reasonable step of making it easier for inmates to access reading material, if not in the service of basic dignity then at the very least to assist with rehabilitation.

MOTHER'S DAY

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (18:11): I join the Premier, who commenced private members' statements this evening, in wishing the mothers of New South Wales a happy Mother's Day. As members of this place may know, I am reasonably profligate myself. However, I am one of nine children and as I have expressed on another occasion my mother, who is 94 and resides in a nursing home at Concord, has 43 grandchildren. On behalf of each of my siblings—Anthony, Mark, Barb, Pete, Margaret, James and Liz—I wish my own mother a happy Mother's Day. I have been able to emulate my parents and I am sure that my nine children, who I am sure are watching, would like me wish their mother a happy Mother's Day.

Therefore, on behalf of Patrick, Clare, Thomas, Monica, John, Madeleine, James, Anna and Lucy, I wish their mother a happy Mother's Day and remind them that the most important thing that a father can do for his children is to love their mother. On that same note, I have had in the past three weeks two grandchildren, born within 10 days of each other. My son and his wife, John and Daniella, have had their first child. I am sure they will remember their first Mother's Day. Similarly, Clare and Jason, who have had their first child, will also remember this first Mother's Day. However, there is a serious note to this. Mother's Day is really one of the very important days of the year in that it acknowledges the selfless contribution that mothers make. Clearly, I have had reasonable firsthand experience of the selfless way in which mothers devote themselves to their families.

One of the great things the priest in my parish does is to call all the mothers to the front and invite them to participate in a blessing for mothers. There is a poignant aspect to that, however. While all those mothers proceed to the front and receive the blessing, there may be as many as 20 women who remain sitting in the pews, women who, for whatever reason, cannot have or have not had children. They may be women in their later years. Mother's Day can be hard for those women and we should feel some empathy for them—many of them would have liked to have children. We should never forget that, in some ways, Mother's Day can be a difficult day for such women. In any event, on behalf of the members of this place—and particularly to the constituents of the electorate of Epping—I wish a happy Mother's Day to all.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Private members' statements having concluded, and in accordance with standing and sessional orders, the House now stands adjourned until Tuesday 10 May 2016 at 12 noon.

The House adjourned at 18:15.