



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday, 23 October 2019

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 23 October 2019

The Speaker (The Hon. Jonathan Richard O'Dea) took the chair at 09:30.

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome Sutherland Tse and his colleague to the gallery.

Bills

FINES AMENDMENT BILL 2019

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

ELECTORAL FUNDING AMENDMENT (LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE CAPS) BILL 2019

First Reading

Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.

The SPEAKER: I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

MUSIC FESTIVALS BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 22 October 2019.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (09:47:44): The Music Festivals Bill will reinstate obligations on music festivals which are deemed to be high-risk. These obligations were set out in a new licence category through regulation earlier this year but were recently disallowed in the other place. The bill will create a standalone Act that will enable the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority [ILGA] to continue to deem certain music festivals as high-risk and subject them to additional specific requirements. Last summer six young people died after taking illegal substances at music festivals and so it is important that we introduce appropriate regulations to make events safe. I do not think anyone disagrees that music festivals should have special safety requirements, but I share the industry's concern that this bill has some serious drawbacks which will impact on music festival viability.

The only way to get safe and workable regulations for music festivals is if government and industry work together through an ongoing collaborative process. I acknowledge that the Government committed yesterday to finally create the roundtable, but this bill does not fix any of the concerns the industry had with the regulation or demonstrate a real understanding of how music festivals operate. The uncertainty has led again to another threat from major festivals to leave the State. The industry believes the definition of music festivals needs to be changed and is especially concerned with use of the term "high-risk", which would brand certain music festivals as dangerous and damage their reputation. ILGA will have broad discretion to deem music festivals as high-risk and to impose conditions on these festivals, causing significant uncertainty among festival operators.

Some of the obligations around keeping an incident register duplicate existing requirements. The requirement for festival organisers to record incidents where they reasonably suspect someone could possess or have used an illegal drug is onerous and absurd. Music festival operators have not been trained in making decisions about illegal substance use. Will they be required to record incidents where they encounter people with dilated pupils, who are talking quickly or who are especially happy? The vagueness of this provision will make compliance difficult and highly contestable. Under the bill, any police officer will be able to request to inspect the

incident register with no confines on how they use this power, leaving it open to concerns about abuse. This role should be limited to senior officers to ensure coordination and reduce the burden on organisers.

New penalties for organisers of high-risk music festivals can be up to 12 months imprisonment for failing to deliver a festival in line with the approved safety management plan. This is grossly excessive. The Government should instead work with organisers to help them comply with safety requirements. Some of the obligations set out in the bill are appropriate. We want festivals to have safety management plans, ensure access for medical and emergency services and provide areas for their attendees to get respite. But we need to ask whether a standalone Act is the best approach. Perhaps these obligations should be regulated through the development application process.

The standards in the health guidelines that help promoters employ appropriate medical providers at their events focus on skills, but promoters do not have the capacity to determine whether a doctor has those skills. The industry is calling for an accreditation system so that health experts determine which professionals can provide the required medical services, and music promoters can then select from a list. Such challenges would have been resolved by now had the Government agreed to a collaborative process with industry earlier. While there are many vital safety measures in the bill, we need to address the concerns raised by industry to ensure music festivals can continue to operate in this State. Music festivals remain an important cultural experience for hundreds of thousands of people, giving them opportunities to see live music, socialise, dance and have fun. For local musicians they are essential for exposure and building a fan base.

One of the aims of the bill is to keep safe people who attend music festivals. The focus is on people who take illicit drugs and ensuring they have access to water, chill-out spaces and appropriate medical attention should they feel unwell. I acknowledge that these are harm minimisation measures. However, to effectively reduce harm associated with drug use, we need to replace the punitive approach, which is encouraging risky behaviour among music festival goers and resulting in charges and convictions of otherwise law-abiding citizens. We have seen the media reports from the NSW Coroner's inquiry describing what experts have been telling us for years: Young people will consume higher doses of drugs if they fear they will be caught carrying illicit substances by police. It appears from reports that the coroner will recommend pill testing, decriminalisation of personal use and an overhaul of drug detection operations and strip searches.

I have been a strong advocate for such harm minimisation measures and I urge the Government to consider a new approach. The tough stance on drugs is not working. People continue to take recreational drugs despite the massive police and dog presence at festivals and train stations. They continue to take drugs despite the recent deaths and they will continue to take drugs if that is what they want to do. The Kings Cross medically supervised injecting centre seemed controversial at the time, but multi-partisan support enabled it to happen and more than a decade later it continues to save lives and garner strong local community support. The Parliament should work together again to address harm from drug use at festivals through a summit where we listen to the experts. This bill does not reflect the best approach to regulating music festivals. I call on the Government to use its roundtable to work with the industry to establish a way forward for a safe and vibrant music festival industry.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (09:53:34): Originally I was not sure whether I would speak in debate on the Music Festivals Bill 2019. However, after listening to a few contributions and thinking about the roles that I have in my shadow portfolio, I decided to contribute. There has been a fair bit of discussion and anger, whether it is in opposition to the bill or in suggesting amendments. The one thing that is really clear is that by and large everyone knows that it is important to have regulations. It is important to have something strong around music festivals. Then there is discussion about what happened in the other place a couple of weeks ago. Let us not forget that that came out of a committee report recommendation. Somebody did not just decide to overturn a particular piece of legislation. This was after a particular recommendation and it shows that the original legislation was not up to scratch. Hopefully things will be better this time. I acknowledge the work being done by one of my shadow Cabinet colleagues, the Hon. John Graham. He is nicknamed the shadow Minister for fun and I think he has the best job in Parliament.

But seriously, he has worked through this process really well. He has met regularly with stakeholders and has put forward some sensible suggestions. Most members, particularly those on this side of the House, have addressed the need for regulation to ensure music festivals are not cancelled. But they have also said that a couple of things are missing. The two big things missing are the need to legislate for a roundtable—which I will get to shortly—and the language that is used. When we use "high-risk" and extreme words like that, it puts those particular festivals at risk of not running. If there are festivals that are higher risk than others we need to identify that. But what we should be doing—with any piece of legislation—is making sure we set expectations for what music festival organisers will do.

I know you will not believe it, Madam Temporary Speaker, but back in the day I enjoyed dancing—I still do. I still dance like it is the 1980s. My colleagues are encouraging me to dance but my advisers watching me will

be saying, "Jihad, do not dance on screen." Unfortunately I did dance the other day and I posted it on Facebook. I thought it was good dancing but many others did not.

Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: How many likes did you get?

Mr JIHAD DIB: I do not count the likes. Let us just say there were a few. Sometimes with music festivals, we think it is just young people and teenagers. But there are other music festivals. This week there is a music festival on the Central Coast called Rock at the Races. It will be held this Saturday night on the Central Coast and it features people I would have enjoyed listening to. I could easily see myself grooving to people like Daryl Braithwaite, Wendy Matthews, The Church, Dragon—they are still going. I thought that Dragon had gone but everyone is making a comeback.

Ms Gabrielle Upton: Have they still got the original singer?

Mr JIHAD DIB: No. Marc Hunter unfortunately passed away a while ago. But this is a music festival. So music festivals are not what some people would think of as stereotypical with the doof doof music, the flashing lights and everybody taking tablets and whatever else. So it is important we get the regulations right. The Australian Festival Association [AFA] is the stakeholder and we need to engage with it. It knows what is going on and it is the one that can make a change. Sometimes in Parliament we have to be careful not to push aside the experts or push aside those who have important interests just so we can say, "This is what we think is right." We need to bring stakeholders to the table. It is good the Government finally met with the AFA, but disappointing that it was only a couple of days ago.

Bring AFA to the table and hear what it has to say because it has a vested interest. It wants to make festivals work because there is an economic benefit from them, particularly in small regional towns. Let us think about what happens when a regional town holds a music festival—the number of people it brings in, the tourist dollars, the motels start filling up, the local coffee carts get work and local businesses get some work. Let us not just look at the lowest common denominator with music festivals because the vast majority—like Splendour in the Grass or those often held in the vineyards in the Hunter Valley—are not high-risk in terms of what people might think, with teenagers and so forth.

My experience of music festivals comes from my teenage kids. One of my teenage daughters knows everything. She was at a music festival a while ago and I did what every parent would do. I gave her the, "Please look after yourself. Do not do anything stupid under any circumstances. Do not take anything, do not leave your water unattended." Anything that I could think of that was a safety issue. But I knew she was going to be there and goodness knows what is going to happen. But after the music festival, she said there were a couple of things that had bothered her. I had been saying, "Buy water. Buy as much water as you want." The water was really expensive. I asked her if there was free water and she said, "Yes, you could get free water but it was hot because it was sitting in the sun all day." That was an encouragement to buy water. She said, "Dad, you could buy a bottle of water for up to \$8. You could buy other stuff for not much more than that." I really worry about that. You could get sugary drinks and alcoholic drinks but water was almost a luxury item.

I could not imagine being in the shoes of the parents who lost children last summer. I could not imagine being in the shoes of any parent who has lost a child. If you read the reports you learn that most deaths at music festivals occur when young people overheat because of the substances they have taken. Having water available might not fix it, but let us at least make it accessible. Let us make sure there is proper shade, that certain paramedics will be there and that there is an action plan so that if something goes wrong a life is not lost.

Discussions on these issues invariably centre on the use of illicit drugs. There is a big debate raging about pill testing. It has to be recognised that although we may tell people not to do drugs there will always be some people who will. This House has not seen the Coroner's report that has been the subject of discussion over the last week. It is really important for us to be able to see what the Coroner has to say. I want people to have fun but at the same time I desperately want them to be protected. I want to make sure that all of the circumstances surrounding music festivals are good for people. That is my starting point. I do not want to see music festivals banned. I do not want to see kids die. I want to see the best of both worlds. I want to see the industry come together so that there is a social benefit for everybody. I do not know if LL Cool J is still big—this may show how out of date I am. I think the member for Granville is a bit into that sort of rap music.

Ms Julia Finn: He is a bit old these days.

Mr JIHAD DIB: He is a bit old these days, apparently. Whether you listen to LL Cool J or Daryl Braithwaite, everybody should be able to have a good time. We need to listen to the experts. A committee inquiry made recommendations on the original bill. I have already mentioned the recommendation to establish a regulatory roundtable. I have also mentioned the language used in the bill. There also needs to be a proper discussion about the use of illicit drugs. We cannot come at the problem from polar opposites. A variety of

opinions need to be considered, because we have to get the solutions right. It is frustrating that people sometimes just look for simple solutions. There is not a simple yes or no solution to these issues. Good solutions are nuanced; they take elements of all sorts of ideas. That is really important to remember.

We cannot protect kids by putting them in cottonwool. We have to give them the ability to make the right decisions. Legislators can help kids make the right decisions by having good, strong regulations. We can have music festivals that are strongly regulated and we can bring the stakeholders, including young people, into the discussions. Let us ask the young people who attend music festivals for their opinions. Had I not spoken to my daughter about the water I would not have known. The circumstance where water is unaffordable is wrong, and legislators may need to do something about water and shade.

I know that a music festival was held last year at Parramatta. I think it was at Parramatta Park. The temperatures were in the mid-thirties but it was open space and there was lots of music, lots of sweaty bodies and not enough drinking water. Those are the sorts of things that could lead to a disaster. This Parliament needs to have a closer look at the regulations. I hope that there is a good solution for all of this. The Opposition will not oppose the bill but I hope that the Government takes on board the recommendations and the amendments put up by the Opposition and the crossbenchers. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (10:03:47): I wish to make a brief contribution to this debate on the Music Festivals Bill 2019. As the warmer months approach, the music festival scene rolls into Sydney and other parts of New South Wales. Today I have seen scaffolds, tents, stage and fencing being assembled in The Domain. No doubt there will be more of that to come. Successful music festivals make our State vibrant and outgoing. They provide attractions for our residents and visitors.

It is therefore important that our music festivals are well run, well promoted and provide a safe and enjoyable experience for festival goers and organisers. Music festivals are important for our local economy, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity and millions more in advertising Sydney and New South Wales. They are a part of our cultural enjoyment and provide a platform for local and upcoming talent to potentially become major household names. It is therefore important to ensure that our regulatory framework enhances the entertainment experience and provides a safe place for people to enjoy great music.

Sadly there have been a number of tragic losses of young lives at music festivals, which initiated this bill. Parents, carers and the public must have confidence in the safety and wellbeing of all those who attend music festivals. Part 2 clause 6 outlines a number of obligations on the provision of health and medical services being made available at music festivals for those who require medical information, advice and, in more serious instances, treatment. That will hopefully prevent tragedy from occurring. A safe music festival is everyone's responsibility and is in everyone's interest. However, I raise some concerns about classifying certain music festivals as "high risk", as detailed in part 2 clause 5.

Firstly, the language of "high risk" carries certain connotations about the nature of the event but does not necessarily reflect the event's risk or the efforts taken to address safety concerns. Festival organisers could have gone over and above the minimum safety standards but could still have that risk classification. Classifying a festival as "high risk" may deter people from attending it or unnecessarily raise parental concerns that are not commensurate with the actual risks. Consequently it impacts on the economic viability of the proposed music festival and increases an organiser's financial risk. The flow-on effect of the increased financial risk from potential reduced patronage may encourage festival organisers to increase their ticket prices to cover for the risk. It could also influence the decision on whether such risks are worth the investment, which may result in planned music festivals not proceeding or being held in other jurisdictions at a cost to our local economy and cultural vibrancy.

Such scenarios are in no-one's interest. Strong public safety management plans can be achieved without the use of negative connotative language assigned to some music festivals but not to others. These are not mutually exclusive events. Secondly, classifying "high-risk" requires a degree of subjectivity in the assessment process which has the potential to unfairly disadvantage some music festivals over others despite there being marginal differences in their safety management plans. Regulation is meant to standardise the rules and provide clarity and consistency in their application but the introduction of subjectivity challenges the notion. Whilst I acknowledge that clause 5 (d) in part 2 provides an avenue for organisers to make submissions in order not to be classified as "high risk", that can incur a significant amount of resources and flow-on effects to consumer pricing.

A simple solution can be found: Rather than assigning a "high risk" classification, the bill should consider an amendment for more neutral language. It costs nothing to replace "high risk" with words such as "nominated", "designated" or even "identified". The use of those words removes the negative connotations and flow-on effects of being classified as "high risk". Good bills can become better bills when major stakeholders are consulted simply because governments do not know everything and do not have all the answers. It surprises me that a conservative Government that purports to believe in the universal supremacy of the private sector will not enshrine its role in

the regulatory framework. It could create a partnership and ongoing dialogue with the aim of continual improvement. Perhaps the Government does not believe in public-private partnerships after all.

A regulatory roundtable is not an unreasonable suggestion because it was the Legislative Council Regulation Committee inquiry's recommendations 1 and 2. All the inquiry's good work will come to nought despite the two recommendations having widespread support. The two suggested amendments do not alter the bill's principles or intent but minimise the potential unintended consequences for the industry and allow for ongoing innovative changes to make our music festivals safer, more successful and enjoyable. Let us also bear in mind that a vast number of music festivals proceed without major incidents. We always hope that tragedy does not occur.

That is not to say that safety management processes cannot be improved, but the way to proceed is to minimise adverse unintended consequences. Music and entertainment are a central part of our culture and lifestyle and provide significant economic benefits. I suggest to the Government that these two sensible amendments can achieve improved public safety and ensure our thriving music festival industry in Sydney and New South Wales maintains its supremacy across the country.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (10:09:54): I contribute to debate on the Music Festivals Bill 2019. At the outset I will say that the bill requires significant amendment. The bill has been introduced to replace the disallowed regulations that the Government hastily introduced last year with no industry consultation in order to shut it down. This Government is frightened by the reaction to its shutting down the greyhound industry, so instead of shutting down what it deems to be high-risk music festivals it has made them financially unviable. It has raised the bar for compliance to a level where these festivals are just going to go interstate. The Government did not consult with the industry and to date is still not consulting with the industry. That is why the industry requests that at the very least there be a roundtable, that there be consultation and that it actually makes these regulations work.

Music festivals do require regulation. However, the regulations that were passed for last summer's festival season were ridiculous. It was absolutely appropriate that they were disallowed. They form the basis of much of this legislation. However, there are also things in the bill that are warranted and will be good for making festivals flourish. Music festivals bring over \$300 million to the New South Wales economy each year, in Sydney and throughout the regions. Some of those festivals have been running very successfully for many years. They include Splendour in the Grass and Bluesfest at Byron and Field Day and St Jerome's Laneway Festival in Sydney. They have all been captured in the bill. The bill also designates a small number of festivals as "high-risk festivals". That language in itself is problematic. It does not reflect the efforts of organisers to make those festivals safe. It needs to be replaced with a far more nuanced language, such as describing them as "nominated festivals" or "designated festivals".

The Government needs to work with the industry. It needs to start talking to the industry and it needs to hold roundtables with it. Yesterday we saw in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that both Splendour in the Grass and the Falls Festival may leave New South Wales altogether. That will take millions of dollars out of the New South Wales economy and transfer it interstate. If the Government does not like a certain form of entertainment it wants to get rid of it. It is the fun police, as the member for Wollongong said in his contribution to this debate yesterday. For a Government that is supposed to be pro-business, it seems very keen to shut down businesses that it does not like.

I have been to many music festivals in my life—not in the last few years. Most of them are very well run and do have medical facilities on site to support people, whether they have taken drugs or are just affected by the heat or excessive alcohol. In the research and follow-up that has occurred since the appalling deaths last year it was found that some festivals were incapable of dealing with more than one medical emergency at a time. I think it is really important that the health guidelines are required to be used. We need to make sure those health guidelines do not just contemplate the fact that there might be one medical emergency, but that on a very hot day there may be multiple medical emergencies, not all related to drugs. Those medical emergencies might be largely related to the heat and, as the member for Lakemba mentioned in his contribution, the high cost of bottled water at those festivals.

Water has been problematic for many years. Even when I was a young person, which was a very long time ago, there were problems with nightclubs turning off the cold water and only having hot water in the taps to make people spend more money at the bar. It usually means people drink less fluids than they should and end up dehydrated. Along with that, we have had a lot of leaked evidence from the Deputy Coroner's report that perhaps the overzealous policing of music festivals might be counterproductive. As horrifying as it might sound, it might be creating an incentive for people to swallow all the pills they have brought for themselves and their mates in one go once they see the sniffer dogs at the gates. We need to consider that carefully. Labor went to the last two elections calling for a new drug summit and I think it is needed. We need to consider the Deputy Coroner's report when it is fully released, in its context. We should not be ruling things out before it has been considered and we

should be looking to all the experts, not just the Deputy Coroner but also everybody involved in this space, to find out how to make young people safer.

The reality is that as much as we tell young people not to take drugs at music festivals, they probably will. But they will not only take them at music festivals, they will take them every weekend at private parties. Music festivals are more dangerous partly because some people are swallowing all their pills when they get to the gates and see the sniffer dogs, but also because it is incredibly hot. They have also entered an enclosed area where, if they leave, there are no pass outs and they cannot come back so they are often there for 12 hours at a time. We not only need to make sure that festivals are safe but also need to recognise that this is happening across Sydney at private parties and nightclubs and elsewhere, without such terrible effects. We need to work out what is happening well and what is happening poorly in other parts of our city. We can only do that by having a drug summit and considering pill testing. It will not be a panacea and there might be some people who, even after being told the pills that they bought are something completely different, choose to take them anyway.

The evidence from interstate and from around the world is that when people are told that their pills are dangerous, they dispose of them and some never take drugs again. It is also the first time a lot of young people will speak to a health professional about their drug-taking behaviour and a real opportunity to get good, clear messages to them, when they are prepared to listen. Instead of a draconian response or driving an industry interstate and making sure the only forms of entertainment here are small private parties or illegal doofs and warehouse parties on building sites and things like that, we need to make sure these regulations work. They require considerable amendment and they require working with industry, rather than slamming the door in its face. We must ensure that with this bill and the regulation of music festivals there is no extreme hit list of festivals or use of language that stigmatises certain festivals and creates a barrier to working with them.

We must make sure that the NSW Health guidelines are used and that there is a power to require their use. They must be strong enough to prevent multiple medical emergencies happening at the same time. Medical providers must be registered and adhere to the guidelines. Finally, a regulatory roundtable must be established immediately to allow festivals, the Government, local councils and festival organisers to work together to ensure that there are no more tragic deaths this summer. Festivals over this summer season must be run effectively and safely so that none of them feel the need to move interstate. This bill is really important. We are not talking about a small number of people; we are talking about thousands of people who attend these festivals, thousands of people who work at them and, for regional Australia, the flow-on effects for tourism of those thousands of people coming to visit the festivals. They are a great opportunity for towns.

The overwhelming majority of people who attend music festivals have a fantastic time and they should be supported and encouraged. We should work with festival organisers to make sure that they are as safe as possible; we should not be slamming the door in their face because we do not like it. On the weekend of the Defqon.1 festival, where two people passed away, somebody passed away just down the road from consuming homemade Croatian brandy—Slivovitz—or a spirit like that. It is not just illegal backyard MDMA that can kill people. Illegal backyard alcohol can kill people. We need to make sure that people are as safe as possible at all times. We can improve the bill significantly if the amendments are supported.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (10:20:03): I make a contribution to debate on the Music Festivals Bill 2019. What I say should be seen to be completely consistent with the views expressed by the Hon. John Graham and nothing that I say should be seen, either directly or by implication, to be inconsistent with those remarks. I make a contribution to the House on behalf of all of the young people in the State, transmitted to me by my grown-up children and their mates, and their young mates still at school. They love music festivals and involving themselves in live music. They point out to me that the lack of live music in many of the establishments that they attend is disappointing to them, as it should be to all of us. Those of my generation grew up in cities and rural towns full of live music, which was not only an essential part of the entertainment fabric of the State but also provided many opportunities for budding musicians to develop in the industry.

I listen to various broadcasters or commentators in respect of music festivals and their cynical views, or sometimes their arch-conservative views, based upon either their own prejudices, or alternatively their complete failure to understand how a great section of the community operates, and as a result Parliament legislates. Once again this is a bill without proper consultation, it is a sledgehammer to crack a nut and has a range of unintended consequences that could close down music festivals. The Labor Party has always asserted that music festivals should be safe—far safer than they are now—and require some comprehensive regulation. Having regulations imposed by legislation by a Parliament—of which most of its members have never been to a music festival—seems to be imposing a will well beyond its experience. It seems to me to be a similar, conservative, fuddy-duddy attitude that has often permeated society.

As an example to show how society and the community has moved on past a lot of the fuddy-duddies in Parliament, I go back to the 1950s. On 9 May 1957 the then Botany Municipal Council wrote to a

Mr J. M. O'Keefe, known to all of us as Johnny O'Keefe, the father of rock and roll. He had hired Botany Town Hall for a concert. The letter that came from the town clerk dated 9 May read: I refer to the hire contract in respect of Botany Town Hall on Wednesday night. In respect of its several halls, the council will not permit their use for rock and roll and your application of the 8th instant indicated that Botany Town Hall was required for a dance. You were also informed verbally by this office that if the hall was required for rock and roll the letting would not be proceeded with. During the course of the hire of the 8th it was observed that your pianist was standing and had one foot placed on the woodwork adjacent to the keyboard. In view of the misrepresentation made as to the purpose for which the hall was to be used and the abuse of the piano aforementioned, I have directed to advise the hire has been terminated forthwith in pursuant to clause 1 of the agreement.

This wild man, Johnny O'Keefe, in May 1957 was going to dance and perform and sing in a way that was an anathema to the old fuddy-duddies—working-class fuddy-duddies, blue-collar workers who were, to use that expression, all talk and no trousers—and they were beside themselves at this sort of behaviour, a man standing on the keyboard. Whilst we think that that is funny and ridiculous of our forefathers, it is no different to the attitudes taken by the fuddy-duddies to music festivals because they have no understanding of why young people want to go to them.

We indicate our support for music festivals, not only because of their economic benefits to the community but also because they provide opportunities for live music to generate and to show their wares to a potential audience. When a huge group of young people are together, guess what happens? Right throughout our entire society—from the poor socio-economic areas of south-western Sydney to Cranbrook High School, The Kings School and the elite schools—there are people who participate in the taking of drugs and narcotics. In Waterloo, in a block of flats containing probably housing tenants, there are drug dealers on every floor and they have more than one lot of consumers per floor.

Drugs have permeated our society and the same old fuddy-duddies keep working on the basis that the war on drugs will stop drug use and therefore will stop harm. But the reality is that no nation has been successful in its war on drugs. Police standing outside a music festival with a sniffer dog—and the last Ombudsman's report said that sniffer dogs got 65 per cent of their selections wrong—is no deterrent. If young people are going to consume narcotics at a music festival, no act of the Premier of the State telling young people not to take drugs and that the Government cannot facilitate the taking of drugs is a deterrent. The reality is that drugs will permeate every venue. In every nightclub without live music, in every nightclub that has got live music, in every single pub there is somebody flogging something.

The solution to illicit drug consumption is education and providing some type of protection mechanism, not pre-empting the recommendations that might be made by the Coroner and not pre-empting the results of pill testing from the Australian Capital Territory. We should look carefully at ways in which, on an informed basis—not on an old fuddy-duddy bubble basis—we ourselves can embark upon a path in conjunction with experts to involve ourselves in harm minimisation, which includes music festivals. The other sort of regulation that may well be apparent in respect of music festivals is something that my children have raised with me: some mechanism of price control, particularly of the lawful commodities that are being sold at music festivals. The member for Lakemba made reference to the fact that the price for a bottle of water at a music festival attended by his daughter was up to \$8. That is price gouging. My kids have told me that the cost of alcohol at music festivals is so huge that it is cheaper to buy a couple of tablets to get an all-night euphoric effect. [*Extension of time*]

Like any place that provides services or retails products, there needs to be competition in the marketplace to ensure that people pay reasonable prices. Clearly, when there is price gouging in respect of products that are available, particularly water of all things, then obviously a problem will develop. Those who consume illicit substances on a very hot day will dehydrate extremely quickly and water needs to be made available. To regulate music festivals properly requires detailed consultation with not only stakeholders but also those entertained at music festivals. I venture to say that neither the Parliament nor the Government of the day has the necessary expertise to act alone to address those concerns. However, simply trying to rush through a bill that requires rushed amendments is only going to create considerable unintended consequences.

In relation to illicit drug usage, firstly, if you make drugs cheaper than alcohol you will direct people towards drugs. Secondly, simply having an adult—or somebody of my era or the Premier's era or even of the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education's era—telling a young person not to consume drugs, if those young people do not make a rude gesture to your face, as soon as you turn your back their middle finger will go up. The reality is that, if we want to be effective in harm minimisation from illicit drug usage then the solution is education and resourcing the education of young people in a way that they understand.

Believe it or not, Centennial Park Tories who live in my electorate frequently come to see me to complain about music festivals in Centennial Park. These Tories are concerned about the loud music or some of the great unwashed who frequent Centennial Park for music festivals but who may not frequent the park on other occasions.

Recently one person said to me, "If you had a liquor licence in order to open an establishment and you knew that drugs were going to be sold on your premises, your licence wouldn't last too long. Why are festivals granted licences when we know full well that narcotics are going to be sold?" That is a legitimate question.

The answer is that operators in the music festival industry or the hotel or bar industry do not host festivals or open premises for the purpose of the distribution of narcotics; they host festivals or open premises to engage in the business for which their businesses were established. Consequently, to single out a lack of licensing on the basis of narcotics that might be distributed is a small-minded approach when narcotics are distributed in virtually all licensed establishments to some degree. I endorse the remarks the Hon. John Graham has made in this regard for some months now. Let us not be like old fuddy-duddies and simply adopt rules with no understanding of what its impact is going to be upon the industry or the predominantly young people who love and support these live music festivals.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (10:35:12): In reply: The Music Festivals Bill 2019 creates a regulatory framework that will allow the Government to support a vibrant and safe music festival industry in New South Wales. The 2018-19 summer music festival season saw the deaths of five young people to drug overdoses. We cannot allow this to happen again. We must work closely with industry to lift standards at music festivals, particularly safety standards. The bill delivers on this commitment. The bill ensures that high-risk music festivals are able to access the support they need to run safer events. This includes accessing expert advice from New South Wales government agencies on what measures need to be put in place to manage the risks associated with the events, including what steps need to be taken if someone is suffering from a drug-related illness.

The Government makes no apologies for moving quickly to put the proposed framework in place. Following the irresponsible decision in the other place to disallow the music festival licensing scheme, the Government was left with no replacement to ensure music festivals are run safely. We owe it to festival patrons, their families and the broader community to make sure that we are ready for the upcoming summer music festival season. I thank the members representing the electorates of Canterbury, Coogee, Wollongong, Prospect, Swansea, Newcastle, Charlestown, Fairfield, Lake Macquarie, Murray, Ballina, Drummoyne, Riverstone, Tweed Heads, Heathcote, Vacluse, Ku-ring-gai, Terrigal, Wyong, Barwon, Wagga Wagga, Gosford, Orange, Summer Hill, Maitland, Sydney, Lakemba, Macquarie Fields, Granville and Heffron for their contributions to this debate. The issues raised by them is indicative of importance of the issues contained in this bill.

I will now address the issues raised by a number of those speakers. The scheme does not seek to single out festivals, cast aspersions that they are not responsible operators or create a hit list, far from it. The scheme ensures that high-risk events are safer events with help from NSW Health, the Ambulance Service of NSW and the NSW Police Force. I agree with the member for Canterbury that we should make the NSW Health guidelines enforceable. That is what the bill does. The bill is about improving safety outcomes by requiring high-risk events to put appropriate plans in place, including having the right mix of medical personnel on site throughout the festival.

In response to the proposal to regulate medical service providers, the bill applies obligations on festival operators to ensure that the entire festival is covered by the new framework. It is important that medical providers are covered, but it is critical that other harm-reduction services that operators should be expected to provide are mandatory, including providing shade, water, chill-out spaces and harm-reduction engagement services through providers such as DanceWize NSW and Red Frogs. The bill ensures that these measures are put in place.

We understand the concern of some members around the ambit of the definition of "music festival". The definition in the bill replicates the definition in the disallowed regulation that ensured the Government was able to capture high-risk music festivals under its regulatory framework. While over 90 events will fall into the definition of music festival, the bill clarifies that only high-risk music festivals are subject to the new scheme. Many of the events identified by members as occurring in their electorates which they had personally enjoyed will not be captured. For example, the member for Orange asked whether the Cold Chisel concert would be captured. Based on the description provided by him I can confirm that it would not be captured.

The bill provides that where an event is a concert it will not be considered a music festival. A "concert" under the bill is a music-focused event that uses a single stage, is proposed to be held over a period of less than five hours and has not more than two headlining performers and not more than four performers in total, including supporting performers. This clearly does not capture a lot of the events that members have raised in debate yesterday and today. To be clear, the bill will only capture events that fall into the high-risk category and require additional support to run safer events.

I will also respond to some questions around the right to review. Before a high-risk festival is required to have its plans approved by the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority it will be given the opportunity to

respond to any incident that has occurred at the event as well as receive advice from NSW Health or the NSW Police Force. This ensures that the operator will be provided procedural fairness by having the right to make submissions and respond to adverse information before a decision is made. This worked incredibly well under the previous licensing scheme and we will replicate that process under the new scheme. The new scheme will not include administrative reviews of Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority decisions but judicial reviews for errors of law will remain unfettered. Some members opposite sought to substitute debate on this bill with a debate about how we can condone drug taking at music festivals through the use of dangerous measures like pill testing. To be clear, the Government does not support pill testing. There is no safe way to take illegal drugs.

Dr Geoff Lee: Hear, hear! Well said.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: The member for Lake Macquarie and other members have also raised draft findings from the coronial inquiry, which have been reported in the media. The Government has not yet received the final report from the Coroner regarding deaths at music festivals but will carefully consider any findings or recommendations made by the Coroner once that final report has been published. We will implement any changes if they make music festivals safer. The Government is passionate about music festivals; this bill does not detract from the State's leadership of the music festival sector but enhances it. Music festivals bring incredible vibrancy to the New South Wales cultural scene and they employ thousands of people across our great State.

It is critical that we not only encourage music festival operators to put on exciting new acts and different experiences but also ensure that they are running safe events so that everyone can get home. People want to go to festivals that are organised safely. This bill addresses those concerns and ensures that people have confidence that the festivals will not only be fun but also safe by ensuring that operators of high-risk events have appropriate plans in place to address those risks. The bill will only apply to a small number of the more than 90 music festivals that are run in New South Wales every year but will make sure that at those festivals there are appropriate medical and harm-reduction plans, that there is sufficient water, shade and chill-out space available and that organisers are working with NSW Health, the Ambulance Service of NSW and the NSW Police Force before, during and after the events.

There is an urgent need for this bill to come into effect. Members know the summer music festival season poses a risk to a number of events, including those in isolated areas and those that occur during high temperatures. We need to be ready to work with industry to deal with these risks and we can only do this by having the music festival regulatory framework in place as soon as possible. I thank industry representatives for meeting with me to discuss the bill and identify ways that industry and the Government can continue to work together to make music festivals safer. This Government is committed to ongoing dialogue with the industry to identify ways to ensure that New South Wales remains the national leader in music festivals.

As part of this commitment I can confirm that I will roundtable with representatives from industry this year to discuss opportunities to improve New South Wales' festival industry. It will include ways to encourage the adoption of best practice, health and harm-reduction management across the sector. The Government does not think that legislating a roundtable is necessary—in fact, doing so is completely unprecedented by this Parliament. It is wholly unnecessary. In my discussions with the member for Wagga Wagga I agreed that a roundtable with industry is important but it does not need to be legislated. Rather, I will work with industry to settle a format that reflects the genuine desire for dialogue. We will be well placed to work together throughout the summer festival season and beyond. I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Ms Yasmin Catley.

Consideration in Detail

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 14 be agreed to.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (10:46:08): I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-198A:

No. 1 **Music festival roundtable**

Page 8. Insert after line 16—

Part 4 Music festival roundtable

Division 1 Establishment, functions and membership

13 Minister must establish music festival roundtable

The Minister must establish a music festival roundtable.

14 Functions of music festival roundtable

The functions of the music festival roundtable are—

- (a) to support the growth of the music festival industry in the State, and
- (b) to support the safety of patrons of music festivals by—
 - (i) conducting reviews of regulatory schemes that are relevant to music festivals, and
 - (ii) providing advice to government and industry about best practice in relation to the safe operation of music festivals, and
- (c) to conduct reviews of legislation, reports, advice and other matters that are relevant to the operation of music festivals, and
- (d) to address any unforeseen consequences from the enactment of this Act.

15 Membership of music festival roundtable

The members of the music festival roundtable are—

- (a) 10 members chosen by the Minister to represent the government including, for example, members chosen to represent the following—
 - (i) the Department of Premier and Cabinet,
 - (ii) the Ministry of Health,
 - (iii) Ambulance Service of NSW,
 - (iv) the NSW Police Force,
 - (v) Liquor and Gaming NSW,
 - (vi) the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment,
 - (vii) Transport for NSW,
 - (viii) Destination NSW,
 - (ix) Create NSW, and
- (b) 10 industry representatives, being—
 - (i) 4 members nominated by the Australian Festival Association, and
 - (ii) one member nominated by APRA AMCOS, and
 - (iii) one member nominated by MusicNSW, and
 - (iv) one member nominated by Live Performance Australia, and
 - (v) one member nominated by Local Government NSW, and
 - (vi) one member nominated by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA), and
 - (vii) one member nominated by Unions NSW.

Division 2 Operation of music festival roundtable

16 Chair of music festival roundtable

The chair of the music festival roundtable is—

- (a) for the first chair of the roundtable—the member chosen by the Minister, and
- (b) otherwise—the member of the roundtable chosen by the members, with the chair to alternate between government and industry representatives.

17 Meetings

- (1) The music festival roundtable is to meet—

- (a) in March and August in each year, and
 - (b) on at least 2 other occasions in each year.

- (2) At least one meeting of the music festival roundtable in a year is to be held at a music festival site.

18 Reporting

- (1) The music festival roundtable must, within 4 months after 30 June in each year—
 - (a) prepare a report on the activities of the roundtable during the year ended on that 30 June, and
 - (b) give the report to the Minister.
- (2) The Minister must ensure a copy of the report is—
 - (a) published on an appropriate government website, and
 - (b) tabled in each House of Parliament within one month after receiving it.

19 Review of operation of Act

- (1) The music festival roundtable is to review the operation of this Act in relation to music festivals held between the commencement of this Act and 30 April 2020.
- (2) The review is to be undertaken as soon as practicable after 30 April 2020.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament by 30 June 2020.

The Opposition is proposing a very sensible amendment to include a roundtable in the legislation to ensure that industry, government departments and other stakeholders are adequately consulted. I start by addressing the Minister's last comment in reply that legislating a roundtable would be unprecedented. The Minister has gone to great lengths to tell us how important and time critical the bill is. These are unprecedented times. If the Minister truly believes it is unprecedented it is within the same vein as the rest of the bill.

I am disappointed that the Government is not genuine about legislating for a roundtable and working constructively with the industry to ensure that this sector has a future in New South Wales—its future is at stake. The establishment of a regulatory roundtable was recommended by the Government's parliamentary inquiry into New South Wales music festival regulations. Chapter 2, paragraph 2.40 of the report clearly outlined the committee's findings—namely, the regulation was inadequate primarily because implementing a brand new licensing scheme within four months is not best practice. A wide range of stakeholders have indicated support for a roundtable. Paragraph 2.32 states:

In relation to the establishment of a Live Music Roundtable, the Australian Festivals Association advised that it 'sees this recommendation as a long-term solution to strategically address the live music ecosystem, and its important place in NSW's economy and sociocultural environment'. It went on to say that establishing this roundtable would be 'a positive step towards repairing the reputation the state has gained around live music' and noted the success Victoria has had since the establishment of its own roundtable in 2017.

I ask the Minister to note that it is not unprecedented. If the Minister had read the findings of the parliamentary inquiry he would have known that. Paragraph 2.34 states:

... Ms Jessica Ducrou, Co-Chief Executive Officer of Secret Sounds, stated that she wants 'to see an ongoing industry-inclusive roundtable process that includes all stakeholders, where we can discuss the various challenges, implement the appropriate strategies in order to present safe, well-organised festivals'—

that is what we are all trying to achieve. Paragraph 2.37 states: When asked about the suggestion of a regulatory roundtable at the hearing, Ms Mann from Liquor & Gaming NSW 'wholeheartedly' supported the recommendation. The advice from the department is also supportive of this very sensible amendment. It beggars belief that the Government is so bloody minded and will not come to the table on this—pun intended. On 17 October Live Performance Australia penned an open letter to the Premier, which stated:

As you are aware, the live music industry has repeatedly expressed our strong desire to work collaboratively with your government on our shared commitment to safe music festivals. Since February this year we have requested that you convene an industry roundtable to discuss regulation and safety at music festivals.

At a meeting on 20 February with Government advisors and agency representatives, including from your office, we were assured proper industry consultation would be undertaken post the March election. This has not happened.

It went on to say:

We believe it is imperative that you immediately convene an industry roundtable to develop a workable framework that supports our shared objectives.

If [the Government is] genuine about ... shared commitment to better safety at music festivals and saving lives, you will understand that collaboration with industry is the only way to deliver better safety outcomes.

We stand ready to work with you.

We on this side also stand ready to work with you. That is why I am speaking to this amendment today. The amendment addresses this very problem. The amendment proposes to insert Part 4 Music Festival Roundtable. Division 1 describes the establishment, functions and membership of this roundtable. Firstly, the Minister must establish this music festival roundtable. Secondly, the functions of the music festival roundtable are described as:

- (a) to support the growth of the music festival industry in the State, and
- (b) to support the safety of patrons of music festivals by—
 - (i) conducting reviews of regulatory schemes that are relevant to music festivals, and
 - (ii) providing advice to government and industry about best practice in relation to the safe operation of music festivals, and
- (c) to conduct reviews of legislation, reports, advice and other matters that are relevant to the operation of music festivals, and
- (d) to address any unforeseen consequences from the enactment of this Act.

The next proposed section addresses the key members of this roundtable. Ten members will be chosen by the Minister to represent the Government, including from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Ministry of Health, Ambulance Service of NSW, NSW Police Force, Liquor & Gaming NSW, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Transport for NSW, Destination NSW and Create NSW. Ten members will be drawn from industry, being four members nominated by the Australian Festival Association, one member nominated by APRA AMCOS, one member nominated by MusicNSW, one member nominated by Live Performance Australia, one member nominated by Local Government NSW, one member nominated by the Australian Recording Industry Association [ARIA] and one member nominated by Unions NSW.

Division 2 outlines the operation of the music festival roundtable. Proposed section 16 defines the chair and the selection process of the chair, first to be appointed by the Minister and then to be chosen from the membership, with the chair to alternate between government and industry representatives. Proposed section 17 outlines the meeting schedule for the festival roundtable, which will meet four times a year, including meetings in March and August. At least one meeting is to be held onsite at a festival.

Proposed section 18 defines reporting, noting that the roundtable must report to the Minister within four months after June 30 each year on their activities, and the report must be published on an appropriate government website and tabled in each House of Parliament within one month of receiving it. Proposed section 19 provides for a review of operation of the Act. The roundtable is to review the operation of the Act in relation to music festivals held between the commencement of the Act and 30 April 2020 and is to be undertaken as soon as practicable after that date. A report is to be tabled in each House of Parliament by 30 June 2020.

Perhaps Government members would be better served by allowing industry to meet, discuss and inform them about the situation at festivals instead of spending their debating time talking about pill testing—something not even considered in this bill. I commend the amendment to the House. I encourage Government members to support this very sensible amendment, which they know will make this industry better and safer and an ongoing industry in New South Wales.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (10:54:06): I oppose the Opposition's amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-198A to the Music Festival Bill 2019. The amendment is not necessary. It seeks to do what the Government has already committed to do. In my speech in reply I committed to holding a music festival roundtable with industry. This roundtable will provide a forum for industry and government to share information and experiences to deliver safer music festivals, including how we can continue coordinate efforts across government and industry to provide effective medical and harm-reduction services at music festivals. This will include opportunities to improve take-up and implementation of the NSW Health *Guidelines for Music Festival Organisers: Music Festival Harm Reduction*.

The Government does not support the proposed amendment. It will limit the ability of the Government to create a roundtable flexible to the needs of industry and government. It will tie us to a specific model that may or may not work. It will also require us to come back to Parliament every time we need to change it. The move by the Opposition to require a roundtable is an unprecedented action. It will actually limit our ability to create a dialogue with industry and the community on music festivals to be able to deliver safe music festivals. The member for Swansea indicated that consultation is happening in Victoria but that consultation was not prescribed by legislation.

Whilst the Government does not support this amendment, I again commit to holding a roundtable with industry this year. I commit to working with industry to ensure that operators have the support they need to run safer events. I commit to including a broad representation from industry to ensure that all voices are heard. We also foreshadow an amendment in the Legislative Council to rename "high-risk" festivals as "nominated" festivals. This amendment is not necessary.

The Government understands that the Opposition is concerned that saying that an event has elevated risks associated with it, including increased risk of drug- or alcohol-related incidents, might be construed as targeting

festivals. We appreciate this concern but think it is nonetheless wholly appropriate to identify these festivals as high risk because that is exactly what they are. We are not saying that the operators are not responsible and that operators are not working collaboratively with government to run a safer event.

We are saying that the inherent risks associated with the event, including the kinds of music being played, the number of people attending, their demographics and even the time of year mean that it is high risk. We need to have comprehensive plans in place to manage those risks. We want to work closely with operators to put in place good plans. If we see improvements from operators and that the risks associated with their events have changed, then they will not be required to go through the new scheme. But we owe it to festival patrons and the broader community to take the precautionary approach. If we know that there are significant risks with an event then let us make sure that we are working hand in glove with operators to address those risks and get people home safely.

In summary, the Government is ad idem in relation to the roundtable going forward. We differ because those opposite want it legislated. We want the agility to work with industry to properly form up that roundtable and consultation moving forward. From my 8½ years' experience as a Minister I know that when we have roundtable consultations we need to have flexibility. People change, the terms change and we need that agility. To prescribe it in legislation is ludicrous. We might as well prescribe the date upon which I must meet. Should I meet every Monday at 10 o'clock? Should I serve tea and scones? Should the jam or cream go first? We might as well put that in the legislation.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Don't trivialise it.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: The Opposition is trying to trivialise and politicise the debate by introducing, quite frankly, a preposterous amendment to the bill that adds absolutely nothing. I have already given a bona fide commitment to have consultation once this legislation is passed in both this Chamber and the other place.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-198A be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes39

Noes47

Majority.....8

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Donato, Mr P
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
O'Neill, Dr M
Saffin, Ms J
Tesch, Ms L
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E
Butler, Mr R
Chanthivong, Mr A
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Voltz, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Bali, Mr S
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Lalich, Mr N
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T.F.
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Gibbons, Ms M
Hancock, Mrs S
Johnsen, Mr M
Lindsay, Ms W

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Elliott, Mr D
Griffin, Mr J
Hazzard, Mr B
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L.J.
Gulaptis, Mr C
Henskens, Mr A
Lee, Dr G
McGirr, Dr J

NOES

O'Dea, Mr J
 Petinos, Ms E
 Roberts, Mr A
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Tuckerman, Mrs W
 Williams, Mr R

Pavey, Mrs M
 Piper, Mr G
 Saunders, Mr D
 Smith, Mr N
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Wilson, Ms F

Perrottet, Mr D
 Preston, Ms R
 Sidgreaves, Mr P
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G

PAIRS

Doyle, Ms T
 Hornery, Ms S

Provest, Mr G
 Singh, Mr G

Amendment negatived.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 1 to 14 be agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 14 agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

WATER SUPPLY (CRITICAL NEEDS) BILL 2019**Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from 16 October 2019.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:06:58): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. The Opposition will not oppose this bill. However, we will move two amendments—amendments that I consider to be quite minor—to improve the quality of the bill. I congratulate the Minister for Water, Property and Housing and her staff on her second reading speech. One of the important things in this Chamber is the second reading speech. If the words of a bill ever need to be interpreted in a court of law, sometimes a picture needs to be painted around their intent and purpose and that picture is painted by the Minister's second reading speech. Quite frankly in the 8½ years that I have been in this place I have heard some appalling efforts and I have heard some quite good efforts on that front. In this instance the Minister has done quite a good job of explaining the picture that surrounds the need for this bill.

The title of the bill includes the words "critical needs". As the shadow water Minister—I am sure it is the same for the current water Minister, and it was the same for the previous water Ministers and shadow water Ministers during times of drought—my portfolio responsibility weighs quite heavily on my shoulders. At a time when some communities have already run out of water and hundreds of thousands of people live in communities that might run out of water in the next 12 months, the water portfolio is quite a weighty load for us in this place to carry.

As best as I can describe it, the water problem falls into three broad categories of government responsibilities: Firstly, what we have done or not done up to this date; secondly, what we are going to do today to ensure water for tomorrow; and, thirdly, what will be done in the coming years to ensure water security down the track. The more important parts of this bill are, in fact, the three water projects, not the dams—the pipelines and pumps that today will ensure as much as possible water supply tomorrow for tens of thousands of people. They are the really critical and vital parts of this legislation. If you talk to any regional community, farmer, irrigator or cultural group, the dams that are proposed in this legislation are kind of a far-off distant proposition. The dams will not provide water supply tomorrow, next week, next month or even next year, but the pipelines and pumps will. They are the really important parts of this legislation, so I will talk first about those particular projects, which are listed in schedule 2 to the bill.

The Burrendong Dam access point relocation project will enable water to be sucked from the Burrendong Dam at a deeper level. The access point is currently located above the low tide mark, which is approaching. Water will still be in the dam, but it will fall to a level that is lower than the current access point, so the access point has

to be relocated to get it deeper. It is like having a plug in your bathtub that is not quite at the bottom of the tub. This project will move it closer to the bottom of the bathtub. It relates to the critical town and locality water supplies for communities around Dubbo, Wellington, Warren, Nyngan and Cobar.

The Chaffey Dam to Dungowan Village pipeline is important to prevent losing water in transmission from the Chaffey Dam to Dungowan. If I recall the Minister's speech accurately, around 70 per cent or 80 per cent of water that is shifted from the Chaffey Dam across to Dungowan is lost. A little of it is lost to evaporation, but let's not get caught up with evaporation; the reality is that most of it soaks into the ground. The best way to preserve that precious water is to throw it into a pipe and lose none of it between Chaffey Dam and Dungowan Village. Excellent. Fantastic. Quite frankly, we need to do more of that right across the State constantly—the Albert Priest Channel springs to mind. This project will improve the prospects for the critical town and locality water supplies of Tamworth, Moonbi and Kootingal.

The Macquarie River to Orange pipeline is another project to shift water from one place to another while losing none of it in the transmission process. It is pretty straightforward: It is a pipe. You get water from A and send it to B. That project will affect the localities of Orange, Spring Hill, Lucknow and Molong, and the area serviced by the Central Tablelands Water County Council water supply system. These are all really important projects. The quicker we can get them done, the better; we will ensure water supply today, tomorrow and in the next couple of months. That is fantastic. I commend the Government for all of that.

I briefly speak to the dams that are proposed in the bill and put on record a couple of problems that need to be recognised—not with these particular dams, but with our approach to dams more broadly, some of the politicking that goes with that, and some of the lessons that we did not learn from times past. By and large, the period from about 1996 to 2010 was dry. We had some good rain events, but most of those years were dry. That period, particularly the early 2000s, is referred to as the millennium drought, which broke in 2010, right at the very end of the previous Labor Government's term and just before the election of this Government in 2011. A significant amount of work had been done at that time, much as the Government is doing today, to ensure that towns did not run out of water. Restrictions were put in place and water-savings devices were made available. The Government is doing much of that now; but there were also projects listed for future security.

As has been acknowledged by a number of people, including the water Minister and the Deputy Premier, sometimes when the rain comes we forget all those lessons. Since that time and until 2016 or 2017 we have had pretty reasonable rain and we have not implemented those projects. That is a great shame. We did not learn the lessons from that period. We need to recognise that with the climate changing, the most likely prospect being put forward by the science is that we will have longer periods of dry and that they will become the norm, and that we will have fewer periods of wet, or what we might historically have thought of as the norm. The norm is changing, so we need to do something differently. We have not learned those lessons.

In 2012 and 2014 Infrastructure NSW was trying to heed the lessons of the millennium drought and suggested that we do something different with water storage. Of course, it is difficult to get money out of Treasury when the rain is falling. It says, "Why do we need to invest? There is no problem." Sadly, by the time you can convince Treasury that there is a problem, you are probably in the midst of a crisis and a drought. That is certainly where we are today. Famously, of course, during the Federal election campaign of 2013 the then Opposition leader committed to, I think, 100 new dams. I am not sure how many of those have been built; I think it might be zero. In any case, a similar problem exists at the Federal level today. It is a nice thought but, in reality, getting the money out of Treasury is a bit harder than that.

One of the dam projects listed in the bill is the Dungowan Dam—that dam already exists—which is a water storage facility owned and operated by Tamworth Regional Council that provides water supply for the people of Tamworth. It is capable of holding just over six gigalitres of water. The refurbishment of Dungowan Dam will involve building a new wall a bit further downstream. The refurbished dam will hold a little over 22 gigalitres of water, increasing capacity by about 16 gigalitres. Hopefully, that will provide some certainty and security for Tamworth going forward. There is an underlying problem with ownership of that asset, which must be resolved as we go forward. I am sure that it will be resolved. In any case, Tamworth is a growing, thriving community that is doing incredibly well and it is entitled to its town water supply security going forward.

The bill also lists an increase in the wall height at another existing dam, Wyangala Dam. The wall will be lifted by about 10 metres and capacity will increase by about 650 gigalitres. That is quite a lot of water in the scheme of things. At the moment New South Wales has the capacity to store about 18,800 gigalitres of water. The extra 650 gigalitres in Wyangala Dam will increase storage capacity across the State by a couple of percentage points. It is a pretty big project. The Dungowan Dam refurbishment will increase the State's storage capacity by about 16 gigalitres, which is a fraction of a fraction of 1 per cent—so not quite the same size and scale of project. Then there is the proposal for Mole River, which is located on the border between New South Wales and Queensland. Quite frankly there is quite a long way to go as a business case is developed, the proposition is put

and funding is sought—cost benefits and other things will need to be looked at. That project is not as advanced as the other two, but Mole River dam is an important possibility.

The river system most under stress—some would say that it is dead at the moment—is at the top end of the Barwon-Darling system—that is, on the Barwon river and, further up, on some of its feeders. The Mole River dam, if it meets the criteria and is built, could provide future critical town water supplies and environmental supplies through that river system. That would be brilliant. I am sure that all members of Parliament were shocked and dismayed at the footage of the mass fish kills last year along that river system down towards Menindee. We have already been warned about more fish kills this year because there is not sufficient water to run a decent flush through the system to deal with that crisis.

I return to an earlier matter. A couple of things have happened in the past couple of weeks. The Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister went out on the hustings and engaged in a bit of chest-beating about the announcements of these proposed new dams. They said that funding was assured and that these projects would go ahead; it was all tickety-boo. But yesterday, at the Federal Parliament's budget estimates hearing, bureaucrats were asked whether they had received an application for funding for the Dungowan Dam—a business case or something like that. Water officials were forced to acknowledge that they had received no such application. The Federal Government is seeking applause for funding this project, but the bureaucrats say that they have not received any application to be approved.

I appreciate that politicians will do the politics, but the Federal members should have lined up these things correctly—sorted out an application, gone through a cost-benefit analysis and determined whether Treasury could fund it. The rules of Infrastructure Australia limit what it can fund and what the cost benefit should be before funding can be approved. The Prime Minister announced that the dam would be funded, yet an application has not been submitted. So there is something yet to play out on a dam that is worth \$480 million—almost half a billion dollars. That is not a drop in the ocean; it is a really big amount of money. While I acknowledge that politicians will be political, we should err on the side of caution in this respect. Last night I received an email from somebody who lives near the proposed new Wyangala Dam wall. The person does not want to be named, but I will read the rest of the email:

Hello

I am writing this email to see if you can help me.

As you would be aware of the recent announcement by Scott Morrison and Melinda Pavey that the dam wall at WYANGALA is to be raised by 10mtrs and they will be starting work very soon as it is being fast tracked.

At what point in time will we or any of the land owners who will be losing land be notified?

We are a Primary Producer (sheep) and we will lose a large amount of my grazing land and will have to buy a new property and start again if we can. We were building up our business to be self-funded retirees but now not so sure. Not knowing anything except we are losing our land is very stressful.

Do you know when we will be informed and do you have any suggestions on what we should do?

I put that on the record to contrast it with the politics of Scott Morrison and his wanting to get the story on the front page of newspapers. This email is not about politics at all; it is about farmers who are trying to build lives for themselves as primary producers of sheep and looking forward to funding their retirements. Those farmers have made decisions based on their purchase of land that was close to water, but now they do not know what is ahead. It might be argued that we have to get this legislation passed before we can have conversations with those affected, but I think we can walk and chew gum at the same time.

The Wyangala project is not new. It has been around for years so some bureaucrats could be out there on the ground, talking to farmers and telling them the likely impacts. Those bureaucrats could be saying, "This is how we could deal with those processes and this is what might happen to you." I will contact the author of that email directly, but I want it noted in *Hansard* that I am assured by the Minister's office that the issues around compulsory acquisition of land will be handled as they are normally handled. I have been assured that there will be a process that will lead to a purchase of that property so that those farmers may be able to buy a new property and start again. That brings me to another part of the bill that I have some concerns about. Part 6 states:

17 **Compensation not payable in respect of critical water supply-related matters**

- (1) Compensation is not payable by or on behalf of—
 - (a) the State, or
 - (b) public authority, or
 - (c) a local council, or

- (d) an officer, employee or agent of the State, a public authority or a local council, for an act or omission that is a critical water supply-related matter or that arises (directly or indirectly) from a critical water supply-related matter.

I am concerned about that. Whoever you are, if some damage is done to property you own—an asset, a building, a structure or a piece of equipment—historically and typically you would be able to access some compensation. I have four kids at home and I know that the most likely time for them to crash and burn—make a mistake, tumble and fall, or stuff it up—is when they are rushing. I am an adult and I am exactly the same. When I am rushing to get things done I am more likely to blow it—break something, drop something or spill something. The very purpose of this bill is to enable the Government to rush through some water projects. The most likely time for government agencies or contractors who are doing the work—I clarify that contractors are not covered by this part of the legislation—to stuff things up is when they are rushing. But this bill gives unprecedented power and authority to rush things through.

I have considerable concern about the way this bill waives the right for someone to seek compensation if there is a mistake, if something goes bad, if they are not consulted or if they do not have the opportunity to give their intelligence or insight to a government department that something could get broken or damaged irreparably. This legislation will change the way water moves in these parts of the world and that could have an impact on somebody's ability to farm or get access to water because, all of a sudden, there will be a wall where there was not a wall before. It worries me that we would take away from the citizens of New South Wales the right to go to their Government and say, "You broke it, now you need to compensate me". I will move an amendment in this House to strike out that particular part of the bill. I forewarn the House of that amendment. It comes on the back of emails such as the one that I received and of media releases that identify the Government is making announcements before it has done any of the work—even the application process or having the money approved by Treasury.

There is another part of the bill that I will be seeking to amend. I refer to part 4 of the bill entitled "Application of Water Management Act 2000", listed as clause 11. Fundamentally, this allows us to change water sharing plans. There are 58 water sharing plans across New South Wales and the bill as worded gives pretty broad powers to change any one of those plans. I acknowledge that the Minister's second reading speech and language around this part of the bill certainly indicate the only water sharing plans that might be affected are those in areas where works are being done. However, the bill does not say that explicitly.

I will move an amendment such that the bill deals explicitly with the water sharing plans affected by the projects listed in the schedules to the bill. That will say to all other parts of the State, all other water sharing plans and all other licence holders—farmers, irrigators, towns, communities and cultures—that if the works do not directly affect them they do not need to worry. The Government has given itself pretty broad powers to change water sharing plans, but if the plan is not affected by the projects then people do not need to worry. I think that is important. It sends two messages: one tells the communities not affected that there is no need to worry and the other tells the affected communities that change might be coming their way. It would be good to clarify that situation.

More broadly, the Opposition welcomes the bill. There is much to do in the water security space. We simply cannot let communities run out of water. I pose a question to colleagues as I ramble along. What will happen if communities such as Tamworth, Armidale or Dubbo, with 20,000, 30,000 or 40,000 people, run out of water? What happens next? Water is life. What do we do with the people in those communities? What if we do not have enough vehicles to truck in the water? People need to understand that there are limitations. If anyone out there thinks we can suddenly rally an army of trucks and start sending water to regional communities, they are kidding themselves. There are not enough trucks that can cart water to places such as Dubbo, Tamworth or Armidale and secure their water supply in the long term.

Trucks that have the capacity to carry liquids are already being used for that purpose, whether it is to move milk or fuel or anything else. They are not sitting around in someone's backyard waiting for the call-up to cart water. So what will happen? Do we shut down the schools and the hospitals? Do we move the people somewhere else? Do we set up tents in Moore Park and accommodate people there? Do we second the boarding schools and ship the students out? Who will then secure the towns to make sure there is no looting? What happens when we run out of water? We cannot run out of water. That is why this bill is so important. What is plan C and plan D? We are at that crucial stage now.

I have two final comments. I mentioned that water is life. Our Indigenous communities, who did not have the infrastructure of modern Australia, lived near and around water. They had to, because water is life. It is no surprise that many of our sacred Aboriginal sites, places and relics of millennia past are located in and around water. In this bill we are talking about fundamentally changing some of those waterways, which has every potential to have a significant impact on our local Aboriginal communities. Our First Nations people need to be

consulted in this process. There has been a fair bit of chest beating that if we have to kill a few frogs to build a dam, so be it; however, I certainly hope we do not take that attitude towards our First Nations peoples. Their history and their culture is just too important to lose at the stroke of a pen.

During budget estimates hearings the Minister was asked about the involvement of our First Nations peoples in future decisions around water. She said words to the effect of, "Yes, yes, we will try to make that happen." She was pulled up by the Labor MLCs in the room, who said, "Hang on, Minister, are we going to try to make it happen or are we going to ensure that it happens?" To her credit, the Minister corrected herself and said, "No, no, you are right. We will make sure it happens." That is really important. We need to understand that whenever we do anything around water we will more than likely affect our First Nations peoples. At the very least, they should be consulted about what needs to be protected or preserved as part of their history.

It seems we have no trouble preserving a dam wall that was built 150 years ago by convicts or maybe a 100-year-old train station—that seems pretty straightforward for our heritage and planning instruments. However, we seem to have all sorts of difficulties dealing with what is precious to the culture and history of our Indigenous peoples. At the very least, I ask that we get them involved. To that effect, I ask the Minister to consider putting protections in place for Indigenous culture and history, such as native title rights and so on. Clause 6 of part 3 of the bill seems to give pretty broad powers to override all other planning instruments. In her second reading speech the Minister stated:

... clause 6 to mean the provisions of or made under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 or any other Act—

I repeat, "any other Act"—

that would prohibit the carrying out of the development, or that would require the approval of any person or body before the development is carried out.

I have enormous concerns that the particular language used by the Minister in her second reading speech and in clause 6 of part 3 of the bill will override any other legislative consideration, one of which would be what the land and other assets might mean to our First Nations peoples. We must do something about that. I hope the Minister will address that issue in her reply speech. Of course, the Native Title Act 1993 is a Federal Act, but I hope the Minister will give an assurance that we will not seek to override or overlook any requirement to protect what rightfully belongs to our First Nations peoples.

I conclude by saying that I have appreciated the support of the Minister's office in, first, providing me with a briefing on the bill and then exchanging ideas about some of the bill's contents. I have foreshadowed that I will move two amendments at the end of the debate during the Consideration in Detail stage, the first of which is around restricting water sharing plan changes to the localities identified and the second is around removing the limitations on compensation payable. As I said at the outset, regardless of the outcome of the votes on the amendments, the Opposition will not oppose the bill. We ask the Government to vote with us to improve the quality of the bill but we will not stand in the way of critical water infrastructure to secure the water supply as quickly as possible.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (11:39:43): The title of the bill says it all: the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. Members in this place deal with a large amount of legislation on a variety of subjects but at times critical legislation is put forward. All members are aware that currently 98 per cent of the State is drought affected. Recently I had the pleasure of visiting Inverell to see the effects of the drought. The Copeton Dam is a massive dam—eight or nine times the size of Sydney harbour—and it is less than 6 per cent full. I saw the shops in the town and the flow-on effect locally of the drought—financially, economically and even socially. I had the privilege of meeting some young people and a young family whose three-year-old has never seen rain. The effects of the drought are also starting to be seen in the city.

I praise the water Minister, the Hon. Melinda Pavey, for bringing this legislation forward. It makes a bold statement and is a lengthy bill. Forecasts indicate that the hot, dry conditions are expected to extend throughout the summer. Since 2015 the Government has committed more than \$1.8 billion to drought assistance for primary producers and regional communities. In August this year the Government announced an additional \$78 million to deliver emergency water projects to extend water supplies and protect over 180,000 residents of regional towns. The bill will not apply in special areas of the Sydney catchment and is temporary. It will expire two years after assent unless the Minister is satisfied that risks to declared towns or localities continue, or new risks exist. In this case, it can be extended by regulation for a further 12 months. We all hope—and I know I speak for all members in this place when I say this—the drought breaks within that period.

Recently in my electorate I attended a drought assistance fundraiser organised by our great local Red Cross. It was held in the very same room in the Murwillumbah RSL where I stood just over two years ago when there was about eight metres of water flowing down the main street and metres of mud. This country is tough but beautiful. We have gone from one extreme to the other. The bill, by declaring the new dam and associated works

to be critical infrastructure under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, is ensuring five important things: The project must be subject to an environmental impact statement; the project must be subject to public consultation on the environmental impact statement; the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment assessment report and application determination, including conditions of consent or reasons for refusal, must be made public; the decisions made on the project's approval and conditions of consent are made by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces; and the environment planning assessment decision will be made in a timely fashion.

I will give an example of what the bill does. Dubbo, together with Wellington, Warren, Nyngan and Cobar, relies on the Macquarie River and the Burrendong Dam. The total population exceeds 50,000 people. As at the end of September, Burrendong Dam storages were at 4 per cent. In response, Dubbo Regional Council will implement level 4 restrictions from 1 November. If the current inflow levels continue, the only remaining surface water for the towns will be 21 gigalitres at the bottom of Burrendong Dam. That is a lot of water—equivalent to 8,400 Olympic swimming pools. But the water is currently inaccessible without new works. The Burrendong Dam Access Point Relocation Project is one of three projects declared water supply developments in schedule 2 to the bill. Based on current advice, Dubbo may need access to the deep water of Burrendong Dam as early as January 2020. Burrendong Dam deep-water access needs to be operational by the early 2020s, as long as the drought continues, to ensure that Dubbo stays open.

Schedule 3 to the bill deals with Tamworth. Tamworth is currently on level 5 water restrictions. Tamworth is a city of over 40,000 people with water supplied by the Tamworth Regional Council. Tamworth draws its water from Dungowan Dam and the regulated Peel River. The Peel River is regulated by the Chaffey Dam, operated by WaterNSW. Storage levels have been dropping and are currently below 20 per cent. A pipeline will run from Chaffey to Dungowan Village, where it will join an existing pipeline to transport the water to Tamworth. This new pipeline needs to be operational by March 2020. This time frame will not be able to be met through the existing assessment approval process, especially when one considers the time needed for construction.

Schedule 3 to the bill also declares the new dam to be built at Dungowan to be critical State significant infrastructure. The new Dungowan Dam is about protecting Tamworth for the future by securing the long-term water supply needed for the city's growth to 2050. Co-funded by the New South Wales and Australian governments, this \$480 million dam is a water reliability game changer for the city and the region's economy. In summary, one day the drought will ease and when it does we will need to ensure that the water needs of regional New South Wales towns are not forgotten. This is an extraordinary drought that will have potentially devastating impacts on the lives of residents and communities and the regional and State economies. The effects of this drought will continue for many years. I know a number of agricultural producers who have lost their breeding stock that has taken many years to develop.

In the city we will feel the effects of the drought when commodity prices rise. As I said earlier, there is no end in sight. The long-range weather forecast is that the drought will extend throughout the whole of the summer and early into the new year, February and March. Towns are in desperate need. That is why the Government has taken this proactive step, for which it should be applauded. I realise that some of the water storage programs will take years to complete and come online. It is a bold statement. It is about giving hope to the people west of the Great Divide who feel that more should be done, even with \$1.8 million in drought assistance. They are getting frustrated and that is why I fully support the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (11:47:30): I make a contribution to debate on the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. I first make special mention of the shadow Minister for Water, whose contribution today was comprehensive so I will not necessarily traverse the same territory. On behalf of caucus and Opposition members, I thank him for his good work on the bill and our response to it. On behalf of the many people who are suffering the effects of the drought—the farmers, mums, dads, children, businesses and entire communities—I am frustrated that we are debating this bill today. As the member for Tweed said, the title of the bill says it all—the situation is now critical because of the Government's inaction over so many years. You have failed to heed warnings. You have failed to listen to experts and scientists who have been saying you need to act. You have been in government for 8½ years and you have not built one dam in that time.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The member for Port Stephens will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: The Government has ignored the advice of experts, who gave it a map—a guide—for what to do, including some of the projects that are mentioned in the bill. Those projects were part of a 2012 report that recommended the Government act on infrastructure projects at that time. We are now seven years down the track. One of the projects relates to extending piping and pumping to get more water out of the bottom of dams. I do not understand why that has not happened. What has the Government been doing? The Nationals purport to represent the people of rural and regional New South Wales and yet the Government cannot

get water from the bottom of dams. Who saw that coming? The experts have seen it coming for some time, and yet this Government has ignored their advice.

Yes, there is a drought, and everyone in this place feels for those who are suffering from its effects. The drought is deep, it is enduring and it is pushing farmers and communities beyond their limits. Yesterday I met with a young farmer from far western New South Wales, Anika Molesworth. She and her family run African sheep and goats on 10,000 hectares just west of Broken Hill. They have destocked to such an extent that they now have only 50 head on 10,000 hectares. She explained that these are the most drought-tolerant species, so if it is too hot and dry for them, what next? She said that they have come to the end of the line and they do not know where to turn. We need to do something different.

Anika is a very impressive young woman. She was the 2015 Young Farmer of the Year and she helped form Farmers for Climate Action. She described the situation as heartbreaking, with fourth-generation farmers walking off the land because they have reached the end of the line. They simply cannot earn an income off the land that has been in their families for four generations. Anika, to her credit, remains hopeful. Whilst farmers are bearing the brunt of the impacts of climate change, she is confident that they will play an important role in addressing the impacts that they are experiencing. What people experiencing drought need now is responsible leadership—leadership that is capable of learning lessons from the 2010 millennium drought about the importance of waterproofing communities by protecting environments.

In the lead-up to the bill's introduction we have seen nothing but chest beating and bullish statements, which are polarising. The Government has been talking about water as if it is somehow entirely separate from the environment. The Government has acted in ways that have exacerbated drought conditions. Since the introduction of the Biodiversity Conservation Act, rates of land clearing have skyrocketed by 300 per cent across this State. Vast tracts of native vegetation have been allowed to be cleared. It is a no-brainer that a healthy environment is critical to water security and water supply. When land is cleared it has no protection during dry times; the soil cannot retain the moisture it needs to survive. Instead, it is picked up by billowing dust storms—we have seen frightening images of those dust storms. The storms should be seen as a symptom not only of drought but also of land clearing, combined with the impacts of climate change.

All the chest beating has come from The Nationals, who purport to represent rural and regional communities. However, the party frequently demonstrates its complete lack of care about and interest in anything to do with the environment that sustains the communities it purports to represent. That lack of care and responsibility is demonstrated particularly well by the Deputy Premier, who in the lead-up to the bill's introduction mentioned frequently that he does not mind the environmental harm that comes with the development of infrastructure that the Government ought to have funded before now. In July the Deputy Premier told the NSW Farmers Association conference, "...we need to build dams... If we need to rip up environmental impact statements and kill a few frogs, so be it". Again in July, he tweeted, "We've got to build dams...if a few frogs have to die so be it".

Interestingly, the Minister for Water, Property and Housing recently said, "...we have a shortage of being able to store [water] so we can keep our rivers flowing, our frogs alive, our platypus alive..." The Nationals are all over the shop when it comes to the environment. The party cannot be trusted to protect the environment or to take the steps necessary to protect communities from water shortages. In addition to those elements of the bill that attempt to deny people their right to seek compensation and water sharing plans that the shadow Minister rightly pointed out as being problematic, I draw members' attention to an aspect of the bill that I also regard as a problem. The bill will create a regime that requires the consent of the Minister for Energy and Environment before additional projects are added to the regulations or any environmental protections are waived. This essentially pits two Ministers against each other and it leaves the environment Minister as a human shield to ensure that projects that compromise the environment are not pursued.

In doing so, it risks placing a politician in the shoes of someone who knows stuff, such as an expert or a scientist who could more accurately assess the risks of a particular project. It puts politics at the heart of infrastructure and environmental decisions, instead of science and need. This is fundamentally problematic, especially given the changing nature of politics. I am reasonably comfortable, given the current environment Minister has the willingness and the ability to do the right thing. It would appear that sometimes he has the clout to win battles. Had it been the previous environment Minister, we on this side of the House would have had a very different opinion.

But legislation has to stand the test of time. Whilst this bill has only a limited lifespan, things can change all too quickly in this area. The environmental movement has expressed concerns about aspects of the bill. What if the environment Minister does not approve a project? Does the Premier get to pick which Minister's views to favour? Where she falls will likely be determined by the front page of *The Daily Telegraph*, rather than being

based on evidence and need. That, in itself, is fundamentally problematic. This Government has made the drought worse because of water-allocation decisions—we know that for a fact; the experts have said so. This Government has ignored expert advice from 2012 to invest urgently in water infrastructure.

This Government has not built a single dam. This Government campaigned to stop a major dam being built before it was elected, and then claimed all the credit when the project was shelved. This Government, after more than eight years in power, still tries to blame Labor for its own failings and inaction. This Government is not serious about looking after communities around the State; it is more interested in looking after its mates. Like everyone in this place, we desperately hope it rains. I urge the Government to support the amendments foreshadowed by the good shadow Minister for Water. Regardless of whether the amendments are supported, we will not stand in the way of the Government doing what it ought to have done years and years ago.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (11:57:45): I speak in support of the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. Around 98 per cent of the State is affected by drought and forecasts indicate that hot and dry conditions are expected to extend throughout the summer. It is now more critical than ever to provide the community with certainty about the supply of water. This is for not only the basic needs of life but also the opportunity to ensure that the many businesses that rely on a consistent water supply are serviced and to reduce the chance of regional communities running out of water. In regional areas it is also important that local businesses connected to town water supplies receive water so that there is enough employment for the town's economy to survive.

We need the New South Wales Parliament to pass this bill to expedite the planning processes so we can build more dams now. When it does rain, we can then capture as much water as possible to get regional New South Wales through future droughts. Since 2015 this Government has committed more than \$1.8 billion in drought assistance for primary producers and regional communities. In August this year the Government announced an additional \$78 million to deliver emergency water projects to extend water supply and protect over 180,000 residents of regional towns.

My electorate is home to many of the dams and catchments that provide Sydney with its water. Those dams are down to 48 per cent capacity at present and while the drought has taken hold in country and regional areas of our State the city is yet to experience the heartbreak and trauma that this severe drought is causing in those areas. Many people who live in Wollondilly's largely rural areas are experiencing severe water shortages. I am constantly asked what the Government is doing about the situation. The impact of the drought has not hit home to the extent that it has in other rural areas but through media coverage we are all aware of the hardship and anxiety it is causing. A local initiative coordinated by Sharon Robertson called the Dilly Drought Drive has put the matter front and centre and is taking the lead in assisting local farmers who are overcome by their current situation.

Since January 2018 the drive has raised over \$600,000 to provide relief to local farmers in the Wollondilly area, buying water and running hamper drives to ensure they eat correctly. At present there is not enough money for fodder relief, but Dilly Drought Drive is raising money for farmers who do not have enough water to flush their loos, have showers or provide water for their animals. Farmers are constantly running out of water and they cannot just turn on the tap and get it. As with fodder, trucking in water is too costly. Fodder is being brought in from Victoria and South Australia at a very high cost. The dairy industry is suffering badly in Wollondilly and it needs help. The Dilly Drought Drive is assisting but more must be done. Dilly Drought Drive is 100 per cent volunteer based and both Sharon and Tia Veech have worked tirelessly to raise much-needed funds for the local farmers who may well consider walking away from the land. I congratulate the Dilly Drought Drive on its initiative.

I recently visited farms in The Oaks area of my electorate to see the situation firsthand. The impact of the drought is not as severe as it is in other areas of the State but it did provide me an insight. Minister Pavey and Deputy Premier Barilaro have shown strong leadership when responding to the needs of affected farmers. The bill aims to fast-track projects by giving the Minister the ability to make regulations under the Water Management Act 2000. It will enable and expedite licence and approval applications and it provides the Minister with the ability to modify water sharing in towns where it is needed, with the concurrence of the environment Minister. It also helps to support the decisions of the New South Wales and Federal governments to invest over \$1 billion in the construction of the first new major dams to be built in New South Wales in 30 years—which I think is a disgrace, because Labor had 16 years in government and it did not build a bloody dam—by declaring the dams critical State significant infrastructure, to be included in schedule 2 to maximise flexibility.

However, before a dam can be built the water Minister must secure the concurrence of the Ministers responsible for the portfolios of Planning, Environment, Fisheries and Heritage. There is no one-size-fits-all system; each area must be assessed differently. Building dams is just one part of the equation and it is a vital first step. Other water harvesting methods and more efficient water use are also critical to provide long-term solutions.

In both the Wollondilly and Wingecarribee shires there is already extensive activity, strategic planning and excitement about agribusiness development not only to meet Sydney's food production needs but also to tap into the extensive overseas markets that will open once the Badgerys Creek airport is operational. A reliable and consistent supply of water is central to the further development of the industry.

In times of drought it is incumbent on governments at all levels to further develop innovative ways to harvest and use water to provide business certainty and encourage expansion. A delegation of constituents recently visited my electorate office to suggest a way to use tertiary-treated effluent from the West Camden Sewage Treatment Plant. I mention the scheme at Camden because a number of farmers can tap into the same pipelines that are used to supply treated water to the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute for their own agricultural purposes. There is also a network of disused gas pipelines that could be retasked to supply treated water to farmers in the areas of Cordeaux, Menangle and others. The catch is that it has required a huge amount of paperwork to connect up and use this water.

One constituent who visited me brought along seven lever-arch files weighing over four kilograms, which cost over \$100,000 to process; it took almost two years but finally they are now approved for connection. Minister Pavey and Deputy Premier Barilaro have recently said that we need to cut through the red tape to find solutions to providing water for our farmers. I have mentioned one example in my electorate. All members need to support our farmers and rural communities and provide the water needed for their everyday lives. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (12:04:58): The Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019 aims to protect water supply to drought-ravaged towns by declaring developments to Wyangala, Mole River and Dungowan dams to be critical State significant infrastructure. This allows the Government to fast-track approvals for these projects by cutting short the environmental impact statement and consultation processes. It also empowers the Government to change water-sharing plans to potentially limit its liability for compensation claims arising from these projects. The Opposition acknowledges the dire needs of our regional communities and does not oppose the bill but does raise significant concerns with the lack of water strategy from the Government.

Many towns and communities face day zero, a term coined in Cape Town, South Africa, which generally means the day that municipal water is turned off and residents are forced to queue for rations of water that is trucked in from other municipalities. The concept was created to sharpen the minds of Cape Town residents, who successfully pushed back their own day zero through a regime of water restrictions and behavioural change until the rains eased pressure on the city's water supply. For many communities across New South Wales the notion of day zero is not just a theory or concept—they are living it right now. The ABC's 7.30 program recently reported on the town of Murrurundi in the Upper Hunter, which has effectively run out of water. Water is now trucked in as residents struggle with level 6 water restrictions. They fear the water has become undrinkable and families now often rely on bottled water. Local businesses have been impacted and long-term residents are considering the unthinkable—moving from their homes and starting again elsewhere.

With 97.2 per cent of our State currently in drought there is no doubt other towns will soon follow. Major centres like Armidale, Tamworth, Orange and Dubbo are preparing to truck in water to bolster their dwindling town water supplies. Armidale, with a population of 25,000, is throwing everything at the task of delaying day zero. It has instituted level 5 water restrictions and may have to cancel summer and winter sport if it does not rain soon. It is creating contingency plans and each day it is carting in 100 B-double trucks filled with water. Armidale's day zero is currently slated for October 2020.

Tamworth, with a population of 62,000, is urging visitors to attend the world-famous music festival in January following a study that the event will not significantly impact water usage. Tamworth has refused to name its day zero but Chaffey Dam sits at less than 20 per cent. Some reports suggest that even Sydney, with a population of five million, faces its own day zero. The city is set to run out of household water supplies within two years if there is not substantial rain in the years ahead. As I said, 97.2 per cent of New South Wales is in drought and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has signalled there are 40 water storages in New South Wales with less than six months' supply if there is no rain soon. There is no question that we need to act and act fast. Regional communities know we cannot afford to sit on our hands.

However, for eight long years that is exactly what the Liberal Party and The Nationals have done. We cannot expect the New South Wales Government to make it rain but the community has every right to expect that, in our name, they will be guided by science from the experts when it comes to the management of one of our most precious resources—water. Instead The Nationals members have mismanaged, engaged in secret deals with big irrigators and have denied climate change. In August this year the water Minister ignored independent scientific findings from the Natural Resources Commission that showed over-extraction of water in the Barwon and Darling rivers, which brought the system into hydrological drought three years early. The commission pointed the finger

at the water sharing plan in conjunction with climate change and highlighted years of mismanagement. The commissioner said:

There is an urgent need to remake the plan so the current trend of a river system heading towards collapse is reset and the river and its dependent species, communities and industries are put on a path towards long term health and resilience.

A cloud has hung over the 2012 water sharing plan since allegations emerged that the former Nationals water Minister made eleventh-hour amendments to benefit big irrigators. Those alleged changes made it easier for irrigators to pump during low-flow events and for irrigators to take up to 300 per cent of their contractual entitlements in a single year. Interestingly the natural resources report showed that there were 158 licence holders in the system. However, 86 per cent of the total amount of water extracted from the system is by just 10 licence holders. Astonishingly, 75 per cent of the total amount of water is extracted by just four licence holders.

Earlier this year New South Wales citizens were shocked by viral images of over a million dead fish in the Barwon River at Menindee. The then regional water Minister, Niall Blair, blamed the drought. However, experts including Professor Robyn Watts from Charles Sturt University believe climate change, drought and mismanagement all played a part. Professor Watts said:

There's a lot of complexity around this fish kill. It's hard to know if that could be avoided because there's so much complexity around the Menindee Lakes system in terms of who's been taking water upstream and whether it's been taken legally.

Further, Adjunct Professor John Williams from the Australian National University clearly pointed the finger at mismanagement. He said:

Yes, it is hard to manage rivers like the Darling through drought, but that's Australia. If you haven't got a management plan that can manage the water through drought in the Darling, you haven't got a plan.

It is pretty clear what has been going on. What this bill demonstrates is that the last thing The Nationals have for water security is a long-term plan. This bill is a fast-track attempt to look like they are doing something when in fact they have done next to nothing for a very long time. We have heard a lot from The Nationals recently about dams, but the fact is they have not built one in eight years. Instead of planning for greater water security as the drought has intensified, they have pinned their misguided hopes on the drought breaking and getting them off the hook. Instead of proper planning, we are being foisted with this bill at the eleventh hour, and the bill raises a number of questions. I will go through those questions one by one.

Firstly, by declaring key projects as State significant infrastructure this bill will truncate environmental impact statements and silence the community through curtailed consultation processes. I am concerned this represents more of the same from The Nationals when it comes to sidelining science, expert advice and due process. Environmental impact statements [EISs] are critical to assessing at arm's length the social, ecological and economic impacts of a project. When done properly they ensure expert advice is heeded, errors are avoided, valid concerns are heard and adjustments can be made. Above all else these processes ensure that the proposed project is in the long-term interests of the community.

Ministers are not the bearers of all wisdom and the EIS and consultation process ensures all the information is on the table and the community is on board. This is all the more important when dealing with the fragile and sensitive nature of how we manage our riparian zones and waterways. I am deeply concerned that Ministers will be making decisions with little regard to the views of experts and the community. I note that *The Australian* reported yesterday that Infrastructure Australia is yet to receive a business case for the development of the Wyangala Dam, despite this bill fast-tracking works and despite the high profile announcement from the Prime Minister earlier this month. The community is right to be concerned about any move to strip back processes around consultation and expert advice.

Secondly, I raise concerns specifically about how the bill will interact with native title. As other speakers from this side of the House have mentioned, we want the Minister to clarify whether they have consulted with land councils and Indigenous bodies when drafting the bill. The Barkindji people call the Barwon River "Barka". It is key to their Dreaming stories and songlines. The Barkindji won native title over 128,000 square kilometres of far western New South Wales but they now refer to the river now as "dead water". It is unclear to what extent the provisions of the bill will override native title and the rights of Indigenous communities to preserve and use the river.

Thirdly, I note that the bill gives the Minister power to amend water-sharing plans. While I agree that substantial changes are needed in the case of the water-sharing plans for the Barwon-Darling, it is not appropriate for the Minister to use this bill as a Trojan Horse for changes that require proper management and oversight. I ask the Minister to clarify the extent to which these plans will be able to be amended under the auspices of the bill.
[Extension of time]

Lastly, I raise concerns about the apparent move to limit the Government's liability for compensation under part 6, clauses 17 and 18. The bill strips back important protections and limits engagement and consultation with affected communities. This could raise the potential for communities to be negatively impacted. I am concerned that the Government is shielding itself from proper process and liability. Additionally I note works are also likely to be undertaken by private contractors, which may further shield the Government from appropriate scrutiny. I ask the Minister to clarify the provisions around liability for compensation and to provide assurances that no-one will be left worse off. I think that is a very reasonable question to ask of the Minister in these circumstances.

Labor supports this bill because we must act immediately to meet the water needs of residents. But it is clear we also have to give regional communities the confidence that we are working towards long-term water security. This bill does nothing to give them that confidence. The Nationals are moving this bill because they do not have a long-term plan. They do not have a long-term plan rooted in science and expert advice. They do not have a long-term plan that puts the needs of regional people before their local politics. I call on the Minister and those opposite to pull their heads out of the sand and to work with communities, environmental experts, First Nation peoples and scientists across this great State to deliver water security for all our residents.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:16:49): As nice as it was to hear from the member for Summer Hill, it is a bit hard to sit on this side of the Chamber as a resident of regional and rural New South Wales and be told we do not know what we are doing, when we are living it every single day. As the member for the Dubbo electorate, I am delighted to speak in support of the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. It is a historic piece of legislation brought forward by the water Minister, Melinda Pavey, who has done a fantastic job since coming to the portfolio. She was elected in March and moved into that role.

The Minister is aware of the need for action and not just at some point down the track but right now, and that is what is important. That is what this bill is all about. As some opposite have mentioned, there is recognition that the matter is urgent as 98 per cent of New South Wales is in drought. So let us get on with it. Let us stop talking and get on with doing it. The bill is particularly important for my electorate. The member for Summer Hill also mentioned day zero. It is a nice, ethereal scenario to have. It is a nice, ethereal thing for people in the city to talk about. But again they have no real understanding of the fact that there is not a day zero for every town the member was talking about. Dubbo, for example, which is the one I am more interested in—

Ms Jo Haylen: I think they are working on their day zero plans, actually.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: They are actually not working on day zero plans. If you would like to come and have a chat later, I will tell you exactly what they are doing. What they are doing is getting on with delivering pipelines to reuse effluent. They are delivering bores and the reclaimed water that we need to get hold of, which has never been accessed before. There is no day zero because it is in the future. Hopefully it might rain as well, which would help. But the idea that you can just say it is a day zero and we are going to try to truck water in is not happening for Dubbo.

The scenario of fish kills is also very convenient to talk about but again not entirely accurate. There were also fish kills in Burrendong Dam. Fish kills happen for a vast range of reasons. For example, we got rain at one point and fish got killed because organic matter comes down the creeks into the dam and takes fish with it. There is no oxygen, so fish die. There is a vast range of reasons for fish kills.

Ms Jo Haylen: Yes, including the management by your party.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The member for Summer Hill will come to order.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: They cannot be lumped into one as a convenient argument against what we are trying to do.

Ms Jo Haylen: I didn't do that. That's not what I said.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The member for Summer Hill will come to order.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: To be clear, if there was no management of water at the moment then there would be no water in the rivers. That is recognised by most people along the entire Macquarie Valley. Without being too dramatic, there is no bigger issue in my electorate right now than water. When I walk down the street, it is what people want to talk about. We talk about other things in this place, but the top concern of everyone in my region is water. The drought will not be fixed by anything other than big downpours of rain and if we could make that happen, we would have done so. One of my colleagues, Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales Adam Marshall, is working hard to come up with ways to continue to support those in the community that need support. We have supplied \$1.8 billion so far and more is to come.

In my electorate, the people of Dubbo and Wellington rely on the Macquarie River and Burrendong Dam. Add to that the residents of towns like Warren, Nyngan and Cobar, and there is a total of 60,000 people who need some sort of security around water. As mentioned by others, Burrendong Dam is at about 4 per cent capacity. In response, Dubbo Regional Council will implement level 4 restrictions from 1 November, having already implemented level 3 restrictions at the start of this month. Yes, it will be difficult and yes, there are many things we might normally take for granted that we will not be able to do under higher restrictions—but we are also learning lessons and there are ideas for the future. I think that is great. Most people would say that we are well and truly aware of the need to come up with better ways to use the water we have, whether by re-using effluent, capturing stormwater or just generally recycling our most precious resource.

We are already hearing stories about this. I have had several phone calls from people who spoke about how their children have helped them to be thrifty. People are not pulling the plug in the bath, but instead are chucking that water on the garden or the lawn. Some people are putting buckets in the shower to capture the water that flows while they wait for the hot tap to come on and that would otherwise go down the drain. They then use that water for things like washing the car. These are all sensible things to do. Others are buying hoses so the water that would normally be pumped out of their washing machines can head out to the lawn or garden rather than down the basin and into the stormwater system. While this drought is terrible and crippling, it is also teaching us to be innovative and to think about different ways to use and re-use our most precious resource. That is one positive aspect of the drought.

We must make sure that if the worst-case scenario occurs and the current record-low-level inflows continue, we are prepared. Things could get tougher. We have had inflows 40 per cent lower than in the worst drought on record. We need to look at ways to ensure the Macquarie River continues to flow and provide for Wellington, then Dubbo, and then towns further downstream like Warren, Cobar and Nyngan. The way to do that is via one of the projects that has been talked about in this debate.

This bill will directly help us to access and pump the 21 gigalitres of water at the bottom of Burrendong Dam. It is remnant water which has never been needed before. It sits below the out-take valve. As the member for Cessnock tried to explain, the dam is similar to a tank. In a water tank, the valve sits about 20 centimetres to 30 centimetres above the bottom in order to allow silt to settle and to get the clearest possible water. It is the same with the dam, but we now need that extra water. Twenty-one gigalitres is a lot of water; it is equivalent to about 8,400 Olympic swimming pools. This water can be stretched out for many months to secure Dubbo and also those surrounding towns and towns further downstream. It will give councils and communities more time to keep scaling up their implementation of water saving, recycling and groundwater programs.

However, this water is currently inaccessible without new works; for example, the Burrendong Dam access point relocation project. Minister Pavey joined me at Burrendong Dam recently, for two reasons. First, it was another opportunity for her to see firsthand what is happening across the catchment and, secondly, it was an opportunity to look at how this project can be funded and how much funding is needed. That funding was announced during the Minister's visit. The Burrendong project is one of the three projects declared as water supply developments at schedule 2 of the bill. Without this bill, accessing this storage could take what feels like an eternity. The harsh truth is that, based on current advice, Dubbo may need to start accessing this deep water—which has been inaccessible up until this point—in the first quarter of next year. There is not enough time for a business-as-usual approach to this project, just as with many other projects that could help increase water storage capabilities across this parched State.

If this drought continues—and sadly all the forecasters are saying that it will—the Burrendong deep water works need to be operational by early next year. That will ensure that other communities surrounding Dubbo will continue to have water supply. This does not mean there is no concern for the environment or that shortcuts will necessarily be taken; it means there will be a truncated process and all efforts will be put into getting the work done quickly. The work still needs to happen and it needs to be in concurrence, but it needs to happen quickly. It is not about making sure that impacts are not looked at; it is about making sure we look at those impacts as quickly and efficiently as possible. In some cases approvals can take 12 to 18 months. We need to cut that back dramatically to get the project done in a timely manner and make a real difference.

There has never been a more important time to make sure this happens than right now. Time matters. As for other water infrastructure projects, we need to get cracking on those as well because while we cannot fix this current drought, we can most certainly plan ahead and be part of the solution. We can ensure we do not end up in this same predicament, with dams running out of water, again. Constituents have told me that we should have been looking at more dams much earlier than now, maybe 10 or 15 years ago, and they are right. Unfortunately at that time this State was not in the sound financial position it is in now and it was not being governed by people who were working to improve regional New South Wales as a priority—but it is now.

History tells us that major droughts are followed by epic floods. While this is a bit of a cliché, we also know that every day we go without decent rain, we are one day closer to it arriving. I do not want that day to come and for us as a State not to be prepared for it. We need to be ready and aware. I would be dismally disappointed if we saw inches upon inches of liquid gold fall from the skies but were not able to capture it with the infrastructure that we need. We need to push and push hard to get this work done. I would like to think that when it comes to something as vital as water is to every one of us, there can be some agreements between all of us as elected representatives. We do not need to fight on this; we need to get on with things for now and for the future.

Whether members are on team red, team blue, team Nationals green, team The Greens green, team Independent or team Shooters—whatever team they are on—I urge them to do this in a bipartisan way and represent this State as it should be represented. I note the comments of both the member for Cessnock and the member for Summer Hill that they essentially support the bill. I congratulate them on that. I urge all members of this Parliament to support the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (12:27:33): I speak on the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. It is a critical need that we have in this State, unfortunately, because three years ago all of our dams and reservoirs across New South Wales were full. Now we have a situation, due to this Government's appalling management of water in this State, where whole communities have been going without water for some time. According to the Government, up to 80 towns in this State are at risk of running out of water, if they have not already. In fact, Murrurundi, just up the road from my electorate of Maitland, has been without water for six months. This should never have been allowed to happen.

I refer to the comments of the member for Dubbo. We on this side of the House recognise the urgency of this issue. The question we are all asking and that is being asked out in the communities is, why has it taken so long for this Government to start making plans for critical water shortages? Again, the member for Dubbo said in his speech that if there was no management, there would be no water. If that is the bar or key performance indicator of water management, that at least there is a little bit of water in the State so we have been managing it well, we understand now why we are in the mess that we are in. After the millennium drought we saw improved infrastructure, for example, in the main water supply for more than 24,000 people in the Goulburn area. That is now three-quarters full. A dam and a pipeline were built there by joint cooperation between the State and Federal governments after lobbying by the council.

What has this Government been doing about all of the other areas that we know are in crisis? What has it been doing for the past nine years? Broadly, the bill will allow the Government to fast-track approval processes for listed water infrastructure and dam projects for a period of two years, with a one-year option. Labor is pleased to see the Government finally trying to do something to clean up its mess. The fact that it has not been able to build a dam since it came to government in 2011 is a shameful disgrace. During question time the other day, the Deputy Premier boasted about a biodiversity offset project at Nimmitabel, calling it a dam that had been built by this Government. Quite clearly, that project does not meet the definition of a dam, which shows the Government's complete lack of understanding—or its wilful misleading of this House. This is just situation normal for The Nationals.

We know that the Government wants to shortcut its processes. It was interesting to hear the member for Dubbo talk about bipartisanship. On every rural issue that the Government has dealt with in the past six months it has shown no bipartisanship. We are looking down the barrel of that again with this bill. The Government just does not get that it has to work with the whole community on this matter and that the whole community is depending on it. The member for Dubbo can talk about people having teams; there is one team and it is team New South Wales. We know that it is a complex matter to manage, and in its report earlier this year the Natural Resources Commission showed quite clearly that this Liberal-Nationals Government has failed to do so. What the Government is asking for in this bill that is of such great concern to Labor is to bypass that process.

How can the Government talk about having a bipartisan approach to the management of water on one hand, and on the other hand say that it wants to be able to amend legislation by regulation without bringing it back to this place? It is saying, "We're going to play with you on the field. We're going to get in our team colours and we're going to sort this all out, but actually we're going to make all the decisions in the change rooms and just come and tell you what we've done later on." That is just not acceptable. If the Government had any reputation or any kudos or support from the community for its capacity to manage water in this State, we might give it the benefit of the doubt. But when it has done such a shocking job—a job that is so severely impacting on our regions—we cannot say, "Yes, sure, do what you like." That is why are seeking some clarification in the amendments that have been foreshadowed by the shadow Minister.

It is really clear that if this is what the Government talks about as a crisis, and if it is asking us to give it a blank cheque to make the changes to legislation it wants to make without coming back to this place, the shadow Minister is right. We know that people make mistakes when they are under pressure, when they are doing things

on the hop and when it is all critical. This Government has only now woken up to the fact that this is critical. If we look at the Government's performance when it was ignoring the drought and ignoring the issues that were being faced by people in our regions, it was woeful. What will it be like when the Government is under pressure? I am really concerned about that.

I am also concerned as shadow Minister for tourism. The member for Summer Hill mentioned how Tamworth is trying to deal with its water shortages and what it needs to do. We know that our regional towns are dying without water. We know that the primary industries and tourism industries are dying. We have talked to people in Broken Hill who have had to say to tourists wanting to visit, "No, you don't have to bring your own bottle of water." This Government has failed at every step to provide water and management plans or to do anything to ensure that communities can survive this dreadful drought. The Government is not good at this and it should not have our blanket approval to do whatever it likes.

The other point I make relates to the idea that if we truncate the environmental impact statement [EIS] process everything will be alright. Dams are not pop-up infrastructure. The EIS process is there to ensure that they get built properly. Also, there will be time taken in the construction. There will be time taken in the filling. This Government has no pathway for those processes to happen. Labor recommends very careful consideration of this bill. We agree that we need to support our regional communities. We want people in our regional towns to have water; it is vital to life. But we have to be very careful when we set up a precedent that allows the Government to bypass or truncate existing requirements in the approvals and construction process.

We also need to make sure that if mistakes are made—which we know, based on the Government's record, is most likely to happen—we will not cut people off from compensation that is fair for them. We need to be very clear about what limitations the Government will impose on compensation for unintended consequences. It is not really good at that either. The Government has to be held accountable for its decisions. If we give the Government a blank cheque, if we say, "There is no jeopardy in this for you," we cannot trust it to get it right. To some degree this legislation is necessary because we know we are running out of water. Labor's concern is that the Government should have acted more quickly. It should do things properly. We should not be where we are now. It is a disgrace and a shame on the Government.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:35:35): I make a contribution to debate on the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. It has been said that we are a country of droughts and flooding rains, and it is an unfortunate fact that 98 per cent of our State is in drought at the moment. Looking at the map, I was surprised to learn that Summer Hill is in drought. You would not know it if you live there; you turn on the tap and water magically appears. It is very fortunate for the people who live in Summer Hill and in wider Sydney that we have that facility. We have Warragamba Dam and we have a desalination plant as a backup.

Those facilities do not exist in some of the 98 per cent of places that are in drought. Earlier today the member for Tweed mentioned that he had visited Inverell. I was there with him for that visit and it is a drought like I have never seen before. "Moonscape" is probably the best way to describe it: literally no grass and no greenery at all. For someone accustomed to living on the coast and travelling down to Sydney, where I lived for a short time as well, the view outside of Parliament House is lovely and green. You would not realise just how dry it is until you go to a place like Inverell or like much of the State that is suffering under this intense drought.

The coming summer is forecast to be very hot and dry. Without further rain, the drought will intensify even more. The electorate of Coffs Harbour is officially drought-affected and some patches of it are in intense drought. Looking at it from the air as I fly down to Parliament, it does not look too bad. It looks fairly green. But talk to the farmers on the ground: The dams are empty, the creeks are not flowing and it is tough. We will have a tough summer. You would not know it by looking at it, but it is very, very dry on the ground. Rainfall patterns on the coast are typically very different to rainfall patterns inland. We are far more fortunate than our cousins over the range. Typically we will have periods of very intense rain throughout autumn. We will get big rainfall events dumping huge amounts of water, and then we will have very little rain until we start getting those late spring and summer storms.

In this debate we have heard a lot from both sides but I will just touch on a few issues very briefly. The bill has a temporary two-year lifespan, unless the drought continues. We all hope that within two years the drought will end. In particular, although Coffs Harbour is not struggling as bad as other places, we need our summer rains and autumn east coast lows bringing those big volumes of water and filling our dams. The bill can be extended for a further 12 months if the Minister is satisfied that the risks to declared towns or localities continue or that new risks emerge. The member for Maitland raised some concerns about that.

What we have seen over the past couple of years of this drought is record low inflows. Rivers just are not flowing because we have had so little rain. The member for Maitland also said that she wants water. What is her plan to get more water? You cannot conjure water out of thin air—well, actually you can; it is just very energy

intensive. But what is the Opposition's plan to get more water? It just does not exist. You have to rely on rainfall and inflows. The bill proposes to build dams to capture that rain. The 12-month extension can only be granted with the agreement of the Minister administering the Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Contrary to some of the points made earlier by Opposition speakers, this bill does not take any shortcuts. It still ensures five very important things. Firstly, the bill must be subject to an environmental impact statement. Secondly, the project must be subject to public consultation on that environmental impact statement. Thirdly, the Department of Planning Industry and Environment's assessment report and the application's determination, including conditions of consent or reasons for refusal, will be made public. Fourthly, the decision on the project's approval and conditions of consent are made by the Minister with responsibility for planning of public spaces. Fifthly, an environmental planning assessment decision will be made in a timely fashion. I think that those on both sides of the House and the crossbench would agree that urgent action is required. Today there has been quite a lot of discussion about how this Government waited eight years. Before that we had 16 years of Labor when absolutely nothing was done—10 years of the millennium drought when nothing was done.

Mr David Harris: I can name the projects. That is rubbish.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: You can speak next and name them but I believe nothing was done.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The member for Wyong will come to order.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: This debate started off really well, with the member for Cessnock supporting this bill with amendments—the Opposition has every right to put up amendments—and I thank him for his support. One day this drought will ease. When it does, we need to make sure that the water is being captured in bigger storages and that the process can move along in a timely manner.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): Before I call the member for Orange I remind members that the member with the call will be heard in silence.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:41:38): I support the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. In spite of my support of the bill I point out that it was necessitated as a result of long-term, unabated mismanagement of water and a lack of contingency and forward planning by this and former governments. The Government should not seek credit for this last-minute emergency response to a crisis in our State's civilisation that was foreseeable and—with proper planning, management and funding from State governments—was, to a great extent, avoidable.

This bill is now critical to the communities of Orange, Spring Hill, Lucknow and Molong in my electorate, which are appropriately listed as critical towns or locality water supplies in part 2 of the proposed Act. It is unfortunate that other communities whose water supplies are equally critical, if not more so, have failed to be encompassed in this bill, as will be suggested by my colleague the member for Barwon. My colleagues in the other place will seek to move amendments to encompass those affected communities and locality water supplies overlooked and not considered in this bill.

Like most of regional New South Wales, all of the Orange electorate is suffering the impacts of this drought crisis. In fact, my check of the combined drought indicator today shows that 99.4 per cent of the entire State is in drought, in varying degrees. Orange presently sources its water from the Suma Park and Spring Creek dams, from stormwater harvesting and also the unregulated Macquarie River. The combined level of water storage has been dropping and is currently under 30 per cent. Supplies are predicted to be exhausted in around 12 months.

This drought is a terrible threat to a city of nearly 40,000 people and the broader district encompassing the townships of Spring Hill, Lucknow and Molong. The Orange City Council and the community have stepped up to respond. Orange City Council has implemented level 5 restrictions and the council is closely tracking demand. In the meantime, a frustrating situation exists. There is water now in the unregulated Macquarie River and there is an existing council pipeline from the river to the Orange water supply but the council cannot turn it on. Under its existing environmental planning assessment approval conditions as set by the Independent Planning Commission, this pipeline can only be used when the Macquarie is in high flow—when the flows are above the eightieth percentile or 108 megalitres per day under a conservative model. Other models reduce it to 70 megalitres a day at 80 per cent flows—the subject of a permanent application made in July this year.

Also, the environmental impact statement was completed and it was accepted that there would be no harm at 38 megalitres per day flows in the Macquarie River at the Long Point extraction site at the time of the original consent. In line with expressed community views, council agreed to the conservative views of the Independent Planning Commission and accepted the eightieth percentile flows, with provision to come back in the future with more modelling to reduce the trigger points. This bill would allow Orange City Council to have a

temporary arrangement, with permission from the Minister, in extreme circumstances to go as low as the impact point of flows.

Debate interrupted.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended this sitting to provide for Government business to resume immediately after the conclusion of the committee reports take-note debate and to continue until 2.00 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

Committees

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Reports

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:46:05): As Deputy Chair: I welcome the committee's final report entitled *Sydney's Night Time Economy* and its recommendations that provide the Government with a pathway for a safe and vibrant nightlife for Sydney. I pay special thanks to the Hon. Natalie Ward, the committee chair, for her collaborative leadership through the process. She was able to take a politically contentious issue and deliver a largely consensus outcome. The committee staff excelled throughout, despite a tight time line and, along with all members of the committee, ensured as many voices as possible were heard throughout the process.

Mr John Sidoti: That sounds like a win-win.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: It was a win-win. The time frame was important as it is vital that the Government acts with appropriate urgency to ensure we no longer miss out on the jobs, investments and returns for small business from our night-time economy. It is estimated that the State is missing out on literally billions of dollars each year. It is my hope that by Mardi Gras 2020 our night-time economy will once again be flourishing, fun and safe. I thank everyone who made a submission and engaged with the inquiry to ensure that our recommendations were informed by health professionals, local government, academics, musicians, industry stakeholders and members of the wider community. I pay tribute to those who have long been campaigning for the recommendations for proposed government action, including Keep Sydney Open, The Greens, Labor Loves Live Music and the Young Liberals. Lord Mayor Clover Moore and Deputy Lord Mayor Jess Scully have been at the forefront of the thought leadership to return a safe and vibrant nightlife to Sydney and to ensure we have the diversity that our night-time economy needs to flourish.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Have some fun again!

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: Yes, because good things can happen after 1.30 a.m. I met my husband on the dance floor in a gay bar on Oxford Street after 1.30 a.m. With the repeal of the lockouts, I hope others in Sydney will be able to be so lucky. But we need to make sure that we do not see a return to the situation we had in 2014, with a saturation of vertical drinking establishments co-located within small areas, with extended trading licences and no transport home. The committee made key recommendations about planning and licensing controls, and transport, and we commend those to the Government to act on. With reference to the special treatment of Kings Cross, I support the repeal of the lockouts in Kings Cross but we need to make sure that we get the balance right between density of venues and diversity of offerings.

The report recommends the City of Sydney and New South Wales Government work towards this goal over the next 12 months. Of course, our night-time economy needs more than just legislative change. We need coordination of agencies and investment from the Government. It is great to see this is already happening. The New South Wales Government invested \$192,000 in Sydney's bid for WorldPride 2023 and, having just returned from Athens as part of the bid team, I am proud to inform the House that Sydney won in a definitive victory against Montreal and Houston. Deloitte estimates that this event will bring more than one million visitors and over \$600 million in spending to Sydney. As someone who has attended WorldPrides in Madrid and New York, I am sure we can expect those figures to be even higher. This shows the benefits that come from Government investment. A safe and vibrant night-time economy is critical to the reputation of any global city. In adopting the committee's recommendations, Sydney will be well on its way to getting our groove back. I commend the report to the House.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:49:43): I contribute to this take-note debate as a member of the joint select committee that inquired into Sydney's night-time economy. I too commend the chair of the committee, the Hon Natalie Ward, MLC, for her patient, thorough and professional conduct of the inquiry. I also sincerely thank the committee staff for their huge effort in managing, resourcing and supporting the committee. I found much common ground with other members of the committee about many of the matters canvassed. Nevertheless, I did not support a number of the key recommendations that are presented in the committee report.

My key concern is that the level of violent incidents that had been occurring in Sydney CBD and in Kings Cross undoubtedly fell after the introduction of the suite of measures known as the lockdown laws. In effect this means that lives have been saved and injuries avoided. No-one disputed that finding. What was contested was the reason for the fall, the extent to which that reduction has persisted over time and the likelihood of that higher level of violence returning should the laws be changed. I was particularly keen for further research to be done to identify, if possible, which specific measure or measures were having that beneficial effect. The recognition that some of the reduction may have been due to measures introduced statewide prior to the beginning of 2014 just underlines the importance of that further research. I would like to know what it was that was working and I would like to see that measure or measures retained.

I did not vote to reverse the lockdown measures in Sydney CBD, nor did I support the recommendation in relation to ID scanners in Kings Cross. Frankly, I found the arguments raised against the use of ID scanners to be weak and unconvincing, given the long-established requirement for the provision of ID in licensed clubs across the State. Should the recommendation to reverse the lockdown provisions in Sydney CBD be implemented I am particularly concerned that police, ambulance officers and other frontline personnel will once again be placed at greater risk as they go about their task of protecting and serving the community. In conclusion, my position is that the Parliament should ensure it is in a position to identify those measures that have improved public safety, retain those measures and remove or modify only those other measures that have not been responsible for the demonstrated improvement in public safety.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:52:07): Before I begin my contribution to debate on the report into Sydney's night-time economy I acknowledge and thank the committee members for their contributions, in particular the committee chair, the Hon. Natalie Ward. I also acknowledge the secretariat for its work, the witnesses and those who made submissions throughout the course of the inquiry. Your combined expertise, insight and contributions were invaluable in shaping and identifying key issues and formulating recommendations to approach this very delicate issue.

Throughout the course of the inquiry the committee had the opportunity to tour a number of venues and locations throughout Kings Cross, Oxford Street and George Street in Sydney's CBD. This included consultation with owners and operators of a number of establishments and some key stakeholders in the industry. In addition to the state of affairs in Sydney, the committee also had the great opportunity to visit Newcastle and speak with representatives from Newcastle City Council, officers from Newcastle police and a range of key stakeholders to learn about how the lockdown laws affected Newcastle.

From the outset, I note that throughout the course of the inquiry the safety of patrons, workers and emergency services personnel was at the forefront of our minds. It was a primary point of focus when taking matters into consideration and proposing recommendations to adopt moving forward. The report before the House today has recognised the concerns raised by police and emergency services workers concerning the potential risks associated with changes to the current regulatory environment. The committee firmly believes more needs to be done to diversify the night-time economy to ensure non-alcohol based options are available. In order to achieve a successful and vibrant night-time economy, all stakeholders need to come to the table and we need a collaborative approach moving forward.

The lockdown laws enacted in 2014 were right for the time, in light of the extent of binge drinking and the violence occurring throughout the CBD and Kings Cross. We have learned a lot since 2014. Labor firmly believes a more measured approach is now required to maintain community safety while promoting a vibrant night-time economy for our great city. A recommendation from the report before the House calls for a Minister to be installed to oversee this sector and help drive reform as necessary. Labor has already appointed the Hon. John Graham as the shadow Minister for Music and the Night Time Economy. We call on the Government to appoint a Minister to take charge of reform as soon as possible.

NSW Labor firmly believes in a staged approach, which includes the outcomes being measured and tested as they are introduced. This is a necessary step with regards to alcohol reform. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research should be asked to provide an updated analysis on the staged approach every six months. As part of this approach Labor would also support lifting the 1.30 a.m. lockdown provisions for the Sydney CBD precinct, including Oxford Street. However, it is abundantly clear that Kings Cross cannot be allowed to return to its heyday. We remain sceptical that simply removing the 1.30 a.m. lockdown provisions will be sufficient for Kings

Cross. Labor believes more can and will need to be done to provide long-term sustainability for a vibrant and positive night-time economy in Kings Cross.

Change in Kings Cross will require bipartisan cooperation and support, both in this Parliament and out in the community. Labor would prefer to see two measures immediately trialled in Kings Cross and then rolled out across New South Wales. Those measures are a cumulative assessment tool within the Liquor Act 2007 for "high impact" venues and a revamped Violent Venues Scheme containing heavy penalties for licensees in venues where violent incidents take place. While there is no need to punish licensees that are doing the right thing with heavy regulatory burdens and impositions, it is clear that problematic venues cannot be left to their own devices. We cannot forget the impact these laws have had on the music and entertainment industry. Labor will recommit to the policy it took to the election in relation to music and the night-time economy. However, in relation to funding a short-term stimulus package is recommended. I commend the report to the House.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:56:28): I make a brief contribution to the debate on the report submitted by the Joint Select Committee into Sydney's Night Time Economy. The New South Wales Government is committed to revitalising Sydney's night-time economy and to ensuring that we maintain the public safety improvements made since the introduction of the 2014 liquor law reforms. The Government put together the joint select committee to undertake the work and analysis with experts and the community in order to assess what we can do moving forward. I thank the Premier for initiating this committee and I appreciate having been appointed to serve on it.

Deloitte has estimated that as a result of the liquor reform laws Sydney is forgoing \$16 billion of potential economic activity a year by not taking full advantage of the night-time economy. Not only does Sydney's night-time activity contribute to our economy but it plays an important role in our culture, arts, social activities and our standing as Australia's only global city. As such, the committee has made a number of recommendations, as members have discussed in their contributions, including removing the 1.30 a.m. lockout laws in the Sydney CBD and Oxford Street, allowing the use of glassware and the service of shots, and removing the 3.00 a.m. last drinks cut-off time.

Safety is of paramount importance to every member of the committee and every member in this place. We want to ensure that Sydney remains one of the best places in which to live and go out in Australia. Visitors, residents and workers in our entertainment venues have the right to feel safe from violence. The tragic deaths and assaults that sparked the introduction of the liquor law reforms in 2014 have not been forgotten. Since the Government introduced these reforms there has been a decline in the number of non-domestic violent assaults in the Sydney CBD and Kings Cross precincts.

Earlier this year the committee members and I visited St Vincent's Hospital and Kings Cross Police Station to talk about this decline in non-domestic assaults. This improvement is promising; however, due to the history, venue density and size of Kings Cross, the committee determined that there is a high risk that removal of the 2014 laws from Kings Cross would cause the rate of assaults to rise again. We have recommended to retain those lockout laws and undertake a further review in 12 months' time. A lot has changed since 2014. I believe the recommendations that we have made as a committee strike the balance between the need to improve the vibrancy of Sydney's night-time economy and ensuring safety.

It is crucial that we have appropriate governance mechanisms in place to grow our night-time economy and to ensure that it is well managed. The Committee has recommended the establishment of a governance framework, headed by an overarching coordinator, to increase collaboration amongst stakeholders. It has also recommended the creation of a working group that will bring together the different interested groups that have expert advice. The group would include members of the community, licensees, youth, music, local government and different parts of the New South Wales Government, including NSW Health, NSW Police Force, NSW Small Business Commissioner, Liquor & Gaming NSW, Destination NSW, Create NSW and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

These recommendations will give Sydney the opportunity to develop the flourishing night-time economy it deserves. It was a particularly interesting committee to serve on and to work with the cross-party membership. I thank my fellow committee members the member for Tweed, the member for Riverstone, the member for Fairfield, the member for Sydney and deputy chair, the Hon. Ben Franklin, MLC; and his colleagues the Hon. John Graham, MLC; Ms Cate Faehrmann, MLC; and the Hon. Mark Latham, MLC. There was a bipartisan collaboration on this inquiry. I particularly commend the committee Chair, the Hon. Natalie Ward, MLC, for her leadership throughout the inquiry. There was a lot of work to do in a short period. The Chair and secretariat staff in particular did a fantastic job on this inquiry and in delivering our final report.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Reports**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:00:56): As Chair: I address the House regarding the Legislation Review Committee report entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 7/57* and I start by providing an update on the committee's report tabled on 22 November 2018 entitled *Operation of the Legislation Review Act 1987*. On 21 August this year I wrote to the Premier on behalf of the committee requesting a Government response to recommendations 2 to 4 of this report. The committee looks forward to a response in due course. I turn now to the committee's seventh digest tabled on 22 October. In this digest the committee examined seven bills introduced in the last sitting week.

One of the bills examined was the Electoral Funding Amendment (Cash Donations) Bill 2019, which proposes to amend the Electoral Funding Act 2018 to make it unlawful for a person to make or accept a political donation in cash that exceeds \$100. Cash donations above this amount would be banned because they are harder to trace or account for than are donations that use other payment methods. Anyone who contravenes the ban would risk a maximum penalty of \$44,000 or two years imprisonment, or both. The committee noted that the new offence would impact on the rights and liberties of persons, as previously lawful conduct would become unlawful. However, the committee acknowledged that the bill aims to improve traceability and transparency of donations, to promote compliance and to improve the integrity of the electoral system. Further, it would only be an offence to contravene the new provision if, at the time of the act, the person was aware of the facts that result in it being unlawful. In the circumstances, the committee made no further comment.

Another electoral reform bill, the Electoral Funding Amendment (Local Government Expenditure Caps) Bill 2019 deals with the capping of electoral expenditure during local government election campaigns. The bill seeks to make changes to the caps for candidates or groups of candidates for election as a councillor. Currently there is a two-tiered system of caps for candidates or groups depending on whether there were up to 200,000 enrolled electors at the previous general election for the relevant local government area, or more than 200,000. The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters conducted an inquiry into local government expenditure caps, which reported in October 2018. It recommended replacing the two-tiered system to reflect the significant variation of population between different local government areas. Accordingly, the bill would amend the Act to provide for eight different caps ranging from \$6,000 to \$72,000 depending on the number of enrolled electors for the local government area.

The Legislation Review Committee acknowledged the burden that electoral expenditure caps place on the implied freedom of political communication restricting people's ability to participate in political debate. However, the committee also acknowledged that caps can be viewed as a reasonable measure to prevent some political participants having a significant advantage over others. In addition the bill's changes to the applicable caps seek to address inequalities caused by the large differences in the amount that can currently be spent per elector for each local government area. In the circumstances the committee referred the expenditure caps to Parliament to assess whether the burden they place on political communication is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.

I turn to the Music Festivals Bill 2019, which intends to promote a safer environment at music festivals. It would require organisers of high-risk festivals to comply with safety management plans and other measures. Under the proposed scheme music festivals would be identified as "high risk" by the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority. The bill would create offences for failing to comply with certain requirements, including failing to have or comply with an approved safety management plan; failing to keep a copy of the safety management plan at the venue; and failing to keep an incident register. The maximum penalties for these offences would be a fine of up to \$11,000 or, in the case of failing to have or comply with a safety management plan, imprisonment for up to 12 months.

The committee noted that these offences are strict liability offences that do not require proof of intent. The committee generally comments on such offences, as they depart from the common law principle that the mental element of an offence is relevant to the imposition of liability. However, in the current case, the committee acknowledged that the offence provisions were created to promote public safety and that the compliance burden on festival organisers is reasonably proportionate to protect the wellbeing of festival goers. In the circumstances the committee made no further comment. That concludes my remarks on the seventh digest of this Parliament. I once more thank my committee members and the secretariat for their work. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:05:54): I make a contribution to debate on the seventh digest of this Parliament tabled in the House on 22 October. The committee considered seven bills and commented on

six of those. One of the bills commented on was the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. The committee noted that the object of the bill is to facilitate the delivery of water supplies to certain towns and localities to meet critical human water needs and to declare certain developments relating to dams to be critical State significant infrastructure. In examining the bill the committee noted that it could trespass on personal rights and liberties in that it exempts the State and its institutions from liability for any act or omission that is a "critical water supply-related matter"; further, the bill provides that any act or omission carried out under the proposed Act does not constitute a nuisance; and further, the bill impacts on the rights of persons to pursue an effective legal remedy.

However, the committee noted that certain safeguards apply within the body of the bill. The committee further noted that the bill may make rights, liberties or obligations unduly dependent upon insufficiently defined administrative powers in that the bill would allow the Minister or planning secretary to delegate the exercise of any of his or her functions under the Act to a large class of persons, namely "any person employed in the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment". The committee referred the question to Parliament as to whether or not the power of delegation was too broad. The committee further noted that the bill may delegate legislative powers inappropriately in that the bill contains several Henry VIII clauses that would allow subordinate legislation to amend the Act. The committee noted that it thereby delegates Parliament's legislation-making power to the Executive.

The committee further noted that delegations to the Minister provided under the bill at part 3, where the Minister can authorise a development for the purposes of critical town or locality water supply, including certain listed developments, will be exempt from development control legislation if the carrying out of the development is the subject of such an authorisation. The committee noted that the Minister is therefore empowered to override the operation of various legislation and that this may be an inappropriate delegation of legislative power. The committee made no further comment on the bill other than that.

Once again, I thank the committee members for their work, particularly the Chair. She has many responsibilities that challenge her time, and committee members are always more than happy to support her to meet those challenges in any way that we can. I particularly thank the committee secretariat again. The committee could not operate without the fine professional support that it receives. I always encourage members to refer to the digest and I commend the digester to the House.

Report noted.

Bills

WATER SUPPLY (CRITICAL NEEDS) BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (13:10:30): I continue my contribution to the second reading debate on the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. I acknowledge that this environmental planning condition was set to protect the river's health and that changing that condition should be subject to appropriate review. The council has been preparing an application under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to review and modify these conditions. But, because the condition was set by the Independent Planning Commission, the application could go back to the Independent Planning Commission. Even with the best of intent of everyone involved, by the time the Independent Planning Commission has made its decision it is likely that the water will be gone if drought conditions continue.

The bill provides a process for a temporary new pathway to amend the State significant infrastructure approval for the pipeline that considers the impacts of the development and is robust but, most importantly, will help protect the city of Orange and its residents by saving time in the approval process. I understand the Mayor of Cabonne Shire has sought and received assistance from the Government to access previously preserved funding for its water infrastructure so that it can now complete an augmented water pipeline and, where necessary, domestic water can be delivered to the community in times of need, such as now.

Molong is preparing to implement level 5 restrictions on 4 November this year. Much of our State's domestic water supply is critically low. Where there is conflict between water for the environment, water for industry and agriculture, and water for human populations, priority must be given to the people. Water is the single most vital element in sustaining human life; therefore, water supply and water security are the greatest priority for the people of our civilisation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (13:12:40): The object or target of the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019, though encapsulated in a simple enough sentence, has a significant impact:

The object of this Bill is to facilitate the delivery of water supplies to certain towns and localities to meet critical human water needs and to declare certain development relating to dams to be critical State significant infrastructure.

The important phrase is "to meet critical human water needs". To those of us here who live on the land or in regional New South Wales, the case for urgent action has been made. This is not action in isolation; others have to take action too to develop their plans for their communities, organisations and localities. If we expect urgent action on water security by councils, local water authorities, primary producers, regional manufacturers, even residents as householders then this Parliament has to demonstrate leadership. The bill is a part of what needs to be done in this nation, but it is not the whole answer. We are all called to account. In part I see this bill as a call to action that will be heard right across the State. Some may find the pragmatic steps and realism of the bill a little confronting. Good!

As we explore the bill, I turn first to Part 2, clause 5 (1), which takes a clear stance by naming towns or locality water supplies that are to be declared to be in a critical position. They are Warren, Nyngan, Cobar, the localities of Tamworth, Orange and more. These are among the first names on a list that might be expected to grow as the drought stretches on. Schedule 1 anticipates expansion through regulation as may be necessary. The next step established by the bill is to provide a process for approval of development—from permits to licences, consents and other authorisations—which will fast-track the improvements necessary to provide a reliable supply of water to the towns and localities listed in Part 2 clause 5 and within the first schedule. Part 3 clause 7 (1) gets to the core of the matter:

Development described in Schedule 2 carried out by or on behalf of a public authority is exempt from development control legislation if the carrying out of the development is the subject of an authorisation of the Minister under this Part.

Development control legislation, such as the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, sets out key drivers and concepts that, over a long period of time, we have learned are prudent and instructive when assessing development projects. These rules for planning land use and development are about desirable norms that will guide the community towards sensible outcomes for buildings, subdivisions, primary production versus manufacturing versus residential neighbourhoods; standards to help us move towards sustainable environmental outcomes in general. Yet water security, as the days pass and true jeopardy comes closer, is, I would submit, anything but the norm or suited to a set of rules and processes that apply in general to civic and rural construction and development. The bill puts in place a detailed process for the fast-tracking of water security related projects that are urgently required by so many of our regional communities.

Subclause (3) of clause 7 details a number of stages of consultation that must be taken by the Minister before making a recommendation to the Governor for the creation of a regulation exempting a particular proposal from ordinarily applicable development control legislation. These consultations focus on matters we would all regard as important: biodiversity, conservation, fisheries, heritage and land planning. The bill envisages that, even with an exemption, it will be necessary to place limits and controls on applicable development. A development applicant must, under clause 8 (3) (d), include in its application information as to "the measures proposed to be taken to avoid, minimise or offset the environmental or other impacts of the proposed development". Further, if at any time the Minister is dissatisfied with a development approved under this framework, under Part 3 clause (7) the Minister "may, by notice in writing to the public authority carrying out the development, amend or revoke the conditions of an authorisation before the development has been carried out".

Power is given to the Minister, under clause Part 3 clause 8 (10) to direct a public authority to comply with the conditions of approval, should it appear to the Minister that the authority is failing in its obligation to abide by the conditions. This is a realistic framework established to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure, but without government taking the reins off and losing the power to intervene. It is a matter of balance, and a carefully measured response which, it should be noted, is not hands off but one that regulates development behaviour in unique circumstances. Again, speaking as someone with a farming background, I think it is important that the bill also envisages that in some localities water-sharing arrangements must be taken into account and potentially adapted to these harsh times. Many homes and businesses in regional areas derive their domestic and stock water through a variety of water schemes and common infrastructure. This week I received correspondence—and I appreciate that the member for Murray also received this correspondence—from a couple based in Berrigan talking about how they no longer have access to their stock and domestic water supply. They say:

This water is used for us to shower, flush the toilet and wash our clothes. These are things that as Australians we expect are a given. We can deal with the dust and dirt where there once was grass and the plants in the garden dying but we cannot get by without water for our basic needs.

I appreciate that the impact on the West Corugan Private Irrigation District is different from the town supply arrangements set out in this bill, but I want to let these people know that we are working with the Minister for Energy and Environment and the Minister for Water, Property and Housing and their offices to find a solution. I thanks both Ministers and their offices for the work they are doing on this matter. Part 4 of the bill provides

regulations that can be made to ensure provisions of the Water Management Act 2000 will work to allow water sharing arrangements to be amended so that critical human water needs receive priority. The fact that we are even talking in terms of priority for sustaining human life is yet another indicator of the urgency of the task facing the State.

This legislation is set to have a temporary life and will expire two years after the date of assent. It can only be extended for another 12 months if the Minister is satisfied that current listed towns and localities or others identified in future are considered to remain at risk. This legislation ensures that we can build new dams, modify existing dams or build other infrastructure that will help protect our State's residents into the future. Water is arguably the most vital resource on our planet and is so essential to life that threats to its security and delivery must be faced head-on. We must show courage and commitment when we confront these challenges, and craft proportionate and measured responses. I appreciate that since I came into this role the water Minister has visited the river and creek systems that sustain the towns and farms of my electorate on a number of occasions. I thank the Minister for her action in our regional communities and I support the bill.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (13:20:59): I make a contribution to the second reading debate on the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. I reiterate that the Opposition will not oppose the bill. The shadow Minister has indicated that he will move some amendments to improve the bill. I will start with a dam building history lesson for members opposite. I have heard the same tired, worn-out statement that the Labor Party, when in government, did nothing for 16 years, which Government members roll out all the time and which is factually incorrect—not that that seems to worry them. Members opposite have to remember that Labor had a plan to build the Tillegra Dam. We tried to progress it, but we could not get bipartisan support. The member for Lake Macquarie will remember this.

[A Government member interjected.]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Does the member for Myall Lakes not have somewhere else to be?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The member for Myall Lakes should listen to this: Barry O'Farrell came into this place with some of the same people who now sit on the Government frontbench and said they would never support the Tillegra Dam. He then went to Newcastle and told the Hunter Business Chamber that not only would he oppose the dam but he would stop it in government and use the money allocated for the dam to create a \$350 million infrastructure fund for the Hunter. The only problem for Barry O'Farrell was that Hunter Water was paying for the dam through residents' water rates; he was actually promising money that residents were paying through their water rates. Barry O'Farrell did not backtrack on that; he said that they would still pay the extra money. There was a tax on the people of the Hunter so that they could have the infrastructure fund. Government members have no credibility when it comes to dams. The Labor Government could not get the Tillegra Dam through because it did not have the numbers. Government members should be correct on that and they should be honest with the people about their opposition to dams.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: You were in government.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Your people opposed dams. You can bring all the information and you can make up what you want—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Order! The member for Myall Lakes will come to order.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: —but Barry O'Farrell stopped the Tillegra Dam and there is no other answer to that.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Point of order: The member is misleading the House. Labor was in government and cancelled it.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Sit down! That's not true.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Barry O'Farrell did not cancel it. That is not true.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Myall Lakes will resume his seat.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I will get you the newspaper articles and I will get you the *Hansard* where Barry O'Farrell stood in this place and said he opposed it.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Wyong will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: You were in government. You decided that!

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Wyong and the member for Myall Lakes will come to order. The debate was going so nicely before the member for Wyong began his contribution.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Government members should tell the truth sometimes. I listened to the debate in this place. The member for Myall Lakes was not here. Maybe he needs to go back and check. The Government is being dishonest because it is giving people hope that this infrastructure will be rushed forward. I did some research on the three proposals that we support and found that this is not a short-term answer to these problems. When I go to the WaterNSW website and look at the Upper Mole River Dam fact sheet, the earliest that project can be delivered is 2027. We are looking at five to seven years into the future before that project can be finished, even with the fast-tracking.

When I go to the Wyangala Dam fact sheet on the WaterNSW website and look at the documentation from Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, which will be working on the project, again it says the earliest it can be finished is in 2027. That is going through a process and there is a project time line on the fact sheet: 2020, commence community engagement; 2021, project determination; 2022, detailed design and pre-construction enabling work; and 2023-2025/2027, construction. We should be honest: This is not going to solve the problems that currently confront people living in the country. I have been to Armidale in the past couple of weeks and the community is in a dire situation. If it does not rain the community will literally run out of water early next year. This Government needs a comprehensive plan to deal with these particular issues.

I spoke to businesses, I spoke to farmers and I even spoke to nursing homes. The Government has no plans. What will it do with the hospital when there is no water? What will it do with the aged care centres and the schools when there is no water? All we have heard is that it will bring water in from the coast by truck. Anyone who has driven along Waterfall Way will know that driving water tankers up the hill will be a challenge. That is the Government's solution at the moment, other than the dams to come in seven years' time. Let us be honest: It is a crisis; it is an emergency. Government members stand in this place, they bang the table and they blame the Opposition all the time, but they have no comprehensive plan to deal with these issues. They are giving some money to farmers, which we absolutely support, but what are they doing as a wider plan?

Why is the Government not addressing all of the issues around the drought? This morning I picked up an article in yesterday's *The Australian*, which said that in the Senate estimates the Centre Alliance Senator, Rex Patrick, asked Infrastructure Australia's senior officer Anna Chau about the business case for Dungowan Dam. I was stunned to read that they have not received any business case. Members of the State and Federal Government held a press conference, they told the people they were going to do this, but there is no business case. When Infrastructure Australia was asked what the process would be it said that it could not just accept the proposal on its own, but would have to look at other proposals to weigh up whether it was value for money.

Again, the Government is saying one thing when in reality this whole process shows that, while these projects are important, they are not a short-term solution for the current crisis confronting country people. There was a \$1 billion announcement recently and the Upper Mole River Dam received \$24 million to finish the business case. That was all that was promised, but there is no other money. According to the fact sheet, the actual project will cost \$355 million, which was not included in the \$1 billion announcement. The funding is not even there. It received \$24 million. The fact sheet says, "Federal and State governments have committed \$24 million for a final business case." That was updated very recently. Again I refer to the time line, which says it will take four years before construction starts and the dam will be completed between two to four years after that, so that project may come online eight years down the track.

It is great that the Government is rushing this legislation through. It is great that the Government is telling us that it needs to fast-track the planning processes, but it is not going to help people in the short term. It will not help the people of Armidale. It will not help the people in the Far West of the State where the Darling has run dry and it will not help in places like Tamworth, which is in a critical state and has major tourist events in January, including the Tamworth Country Music Festival. Thousands and thousands of people will move into that area and the water supply is already depleted.

If the Government really wants to tackle this issue, it must put in place plans for moving water to those areas, because saying, "We might be able to get some trucks" is not enough. Do those trucks even exist? I do not know how many water tankers are out there, whether they are B-doubles or smaller trucks, how many trips they will have to make, where the water is going to come from—where the trucks will pick it up—or how long that will take. Those issues are not being addressed. Has the Government looked at putting water tankers on rail to get water to communities in need? I find it interesting that we do not hear anything about the plans and contingencies that need to be put in place. [*Extension of time*]

As I said, members on this side support building new dams. We tried to build a new dam—until then Opposition leader Barry O'Farrell and his crew opposed it and promised the money to other projects. Those opposite can deny that all they like, but it is a fact—it is why we had to cancel the project. The Government has not done anything since then, following the millennium flood. Let us be honest: When Labor built the desalination plant, Barry O'Farrell spoke in this place and called it a "monument to stupidity". He asked, "Why are we doing this? Why are we wasting all this money?" But Labor was thinking ahead. Labor understood that in times of long drought the State's dams alone were not going to cut it and we had to have other sources of water. Labor was thinking about those factors.

On the Central Coast—the member for Myall Lakes might not know this—a pipeline was built from the Mardi Dam to the Mangrove Creek Dam, at a cost of about \$85 million, to make sure that we could transfer water. At the same time, a pipeline was built through the electorate of the member for Lake Macquarie to transfer water from the Central Coast to the Hunter. That was done under a Labor government because Labor understands that water has to be moved from place to place. Those opposite do not know there was a project in 2010 to improve Wyangala Dam. Apparently none of this happened; Government members argue that nothing happened for 16 years but the facts say something different.

Labor did things. Labor spent millions of dollars on water supplementation. Labor spent money on pipelines. Labor tried to build a dam but was opposed by the then Liberal-Nationals Opposition. The Government has learnt no lessons since then. Those opposite would have us believe all these projects suddenly appeared and their importance has just become evident. But research reveals that the projects arose from reports to government in 2014. So the proposals are not new. The Government knew about them and they have been looked into. Lachlan Valley Water and Tamworth local council had the plans and conducted studies. If those opposite google they will find them.

The studies were done in 2014. It is now 2019 and Government members are saying, "Oh, it's a crisis! We need to throw everything we can at it! We need to stop all the laws! We need to rush this through!" I say to those opposite, "Shame on you. You knew." The studies were done but it has taken until now, when towns are actually running out of water, for the Government to act. In 100 days some towns will have no water; their supply will be 100 per cent depleted. There are no plans for what will happen to those towns then. As I said, dams take five, seven or eight years to build so this bill will not fix the problem. Instead of blaming Labor all the time, let us see the Government's plans to solve the problem. The Government has had the reports and the money but it has not acted.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:33:52): It gives me great pleasure to support the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. I commend Minister Pavey and her team for the incredible work that they are doing against the backdrop of unprecedented drought conditions right across New South Wales. With around 98 per cent of New South Wales now affected by drought, the New South Wales Government is delivering on its commitment to support farmers and communities through drought and achieve greater water security into the future. The New South Wales Government is committed to protecting our farmers and ensuring that they can continue to be the most efficient and productive farmers in the world.

Water security is vital. That is why the New South Wales Government is committed to spending \$1.4 billion of the Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund on water security. This is in addition to funding that is being spent through the \$1 billion Safe and Secure Water Program and emergency water funding. The New South Wales Government recognises that lengthy approvals processes are holding up important water infrastructure projects across the State. The Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019 will facilitate the delivery of water supplies to towns and localities to meet critical needs for people living in those places. It will also enable certain developments that relate to dams in New South Wales to be declared critical State significant infrastructure, meaning they are exempt from parts of the lengthy approvals process and we can get on with the job of building them.

The raising of Wyangala Dam wall is a major project in my electorate of Cootamundra that will be delivered and is named in this bill. The New South Wales Government and the Federal Government will co-fund the project to the tune of \$650 million. By the early 1900s it became clear that a dam was required to regulate variable river flows in the Lachlan River. Following the completion of Burrinjuck Dam on the Murrumbidgee River—the first major irrigation dam to be built in New South Wales—work started in 1928 on Wyangala, the State's second major irrigation dam. The dam was completed in 1935 and was initially designed to irrigate 15,000 hectares along the Lachlan River, supply water to people and stock over an area of half a million hectares, and open up a quarter of a million hectares for settlement and development, such as wheat farms. The dam was then enlarged in 1971 to increase storage capacity by four times.

However, during the millennium drought there were consecutive years of zero to little general security water allocations and water restrictions in dependent areas. Then 920,000 megalitres of water went over the dam wall between August and December 2016, causing downstream flood damage and wasting valuable water that we

could be utilising right now to help get our farmers and communities through this drought. It is very important that we act now to put measures in place for future droughts. The proposal to raise the wall of Wyangala Dam by 10 metres will provide an additional 650 gigalitres of storage. It will have important benefits for towns in the Lachlan Valley such as Cowra, Forbes, Hillston and Condobolin by assisting with both water security and flood management.

Modelling predicts that the project will generate an additional 21 gigalitres per annum for general security licence use, providing significant improvements in drought security and flood management. Once the assessment process has been completed, WaterNSW can deliver a final business case from which the New South Wales Government will make its final investment decision. As part of the preparation of the business case, WaterNSW will engage with stakeholders, customers and the community. Schedule 3 to the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019 provides for certain developments to be critical State significant infrastructure for the purposes of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. This means that, in accordance with section 1.6 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, those developments are exempt from that legislation.

Schedule 3 to the bill also permits new developments to be inserted. Schedule 3 identifies the exempt developments as the Wyangala Dam wall raising project alongside dams at Mole River and Dungowan. By creating a temporary streamlined pathway for environmental approvals for critical water infrastructure such as the Wyangala Dam wall raising project, we can protect towns during this drought and start preparations for the next by maximising water capture once it starts to rain again.

The bill will mean that for the first time in 30 years we can start to build dams again in New South Wales. The Nationals have long supported the building of dams in this State. Dams built in New South Wales have played a major role in providing water reliability for communities, enabling economic development and helping to offset some of the effects of drought. The Snowy Mountains scheme is our most famous example. On its completion in 1974, the scheme consisted of seven power stations, 16 major dams, 145 kilometres of interconnected tunnels and 80 kilometres of aqueducts. It provides electricity and much-needed drought security. Some \$820 million was spent on the scheme's construction.

Another 27 large dams, defined as being more than 15 metres in height, have been built in New South Wales. Further priority investments in regional dams, pipelines and weirs are also under investigation by the New South Wales Government, including new and replacement weirs at Walgett, Gin Gin and Wilcannia, and new pipelines from Lake Rowlands to Carcoar, Lostock to Glennies Creek and Hunter Water to Singleton. In the past four years the Liberal-Nationals Government has delivered 175 water infrastructure projects and invested \$810 million. We have invested in 60 bores across the State and built 40 sewage treatment plants and 31 water treatment plants since coming to government. This Government has built 2.3 billion litres of storage in New South Wales and has invested in 14 pipelines across the State.

There are many examples in the Cootamundra electorate of the New South Wales Government's investment in important water infrastructure. These include \$30,000 and \$54,500 respectively towards emergency water carting for the rural communities of Bribbaree and Caragabal, which are running out of water. We have also provided \$127,000 in funding for the implementation of infrastructure that will secure a permanent water supply for Bribbaree. In March this year I was proud to announce \$10 million to upgrade and expand Gundagai's sewage treatment plant. The old plant was nearly 100 years old. I have also announced \$12.3 million for a new sewage treatment plant for Grenfell, more than \$3.2 million for Ardlethan and \$9 million to upgrade the Junee sewage treatment plant. Recently I announced more than \$4.8 million to improve sewerage in Barellan, where the current sewerage system is prone to failure, and also funding for a feasibility study of septic system sites in the existing sewer network in Narrandera.

Water security is not just about water supply; it is also about the health of our rivers. I was very pleased to announce a \$4 million investment by the New South Wales Government toward the expansion of the Narrandera Fisheries Centre. As we face another summer of prolonged drought, there is a risk of fish kills recurring and we are taking action now to respond to those risks by increasing the capacity of the Narrandera fisheries for research, breeding and rescue of native fish populations. The Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019 not only streamlines the process for State significant dam projects, but also facilitates a temporary pathway for environmental planning approvals for critical water infrastructure that is needed to protect regional towns both in this drought and in future droughts. [*Extension of time*]

The bill will assist communities such as Cobar, Tenterfield, Nyngan and Bourke, which face dwindling water supplies, by accelerating the assessment process and approval times for emergency water projects. It takes a balanced and sensible approach to respond to this urgent drought circumstance. The New South Wales Government is committed to protecting farmers and communities through this drought and ensuring greater water security into the future. In addition to the \$1 billion already allocated through the Safe and Secure Water Program and the \$1.4 billion committed from the Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund, this Government is now turning to address

the lengthy approvals processes that are holding up critical infrastructure projects. The bill will ensure that we are supplying water to those towns that need it most, when they need it most. We are making sure that projects such as the wall raising at Wyangala can proceed in a timely manner so we can be ready to capture water and build up reserves for the next drought. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (13:44:51): I thank the House for the opportunity to speak in debate on the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. The essence of this legislation is in the title itself—water supply, critical needs. That is right—it is critical to secure the future, lives and sustainability of our region and our rural communities. This year the Government announced an additional \$78.3 million for the delivery of emergency water projects. The bill will assist to accelerate the assessment and approval times for emergency projects. It will allow the Government to work with the Commonwealth to ensure that dams get built and to enhance future water supplies to our communities. It is time to stop the bureaucratic nightmare surrounding the development approval and building of critical water infrastructure.

The town of Boorowa in my electorate has been working with WaterNSW since 2003 to identify water security solutions for the township. Over the years the Government has provided funding for bores to supplement supply but, due to poor water quality and quantity, they have been unable to provide the water security necessary for this community. The township has been on water restrictions over 60 per cent of the time for more than a decade. It has reached level 4 restrictions and is on the cusp of level 5 restrictions, when water carting will be necessary. The local council has been working with the department to continue to undertake water security options and assessments.

Eight studies have been completed thus far. The latest was funded by the Safe and Secure Water Program and Hilltops Council, and it was to undertake additional studies to address the department's concerns about the previous seven completed studies. The options analysis was completed recently and a clear option was identified. Yet the department again requires that further studies be completed at an additional cost to the community. This has to stop. Our communities cannot continue to put up with this bureaucratic nonsense when the evidence clearly states that there is no other option on the analysis and assessments conducted under the guidelines of the department.

If this is an example of how the department works, the urgency of this legislation cannot be understated. I thank the Minister for Water, Property and Housing for her tough stance and leadership in this regard. It is time communities were given hope and certainty of their viability and sustainability. Whilst we have communities on their knees due to unprecedented drought conditions, I also have farmers in my electorate whose properties neighbour the Wyangala Dam and who need certainty around their fat lamb and cropping production. Time lines are of the essence to these hardworking producers, who turn out 14,000 prime lambs a year under contractual arrangements and are uncertain of what raising the dam wall means for their businesses, homes and futures.

I thank the Minister for her work in this difficult portfolio. I thank her for listening to my concerns and the concerns of my constituents and for understanding the impacts and importance of communicating time lines and giving suitable comfort to those affected. Water scarcity does not affect all populations equally. It can exacerbate already existing economic inequalities. The exemption of development control legislation is an essential aspect of the bill that is needed to accelerate the assessment approval time frames of the emergency projects as outlined in the Minister's second reading speech. I note that clause 5 (2) allows the Governor to make regulations that declare additional towns or localities in schedule 1 as critical town or locality water supplies. This is needed to ensure that other towns or localities in regional New South Wales can have the benefit of this legislation if the drought and water supplies in other areas of the State reach critical levels. This will need the concurrence of the Minister administering the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 before a regulation can be made to declare additional towns or localities. We all understand that water is essential for human life and health; but it is also the lifeblood of our local economies.

In 2011 the Government delivered the Highlands Source Project, which provided essential infrastructure and a long-awaited secure water supply for the Goulburn community. The economic boost to the region has been phenomenal, with businesses relocating to the area, strong housing development, job opportunities and growth. A secure water supply is critical to sustain local communities. I welcome the current projects in my electorate: the Murrumbateman pipeline and the Yass Water Treatment Plant. I urge all members to support the bill to provide some comfort regarding the future water security of this State and to give some certainty to our rural communities and farmers. This Government is investing in critical infrastructure. It is time to get on with it. It is time to provide hope. It is time to give a dam—or a pipeline—and get it done.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (13:51:01): As the member for Tamworth, I am thrilled to speak in support of the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019—legislation that is needed urgently. I am pleased to say that the bill is the result of the State Government doing everything it possibly can to support communities right across regional New South Wales that are struggling

during the most significant drought on record. It is unprecedented. We are in uncharted waters—uncharted territory, if you like. Areas that have never before had pressures on their water supply are in a predicament. For example, Walcha, on the upper eastern side of the Tamworth electorate, is generally the last to feel any pressure on water from the Macdonald River. It is now in serious trouble. We have looked at providing a \$1.5 million initial grant to supplement its water supply, starting with an off-creek water storage.

I commend Mayor Eric Noakes for the work he is doing with the community to determine what has to happen. We will start the process and then fund an off-creek water storage to provide water security to the township of Walcha. The smaller towns of Manilla and Barraba get their water from Split Rock Dam and its catchment. We need to ensure that there is enough water in that catchment to supply those townships. In around 2013 or 2014 we built a pipeline from Split Rock Dam to Barraba that allowed the water to flow freely. Until then, Barraba was on level 5 or level 6 water restrictions. We built the pipeline and thought the town would never again need to put water restrictions in place. But look at where we are now: In 2019 we are worried about the level of Split Rock Dam, which supplies Barraba. The town is now in dire straits. As I said, we are in uncharted territory.

Tamworth, a town of over 60,000 people, is currently on level 5 water restrictions. If no decent rain falls in the near future—it is very difficult to put a time on it because that becomes an issue—we are in serious danger of having to import water in some way, shape or form. The town is doing it tough. I congratulate Tamworth residents and the council on having the foresight to purchase catchment land in a valley in front of the existing Dungowan Dam so that we can now get on with the job of building a brand-new Dungowan Dam. The new 20-gigalitre dam, in turn, will provide the water security we will need well into the future. That is the infrastructure we are looking at right now. The fact is it is critical State significant infrastructure, co-funded with the Federal Government but funded primarily by the State Government. Again, I thank Tamworth Regional Council for having the foresight to purchase the land.

By declaring the new dam and associated works to be critical State significant infrastructure under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, the bill ensures five important things: the project must be subject to an environmental impact statement; it must be subject to public consultation on that environmental impact statement; the assessment report of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and the application determination, including conditions of consent or reasons for refusal, must be made public; the decisions on the project's approval and conditions of consent are made by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces; and an environmental planning assessment decision will be made in a timely fashion.

Declaring this \$480 million project to be critical State significant infrastructure allows the process to be expedited, but not by cutting corners or avoiding any of the environmental planning or environmental issues involved with building dams. It will allow the process to be fast-tracked, complete with those environmental protections in place. We cannot afford the two-, three- or four-year planning process for a dam of this size. Because Tamworth is on level 5 restrictions we will crack on with building the dam so that the great city of Tamworth and its 60,000 residents will have water. A number of industries in Tamworth rely on water. There are several abattoirs that each employ over 600 people, including Thomas Foods, a lamb abattoir, and Teys Australia, a beef abattoir. The intensive livestock and poultry industries employ over 1,000 people.

The great people of Tamworth are taking emergency measures every day. Every day we talk about what we must do to conserve water. Who would have thought in a modern, sophisticated town like Tamworth, when you have a shower you turn on the water, get wet, then turn off the shower, soap up and turn the shower back on to rinse off? That is a water-saving measure. In addition, there are little water tips such as turning off the tap when brushing your teeth. We take things like that for granted all the time; we leave the tap running and think nothing of it. I urge my city counterparts to think about their water use. Do not leave the tap running when the water is not being put to good use. Water just runs down the drain while people brush their teeth. Tamworth residents are in a predicament. Many elderly people love their gardens; they are their life's work. But they cannot water them and so must watch them wither and die. While that may seem insignificant to some, a garden is something that keeps people going. That is important to the social fabric of communities in regional New South Wales.

We know that WaterNSW is taking a range of extraordinary measures to secure the water supply not only for Tamworth but also for other regional centres. The remaining water supply option available to WaterNSW for Tamworth is to move quickly. In conclusion, I commend the Minister for Water, Property and Housing and the Federal Government for coming on board. We need to push hard and not take our foot off the accelerator. We should not think for one second that because we have a plan, we can stop. This bill enables the urgent action that Tamworth needs during this drought and also ensures streamlined but robust assessment of the first new dam to be built in New South Wales in 30 years as a Government priority. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate interrupted.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Last night a number of members of the public visited the Chamber for a Little Night Sitting and heard from the Editor of Debates, Mr Scott Fuller. This month we celebrate 140 years of Hansard in the New South Wales Parliament. I thank Parliamentary Education for its organisation of the event last night and I especially thank the Hansard staff for their tireless efforts in the service of this House.

I welcome to the Chamber Robyn Young, who works with the Minister for Health and Medical Research. I welcome also Marilyn Kimber, Lyn Mills and Tamara Mills, guests of the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and Acting Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans and member for Parramatta. I acknowledge chairman Mark Alderson and director Virginia Howard of Mosman Bendigo Community Bank, Helga Tong from Queenwood School and Jason Chen from North Sydney Boys High School, guests of the member for North Shore.

I acknowledge students and staff from St Marks Catholic College, The Ponds High School, Quakers Hill High School, Riverstone High School, Glenwood High School, Wyndham College and Rouse Hill Anglican College, guests of the member for Riverstone. I acknowledge also guests and constituents of the member for Lake Macquarie. I welcome participants of the Introduction to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly Public Sector Seminar. I met with the participants this morning. I trust that they will find today's proceedings useful and informative. I thank the Government Whip, the Opposition Whip, the member for Balmain and the member for Lake Macquarie for presenting at today's seminar. We welcome you all to the Chamber. I hope that the members are as well behaved as I said they would be.

Question Time

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:22:58): I direct my question to the Premier. In London two months ago the Premier promised to make New South Wales the manufacturing capital of Australia. Why has her Government sent the contract for 13 new Sydney ferries to Indonesia and China instead of supporting manufacturing jobs here at home? You said it, Premier.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. This is not a good start to question time. It is a serious question and members will listen in silence to the answer. Otherwise I will put members on a call to order. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24:00): There is no greater friend to the worker in New South Wales than the Liberal and The National parties.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When those opposite were in government the unemployment rate was the worst in the nation. We have the lowest unemployment and the highest jobs growth in Australia. This year alone we have created 90,000 jobs. I am pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has raised this issue because this year alone we have created 90,000 jobs in New South Wales. Every time that we announce an infrastructure project that will create tens of thousands of jobs the members opposite oppose it. The extra ferries will create 400 extra services which means more jobs in New South Wales.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I again stress the important facts that I have already outlined. We have created more jobs in this State than have been created in any other State. Only this morning, in the presence of the western Sydney Minister, this Government signed a deal with Hitachi to bring advanced manufacturing jobs to western Sydney. Let's get to the bottom of what this is really about.

The SPEAKER: The member for Shellharbour will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In the past 24 hours three different unions have come to lobby the Leader of the Opposition. She knows she has to raise union levies and that is why—

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was specifically about—

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant.

Ms Kate Washington: —why the Premier is not maintaining her line that manufacturing in this State—

The SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When it comes to manufacturing jobs in New South Wales—

Ms Jodi McKay: You lie.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition should be very careful.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Government has already signed 17 memoranda of understanding with businesses around the world to set up advanced manufacturing.

Ms Yasmin Catley: You can sign as many documents as you want. Stop offshoring jobs.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The question is so motivated by Labor's affiliation with the unions that it is not funny. That is what this is all about.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Swansea to order for the second time. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time. The member for Baulkham Hills, this is your get-out-of-jail-free card. The member will not get another one. I give one to the member for Keira as well. I want silence in the Chamber. The Premier is answering a serious question and she is being relevant. The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is important to note that out of the 90,000 jobs the Government has created this year, the latest jobs figures show that 40,000 of them were in regional New South Wales. Over the same period the rest of Australia managed to create only 5,200 jobs in regional areas. Even though we are suffering the consequences of drought, we have managed to create 40,000 jobs in regional New South Wales. Let's make no mistake about it.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Labor Party has to raise \$700,000 and up to \$1 million through union levies and MP levies.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Premier said, "I want New South Wales to be the manufacturing capital of Australia." The first test of her leadership and she offshores those jobs to Indonesia and China.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: For the record, the Leader of the Opposition does not even know what advanced manufacturing is. Advanced manufacturing does not involve that. I might have an answer further to that point. In the past 24 hours three different unions have told the Leader of the Opposition what she should say in this place. Whilst Labor does not have a leader in Sussex Street, the unions are playing—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. If the Premier wants to personally reflect about the great trade union movement—

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat.

Mr Greg Warren: —we will do it all day and all night.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has concluded her answer.

TAFE NSW

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:29:50): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government is making it easier for students to take up a trade?

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Newcastle to order for the first time. Government members will remain silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:29:56): I appreciate the question asked by the member for Seven Hills. I know that he cares about jobs, not just for today but also for tomorrow. When the members opposite were in government, New South Wales had the highest unemployment and the lowest jobs growth in the nation.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Unfortunately, there was no prospect of ensuring that New South Wales had the opportunity to be the advanced manufacturing capital of Australia. The Government is very pleased with some of the interim recommendations of the curriculum review, one of which is to increase the ability for students to take up a trade qualification part-time while still at high school.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: They can do that now.

The SPEAKER: The House will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: You guys did well on TAFE during the election. Remember that policy? Remember that?

Mr Michael Daley: Talk about stadiums while you're there.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The chairman of the Western Sydney Wanderers Football Club said that Parramatta Stadium is the best in the world. Go beat that. As I was saying, this is a very important issue. I hope all members of the House will bring their attention to it.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

I am not sure why the members opposite do not care about jobs. This issue is very important to many in our community. I would hope that all members in this place would focus on it because we know, unfortunately, that it takes—

The SPEAKER: The Premier is addressing the question seriously. I want silence. I will show more latitude for interjections when an attack is being made, but the Premier is being serious. Members will remain silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I was saying, the Government wants to increase opportunities for students who start their trade qualifications while they are still at high school. Some opportunities exist now but we want to increase those in the future. The curriculum review is an opportunity for us to do that. We do not just need more tradies in the traditional trades. The demand for trades is huge because of our infrastructure boom. With the advanced manufacturing jobs to be set up in western Sydney, there is a demand for greater industry input into how we develop the courses, the qualifications and the pathways to TAFE and university. It could very well be that in the future—

Ms Prue Car: So it makes sense to offshore manufacturing jobs, does it?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: You guys bid for the trains in China. What are you going on about? Anyway, that is a side issue. As I was saying, it is important to ensure that pathways exist for young people because the courses they will need to do to manage a robotics production line, for example, or to engage in other advanced manufacturing might very well be a hybrid between a TAFE course and a university degree.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Cessnock to order for the second time. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the third time. This the member's final warning.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: There is no doubt that the curriculum review provides an opportunity for us to make those opportunities even brighter for our students. We are proud of the fact that we are already offering 100,000 free apprenticeships through TAFE NSW. We also know that we need to be prepared for advanced manufacturing. As Premier, with the assistance of the trade Minister and the western Sydney Minister, I am proud to say that in relation to the Western Sydney Aerotropolis, where we want to build an advanced manufacturing hub, we have had 17 memorandums of understanding signed by global companies as well as local companies.

This morning Hitachi converted its memorandum of understanding to starting work on where its plant will be based, its centre for modern research and development, artificial intelligence and advanced manufacturing. We are already creating the jobs of the future. For decades we were locked out of that market. For decades New South Wales was not regarded as a manufacturing capital. But that is going to change and I am so pleased that is the case. Those opposite spend their weekends talking about the future of Sussex Street. They talk about the future of their affiliation with the unions. *[Extension of time]*

Those opposite are trying to work out how to increase the levies for their union affiliates and their MPs. The Government is about creating jobs for the future and the figures speak for themselves. I do not need to boast about them every question time. People can get the figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other sources. What those opposite do not understand is that to create jobs, in order to be a friend of the worker, government has to do a number of things: ensure the education system is equipped to train people in trades; ensure

a record infrastructure pipeline—not cancelled projects—in order to get the jobs going; build the roads, schools and hospitals in the bush to make sure regional employment holds up; and cut taxes. Thirteen taxes have been cut since we have been in government.

Those opposite want to keep increasing taxes. They can squawk and squeal all they like but the numbers speak for themselves. The figures speak for themselves. The Liberals and The Nationals are the parties of the workers. They are the ones creating jobs in the city and in the bush and we will keep doing it because that is what matters to young people.

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

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:37:04): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. The Government has now sourced buses from Malaysia, trains from South Korea, metros from India, light rail from France and Spain and ferries from Indonesia and China. What has the Deputy Premier got against manufacturing workers in rural and regional New South Wales?

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:37:33): I thank the member for her question. It is a bit ironic to hear such a question from the Labor.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Before my time in this place I was in manufacturing, a great business, competing against big nationals and international companies. During the 2011 campaign a Minister at the time—I don't know what his title was but it was John Robertson—called me a "teakwood dealer" and attacked my company's workers because we were manufacturing products in Australia. I addressed this issue in my inaugural speech because of the attack of members opposite on hardworking individuals, mums and dads and small business owners who are part of the small business community and are part of manufacturing in this country.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those opposite keep talking down manufacturing in this country. We recognise that we are not going to be making white goods. But there is no doubt that off the back of other industries, like the mining sector and the supply chain behind mining companies, the advanced manufacturers are so important. That is why we have grown an advanced manufacturing sector in Australia. We can be a strong manufacturing sector but to underpin that we need cheap, affordable energy. Those opposite do not believe in affordable energy and they do not believe in manufacturing. Now I have got that off my chest and dealt with Labor's attacks, let us fast-track to the last eight years. I hosted John Howard and Peter Costello at my factory in Queanbeyan promoting the period of prosperity for the people of Australia.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: When John Howard and the politicians and the media moved out, the unions would move in and attack me. So I will never be lectured by those opposite or held to ransom by the unions of this country. I will never be lectured to about jobs for regional New South Wales. In the last 12 months—despite the significant impact of the drought on agriculture and primary industries—we have created 40,000 new jobs in regional and rural New South Wales. When we compare that to the rest of regional Australia, where only 5,000 jobs have been created, we can clearly see that the levers the Government is pulling and the investment in regional and rural New South Wales are so significant that it is driving jobs growth in regional and rural New South Wales. It is giving confidence to businesses to invest.

I am veering off the question, which is about manufacturing. I have an email specific to the question and in relation to a contract. It comes from Birdon in Port Macquarie. The general manager is Peter Besseling. Peter Besseling used to be an Independent MP in this House. I will give Peter Besseling credit. He talked about the contract. He said as part of the contract for the Australian equipment supply chain for the 35-metre fleet 84 per cent of the equipment will be manufactured in Australia, for the 24-metre fleet 78 per cent of the equipment will be manufactured in Australia and for the 12-metre fleet 100 per cent of the equipment will be manufactured in Australia. Further he says:

Birdon have also been contracted to overhaul and upgrade eight First Fleet class ferries, which will be undertaken at Birdon's Port Macquarie shipyard, employing an estimated 25 trades on each vessel. The vessels will be overhauled in pairs—

That is 50 tradespeople working on each vessel—

over a period of 18 months, leading to significant job creation for regional NSW and a great benefit to the NSW supply chains that support the project.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: This project is going to China and Indonesia. That is your only job plan.

The SPEAKER: What is the member's point of order? I call the member for Swansea to order for the third and final time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Listen to the squawking from the member opposite. Do not believe me. Is the member saying she does not believe the general manager of Birdon Pty Ltd? Is she saying that an individual, a private company, is being misleading? I trust Peter Besseling more than I trust the Labor Party. Labor comes to this House and plays politics with the people of regional New South Wales. That is the truth. The member for Port Macquarie, a big supporter of manufacturing in her electorate, today continues to back in her electorate.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT AND ROADS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (14:42:38): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is delivering on its election commitments to improve regional roads and transport?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:42:57): I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his question.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his question and for his interest in regional roads and transport. Today marks a special day for everyone in this place. Today is the seven-month anniversary of the election. To mark this momentous occasion, I want to update the House on the Government's commitments to building roads and transport in the regions. Those opposite may want to forget 23 March but on this side of the House we remember that day fondly. That was the day we made a number of big, bold commitments to the people of regional and rural New South Wales. They put their faith in us to deliver on those commitments and I am proud to report that the Government is delivering on those commitments. The Government has committed \$500 million to fixing local roads, a program that is going to seal, repair and maintain important local roads in our communities.

I am pleased to announce that applications will open for the first funding round next week. The Government has committed to creating the regional seniors transport card, which will provide eligible seniors with \$250 to spend on taxis, fuel or pre-booked TrainLink services. This is something that Labor did not want and refused to match. It is on track to be delivered in January next year. The Government also committed to fight in this place every day for the people of regional New South Wales. We are doing just that, which makes me wonder what Labor is committed to. Who are Labor members serving when they come into this place and block our ambitious agenda? This morning we learnt from *The Sydney Morning Herald* that Labor members of Parliament are worried that the decision to oppose the right to farm legislation was a strategic error. Forget strategy; this is an outright betrayal of our farmers.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant. The member will resume his seat. The Minister will continue.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The member for Campbelltown might want to raise a point of order but after reading *The Sydney Morning Herald* today I can understand why the shadow Minister for primary industry is on edge today, because her own team is leaking against her. Someone thinks that they can do a better job than her. Is it the member for Cessnock? Is it the member for Campbelltown?

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order: The question was specifically on how the Government is delivering on its election commitments to improve regional growth and transport. It has nothing to do with the Right to Farm Bill.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has been relevant. I will hear further. If he spends too much time on the other topic I will bring him back to the leave of the question.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The Government has introduced the Bridges for the Bush program and fixed country roads so that produce can get to market—food and fibre to the ports. We are also delivering on new bus routes which will provide services to 44 isolated regional communities, and consultation is now underway. The Government will be rolling out the first services in the near future. While regions are doing it tough the

Government is also supporting them by investing in major highways—the Pacific Highway, the Newell Highway with overtaking lanes and the sealing of the Silver City and Cobb highways. Labor is now talking about giving up on the Country Labor brand. Labor members may as well, because the people of regional New South Wales gave up on Country Labor a long time ago. It is clear that the creation of Country Labor was never about fighting for the bush.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I am very interested to hear about regional roads and—

The SPEAKER: The member is being directly relevant. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. Her point of order was frivolous.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: It just shows that those on the other side of the Chamber want to reject the criticism of their image. They do not care about the people in the country. They do not care about people in the bush. They do not care about the Government's transport policy agenda. They do not care about drought relief or the right to farm. It is all about their party brand. That is why the people of regional New South Wales have rejected them.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PAUL TOOLE: It is clear that the creation of Country Labor was never about fighting for the bush. It was about fighting for cash. It was all about their dirty donations. These dirty donations were not being spent in the bush—not even on candidates—but to fund the QCs to defend their disgraced party in the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC].

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 52. The ruckus coming from the Government while Labor members are trying to listen to the Minister is an outrage.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. For the benefit of those who do not understand Standing Order 52, it states:

When a Member is speaking other Members shall not converse or make any noise or disturbance.

Members on both sides of the House are making too much noise. I do not rigidly enforce Standing Order 52 but I uphold the point of order in this case.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Country Labor is nothing more than a sham to funnel illegal donations. Labor members are focused on themselves. Government members will continue to deliver for the people of regional New South Wales. While our regions are doing it tough the Government has committed a record \$6.7 billion to fund projects and services in regional areas. These regional roads projects are making a difference to the lives of people in our regional communities. These projects ensure that people can stay in their homes longer. [*Extension of time*]

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The Government's investment in these projects is making a difference in those areas. Those opposite are disgraced by what I have already said about Country Labor. What are those opposite doing? Instead of supporting the Government's agenda to protect the right to farm they are desperately trying to scramble together their own bill—a bill that completely ignores the extent of the problem. Those opposite talk the talk but Government members will walk the walk.

The SPEAKER: I am not going to take a point of order when Opposition members are making so much noise that I cannot hear what is being said.

Mr Jihad Dib: Get back to roads.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: You would not even know where the bush is, mate.

The SPEAKER: The member for Lakemba will resume his seat.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I return to regional transport and roads.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: This is what we have achieved in seven months, and it is only just the beginning. I will have no problem in updating the House in 14 months, in 25 months and on our 36-month anniversary, all the way up to our 48-month anniversary.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I hope those opposite get comfortable on the Opposition benches because the Government is going to spend every day in this place fighting for the regional communities that they have abandoned.

WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (14:51:57): My question is directed to the Premier. Today a large group of injured workers travelled here from the Central West to explain how her Government's cuts to workers' compensation have shattered their lives. The Premier said that New South Wales could have it all. Could she seriously look any of these injured workers in the eye and tell them that her cuts were worth it?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:52:33): I thank the member for Cessnock for his question. I stress for all members of this place that the Government takes its responsibility in relation to injured workers very seriously. In fact, when we came to government the Workers Compensation Fund was in deficit by about \$4 billion. It was not working.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: There was no confidence that workers would be able to receive their entitlements in the long term because the fund which the Labor Party had overseen was in disarray. In fact, the chairman of the fund singled out the member for Maroubra and Joe Tripodi as having mismanaged that fund.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When we came to Government we not only ensured that we reined in the fund but we established icare, which is specifically to support workers' entitlements.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: From a deficit of around \$4 billion that fund is now in a modest surplus, which means—

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Auburn to order for the third time. This is her final warning.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That fund is now in a modest surplus, which means that entitlements can be assured into the future.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If the fund is not managed well injured workers may risk not being able to receive what they are entitled to, or worse. If a government does not manage the fund well it means that it looks to change policy as to who is entitled to receive access to those funds. That is a situation that we never want any other worker to face in this State. We want to make sure that when people are injured in the workplace all of their rights and entitlements are respected and there is a fund to secure them and their families into the future. That is why we turned around a \$4 billion deficit to a \$1 billion surplus, to ensure the integrity of that fund into the future.

I will talk about what this Government is doing in relation to supporting our firefighters, for example. Late last year we passed legislation to ensure that those injured workers who have been exposed to dangerous materials and had contracted cancerous diseases were entitled to adequate compensation. The Labor Party tried to stand in our way at every turn. They then criticised us for trying to increase levies through councils to cover the cost of those firefighters who might be susceptible to those injuries. I was pleased to note that last week the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation announced changes to protect workers who might be exposed to silicosis, a disease which we know is impacting too many tradies.

Again, we want to ensure that we protect workers in that regard. I do not take it lightly when we say we support our workers. We do not take that lightly when it comes to ensuring the integrity of the workers compensation fund and rights in the workplace, but also that categories of workers—whether they are in our emergency services, whether they are tradies, whether they are people on construction sites—are always kept safe. Nothing is worse than learning of a loved one being injured or worse at work. None of us want to face that prospect. Our Government is committed to everybody who might face a temporary or lifelong injury sustained in the workplace. Had those opposite stayed in Government, that fund would have been unsustainable.

Mr Clayton Barr: Not true, Gladys.

The SPEAKER: The member for Cessnock will cease interjecting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I refer those opposite to a 2012 article by the chairman of the fund. He said the member for Maroubra and Joe Tripodi had mismanaged the fund. He had raised concerns with them.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That aside, I thank the member for Cessnock for asking the question. It is an important question. However, I also want him, every member of this place and every member of the community to know that we worked our guts out to make the fund sustainable, to make sure that categories of workers are kept safe and—

[Opposition members interjected.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What is very important for us is that we know that nothing gives people a greater sense of satisfaction and choices in life than having a job and being able to provide for their family, if they have one, or being able to provide for their life choices. Our big emphasis on our support for injured workers is to provide the money for rehabilitation to ensure that they can have the opportunity to return to work when they are ready. That is a very important part of our program.

The SPEAKER: I remind the members for the electorates of Londonderry, Auburn and Swansea that they are on their final calls to order.

STATE ECONOMY

Ms ELANI PETINOS (Miranda) (14:57:54): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on the need for reform to boost economic growth, jobs and productivity?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:58:15): How hopeless is this strategy of those opposite? These are the worst question time tactics I have seen for a long time.

[Opposition members interjected.]

No, make a game of it.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: They come in here today to ask questions—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —about jobs in the State that is creating more jobs than anyone across the country.

[Opposition members interjected.]

Well, okay, how ironic is this? In the election campaign the former Leader of the Opposition was concerned about Asians with PhDs taking our jobs. Now the current Leader of the Opposition is concerned about Asians without PhDs taking our jobs. That is how low they have gone.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That is how low they have gone. We have created more jobs than any other State combined—

Mr Paul Lynch: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Treasurer is over 20 per cent into his answer and he has not got to the answer—

The SPEAKER: Half of it was taken up waiting for silence. The Treasurer will continue.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Let us go to workers compensation. I am not finished here. The Premier mentioned our change to icare. I received a letter recently in relation to icare. It stated that icare:

... is taking a much more positive approach.

...

... the responses have a real tone of "we are fighting for you ... and making sure that you get what you deserve" ...

This is a BRILLIANT thing. Thank you.

...

... could you please pass on my congratulations to all at icare who fight for our injured workers ...

Who wrote that? The member for Cessnock, just quietly.

The SPEAKER: It is not an opportunity for the member for Cessnock to respond. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the third time. That is his final call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Yesterday was a Labor "gotcha" moment without the "gotcha". Two bad days in a row for them. On this side of the House the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is not only repairing the finances but restarting the economy and rebuilding our infrastructure. We are always at the forefront of new and innovative reform to get things done. The Fiscal Responsibility Act 2012, our asset recycling program, our first sovereign wealth fund, the NSW Generations Fund are just some of the ways we have been acting towards our strong financial future. As we know, right now global risks are building on the downside. Manufacturing activity in the United States is at its lowest level since 2009. China's growth has dropped to its lowest level in over a decade. Central banks in Europe are undertaking aggressive quantitative easing.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The International Monetary Fund has downgraded global growth. Here in Australia gross domestic product growth has slowed. The Reserve Bank of Australia has slashed rates to record lows and the drought, for which the Government is providing support, is hurting our regions. These are challenges that as a State and a country we must overcome. However, there are also opportunities to be seized if we are to grow our economy once again. From the usual suspects over this time we have heard the same tired calls for increased taxes, increased regulation and increased welfare. This is nothing but the siren song of mediocrity and malaise.

All members in this place should know that the infrastructure agenda kickstarted by the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government has inoculated us from the headwinds that are coming our way, adding half a percentage point to our economic growth. The pathway to future growth is paved with real reform to lower taxes, to reduce regulation and to encourage aspiration. When it comes to reform we need to think global but act local. That is why in this State we have appointed the NSW Productivity Commissioner to look at opportunities to reduce red tape to get New South Wales moving. That is why we have tasked our Chief Economist to map out our economic future, taking advantage of the greatest expansion of the middle class in human history.

That is why we have also asked an expert panel to untangle the complicated mess of federal financial relations. Convolved agreements and reams of bureaucracy do nothing but hold us back. Our Federal Financial Relations Review panel is being led by the respected David Thodey. Also on that panel is former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson, former New Zealand Prime Minister Sir Bill English, Australia's leading constitutional lawyer, Professor Anne Twomey, former Federal finance secretary Jane Halton and Melbourne economics Professor John Freebairn. These are quality people advising a quality Government. [*Extension of time*]

This panel has just released a public discussion paper, starting a national conversation about how governments at all levels and across political divides can work together for a better and more productive future. There has never been a better time to kick off real reform. We stand ready with other States and Territories to work in partnership with the Commonwealth to get this reform done. Here is a quote those opposite might recognise. It states:

The key ingredient for public life is imagination. You imagine something better and you try to bring the people with you.

Who said that? Former Prime Minister Paul Keating, at a time when Labor used to believe in something. Our desire for reform is in stark contrast to those opposite—their whatever-it-takes mentality and rank political opportunism alive and well and being exposed at ICAC for all to see. It is a party so mired in corruption that it does not even put the Labor logo on its press releases anymore. This week we learnt that not only is it morally bankrupt but financially bankrupt. Their auditors will not rate them. Their lawyers will not represent them and their members do not want a bar of them. The member for Strathfield sits there and does nothing as these illegal donations come in. Kaila takes \$100,000 and gets paid out \$700,000. There sits the member for Kogarah, the smiling face of Labor's corruption. There he sits silently, the pin-up boy of prohibited payments.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Clayton Barr: My point of order refers to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: I do not uphold that point of order.

Mr Clayton Barr: Standing Orders 73, 52, 130, 74.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Treasurer continues to go down this path we will debate this issue. Happy to.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Treasurer to be mindful of Standing Order 73 in terms of the member for Kogarah.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: He is Labor's version of Afterpay, paying out all their dodgy donations in monthly instalments.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: You have had your go. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Why the protection racket? We all know that the member for Strathfield is running a protection racket for the member for Kogarah because, if she dumps him, they will dump her. [*Time expired.*]

MASCOT TOWERS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:06:11): My question is directed to the Premier. The residents of Mascot Towers have been to hell and back. They begged the Government for help. They are now being forced to take out a variable 7.7 per cent interest loan to fix their building. Why has the Government abandoned them and not provided assistance?

The SPEAKER: Government members and the member for Keira will remain silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:06:27): For the benefit of the member for Swansea, who asked the question, the Government continues to provide emergency accommodation support to these residents, which has been provided from day one. It is up to \$400 per night for every resident who requires emergency accommodation. Today, coincidentally, I was pleased to see the new Building Commissioner, but also Bronwyn Weir, who provided important recommendations to the Government on a bill, notice of which I think was given before question time.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Which will not assist these people.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will not have another chance.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am looking forward to the House debating the bill and I hope the Opposition will support the bill, given it will help residents in the future. I assure the House and the member opposite that we are doing everything we can to ensure that there is full confidence in the industry. I appreciate the stress experienced by the residents of Mascot Towers. I reiterate, we have provided emergency accommodation financial assistance to support them whilst they manage their cash flows and other arrangements during this difficult time. It is important to note that Mascot Towers is about a dozen years old. It was approved by the council for which one of the members opposite was mayor at the time.

Ms Yasmin Catley: They don't care who approved it.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I know they don't but if the member cares about this issue she will work with the Government to make sure that the legislation which goes through the House is the best it can be. I call on those opposite to work with us to make sure we have the best regulations moving forward. The important thing to note also is the Building Commissioner, Mr Chandler, advised me at length, and when he speaks publicly he says the rules—

The SPEAKER: I know it is an important issue, but if the member for Swansea makes another sound she will be out of the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Building Commissioner has said repeatedly that there are rules in place, but unfortunately not enough people in the industry are aware of them and their obligations. That is an issue that the legislation will address. I look forward to those opposite supporting it when it is debated.

WATER SECURITY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:09:01): My question is addressed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is continuing to deliver water security across New South Wales?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:09:19): I thank the member for Cootamundra for her question. Cootamundra is an area affected by drought and there are some real concerns developing for water security in the towns. The member has been knocking my door down in relation to Cowra. We have just had a major release of water into the Lachlan River from the Commonwealth environmental water holder, which has concerned me, the member and members of her community. That is a challenge. Another day with a big, beautiful, blue sky with not a drop of rain in sight across New South Wales. I was looking at the satellite images and there is no rain anywhere in New South Wales today. But there is a little bit of a bright spot, a tiny bit of brightness in a sea of drought.

Tenterfield has been receiving support from the Government to put test bores down but the town had not been able to find any sustainable water supply—until Sunday. They put a bore down and were able to maintain a flow rate of over 10 litres per second, which is enough to help sustain the town's water supply. It is an absolute eureka moment for that community. They will still continue to do their work in relation to recycling. Last week the member for Lismore and I attended a meeting with Tenterfield Mayor Peter Petty. He is a big fighter for his community, which has faced many challenges, whether fire or drought. There are potentially only 120 days of water left in the town's supply. They have done the work, they have had the geotechnical experts there and they have been able to find water in one of the bores. That is a moment of brightness.

I turn to the member for Northern Tablelands and his community of Armidale. He is also taking leadership in looking at other options to ensure water security. There are only 400 or so days left in that town's water supply. No-one would ever have thought that Armidale would run out of water. That is the point; the communities of Guyra, Tenterfield and Armidale are great contributors to our nation, but they do not irrigate. This is simply the result of 31 months of record low inflows into our State's water storages. We are facing very challenging times in the north of the State as well as the south of the State. I have farmers from the south along the Murray on the phone to me at the moment having issues trying to get access to water for stock and domestic purposes. Things are so dry that even the channels have dried up. We have to find solutions for those communities to keep the stock and the water options available to them. As well, we are doing the work across New South Wales with the three dams that we will—

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: This drought can bring out the best in people and the absolute worst in people, which is why the member for "Cootamurray" is being proactive, supportive, helpful and collegiate in dealing with this major dilemma—this major disaster that is tearing communities apart. What we need is leadership and strength.

Mrs Helen Dalton: What we need is a decent Minister.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Murray to order for the second time. The member will remain silent.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Yelling and screaming at people does not deliver more water to communities. What we need to do is deal with the Commonwealth and the challenges that we face and the legislative framework that we have to work within. That is why we are getting on and building dams such as the Wyangala Dam in the electorate of the member for Cootamundra and Dungowan Dam in the electorate of the member for Tamworth. These are major announcements. We are going to get the planning for those dams done in very quick time and get the shovels in the ground because we need to support our communities through this major natural disaster, a complete and utter disaster from the north to the south. We have given support of \$130 million in emergency funding this year to keep our towns in water. Today we are meeting with the mayor of Bathurst who is here with great ideas and great plans. We will ensure the security of water across the State.

RECYCLING

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:14:30): My question is directed to the Minister for Local Government. Given the Minister's recent comments in the media about innovations that allow for roads to be produced from recycled material such as plastic, tyres and glass, will the Minister support recycled road construction to make it the norm across local government areas?

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (15:14:55): I thank them member for Ballina for her very sensible question. I also thank her colleague Mr David Shoebridge in the other House for frequently talking to me about matters pertaining to local government. Rather than having discussions across the Chamber, which is sometimes inappropriate, or by notice of motion or in a media release, I have had good conversations with members of The Greens. I am sure that my ministerial colleagues, like the Minister for Energy and Environment and the Minister for Transport and Roads as well as the former roads

Minister, as well as members of The Greens, are aware that we actually do make use of recycled materials in our roads right now. We have been using recycled rubber and recycled glass in lots of our road base materials.

The member asked me about cutting red tape. I have been talking to my colleague the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, who is on board with cutting red tape where it occurs. The member for Ballina would be aware of the \$107,000 grant received from the environment Minister for the construction of the Pacific Highway between Woolgoolga and Ballina. The grant was to trial recycled glass in that section of highway and, as a result of the trial, we will take recycled glass from Lismore City Council's recycling facility and turn that material into road base. That solves a problem for Lismore City Council. If we can do that for Lismore, we can do it for every other council throughout the State. That makes me happy as local government Minister. It will also make the roads Minister extremely happy because it will reduce the cost of constructing our roads.

These costs have increased over the years and right now we are building many roads right throughout the State, whether they are local roads or highways. I am happy about that and I am happy that the Roads and Maritime Services are currently using recycled material in road construction. When I was on Shoalhaven City Council many years ago, we talked about the use of granulated rubber in road base and right now we are using this material. I appreciate this question because it has made us refocus on the use of recycled materials and focusing all our efforts on reducing red tape where there is red tape. None of us wants red tape. I want councils to be successful and I want the Government to be successful. I want us to be able to build roads without hold-ups. I am aware that at the moment we have shortages of sand throughout the State and we have to address those kinds of shortages as well. I will discuss these issues with my colleagues.

I have been given a list of the number of grants Ballina Shire Council has been awarded through the Environmental Protection Authority's Waste Less, Recycle More program. The member for Ballina's local council has been proactive in applying for funding. I was interviewed on the radio the other day about the controversial waste levy. I said that I encourage councils to apply for money from that fund if they have an innovation that reduces waste to landfill. That is what this money is all about. Councils have to show innovation and they have to be proactive and then they can apply for the available funding. We are encouraging councils to do that, and I believe many councils have been successful.

If we are going to make use of the waste levy then councils have to come up with innovative ways to reduce waste to landfill. We would all like to hypothecate that money back to councils, but they must show us how they are going to reduce waste to landfill in the interim. Again, I thank the member for Ballina for her question and her sincerity. I also thank her colleagues and fellow members of The Greens in the other place for their sincerity regarding local government. They have shown interest in the local government sector and they are exploring ways in which we can improve the sector throughout New South Wales. Using recycled materials in road construction is a bread-and-butter issue. We will test and retest road base material such as recycled glass. If there is a hold-up, we will try to expedite the process. I will continue to talk to my colleagues about this matter.

TAFE NSW

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:15:19): My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and the Acting Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans. Can the Minister update the House on how the Government is continuing to support skills and TAFE across the State?

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (15:20:25): I thank the member for Heathcote for his question. He is a much-loved and respected member in his electorate because he understands the importance of skills and training. I have had the pleasure of visiting his electorate on numerous occasions. I visited the Loftus TAFE and heard that they really appreciate the member for Heathcote's work. That is because the member for Heathcote is a former TAFE teacher, as I am.

The New South Wales Government is making it easier for students to take up a trade. This morning the Premier and I announced that TAFE NSW will match selected HSC units to vocational competencies to allow students to receive recognition for what they have already learnt at school. This will make it more attractive for high-achieving high school students to take up a trade by giving them a head start. Eligible students may proceed straight to assessment. I thank the Premier and the Minister for Education in the other place for their commitment to improving outcomes for students now and into the future.

Members on this side of the Chamber know that the New South Wales Government must do everything possible to encourage our young people to enter the vocational education system because we know there are shortages of applicants for critical jobs. The Government is committed to leading the way in delivering more opportunities for our young people to enter vocational training. While some young people may find the best path is for them to go to uni straight from school, others may choose their best pathway to a meaningful job through

education and training. Interestingly, seven out of 10 of the fastest-growing jobs in New South Wales have a vocational training pathway.

This Government is focused on preparing our young people for these jobs of the future. We are meeting this challenge head on. It is a delight to take this opportunity to update the House on some of the great skills training that TAFE is doing. This year's budget for skills training in New South Wales is \$2.3 billion, with \$1.85 billion for TAFE—a 3.1 per cent increase on last year. TAFE gets 80 per cent of the New South Wales skills budget and we are very proud of that. We are delivering 100,000 fee-free apprenticeships over the next four years. Starting on 1 January we will be delivering 70,000 fee-free traineeships. In addition we will be delivering 30,000 TAFE places for mature-age students. This takes the total number of fee-free TAFE and vocational education and training [VET] courses to nearly 700,000 over the next four years.

We are focused on TAFE and, in that, we are focused on creating great pathways to skills development. We welcome the interim report of the curriculum review. We recommend the finding that there needs to be a greater focus on embedding trade education within senior years of the curriculum. We need greater collaborations between schools, VET sector providers, universities and industry. As I said, there is no single solution, no silver bullet. We need to do as much as possible. Today's announcement encourages even more students into vocational education, especially those who may not have considered this as an option before. We are committed to ensuring that all students understand their career options. We know that the best way to encourage students to TAFE is to expose them to it early. I want to see more school-based apprentices, more school-based trainees and more VET courses in schools. Our skills shortage will be filled by high-school students of today and into the future.

We owe it to them to promote the importance of VET, highlight lifetime empowerment opportunities and provide all the options we can. We know that we must change the current bias towards going to university. We know that we must encourage all our students to make informed choices, which means working with students at all levels. This means working with parents, especially mothers, who make incredible decisions, and it means working with careers advisers, schools and industry. Members on this side of the House are focused on delivering the right career options, whether it is university, TAFE or the VET sector. Members on this side of the House support all our students.

Documents

UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 23 October 2019.

PRINTING OF PAPERS

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I move:

That the following papers be printed:

Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "WaterNSW Operational Audit 2017/18, Report to the Minister, Water – Compliance Report", dated February 2019.

Final report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Review of Central Coast Council's water, sewerage and storm water prices to apply from 1 July 2019", dated May 2019.

Final Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Review of Essential Energy's prices for water and sewerage services in Broken Hill from 1 July 2019", dated May 2019.

Final Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Murray to Broken Hill Pipeline, WaterNSW", dated May 2019.

Final Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Review of pricing arrangements for recycled water and related services: Sydney Water, Hunter Water, Central Coast Council, Essential Energy", dated July 2019.

Final Determination of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Maximum prices for connecting to a recycled water system: Sydney Water, Hunter Water and Central Coast Council", dated July 2019.

Report of an Inquiry by a Conduct Division of the Judicial Commission of NSW in relation to Magistrate Dominique Burns, dated 21 December 2018.

Report of an Inquiry by a Conduct Division of the Judicial Commission of NSW in relation to Judge Peter Maiden, SC, dated 26 March 2019.

NSW Forestry Snapshot Report on the Implementation of the NSW Forest Agreements and Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals for the year ended 30 June 2016.

Report of the Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee for 2017-2018, dated February 2019.

Annual Report and Determination of the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal on salary and additional entitlements for Members of the Parliament of New South Wales, dated 21 June 2019.

Assumed Identities Report of the New South Wales Police Force for the year ended 30 June 2018.

Report pursuant to section 242(7) of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 by the Office of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission on Covert Search Warrants for the period ended 28 May 2018, dated August 2019.

Report of the Department of Family and Community Services entitled "Final Report on the Review of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2018", dated June 2019.

Report and Determination under section 24C of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Public Service Senior Executives Annual Determination", dated 27 August 2019.

Report and Determination under section 24C of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Public Office Holders Group Annual Determination", dated 27 August 2019.

Report and Determination under section 24C of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Judges and Magistrates Group Annual Determination", dated 27 August 2019.

Report and Determination under section 24C of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Court and Related Officers Group Annual Determination", dated 27 August 2019.

Report and Determination under section 24C of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Chief and Senior Executive Service Annual Determination", dated 27 August 2019.

Report pursuant to section 242A of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 by the New South Wales Crime Commission for the year ended 30 June 2019.

New South Wales State of the Environment Report 2018.

Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy Progress Report 2017-18.

A copy of a document from the Ministry for Health entitled "Policy Directive, Pregnancy – Framework for Terminations in New South Wales Public Health Organisations", dated July 2014.

Report of the Public inquiry into the Blue Mountains City Council entitled "Supplementary Interim Report: Term of Reference 4", dated 31 July 2019.

Report of Transport for NSW entitled "NSW Road Safety Progress Report 2018", dated June 2019.

Report of Transport for NSW entitled "Speed Camera Programs: 2018 Annual Review", dated September 2019.

Report of the Animal Research Review Panel for the year ended 30 June 2018.

Reports for 2018 of—Department of Education; Charles Sturt University; Macquarie University (Volumes 1 and 2); Southern Cross University; University of New England; University of New South Wales; University of Newcastle; University of Sydney; University of Technology, Sydney (Volumes 1 and 2); University of Wollongong (Volumes 1 and 2); Western Sydney University; Industrial Relations Commission.

Half Yearly Reports for the period ended 31 December 2018 of—Essential Energy; Hunter Water Corporation; Forestry Corporation; Landcom; Port Authority of New South Wales; Sydney Water Corporation; Water NSW.

Report of the National Education and Care Services Freedom of Information and Privacy Commissioners and Ombudsman for the year ended 30 June 2019.

Business of the House

DAYS OF SITTING 2020

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I move:

That unless otherwise ordered, the House meet during the 2020 autumn and spring sittings on the days indicated on the list, which has been made available to members on the table of the House:

Autumn sittings: February 4, 5, 6, 25, 26 and 27; March 3, 4, 5, 24, 25, 26 and 31; April 1 and 2; May 5, 6, 7, 12, 13 and 14; June 2, 3, 4, 16, 17 and 18.

Spring sittings: July 28, 29 and 30; August 4, 5 and 6; September 15, 16, 17, 22, 23 and 24; October 13, 14, 15, 20, 21 and 22; November 10, 11, 12, 17, 18 and 19; and November 24, 25 and 26 as a potential reserve week.

Motion agreed to.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

The Star Casino

Petition opposing construction of a proposed residential and hotel tower on The Star casino site, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Inner-city Ferry Services

Petition calling on the Government to fast-track project work for ferry wharves and services at Glebe Point; Johnstons Bay, Pyrmont; Woolloomooloo; and Elizabeth Bay, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Pet Shops

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

Affordable Housing

Petition requesting that 15 per cent of all new residential developments be set aside for affordable housing, that councils be permitted to levy developers for affordable housing, that inner-city housing stock sales be halted and that the wholesale conversion of residential homes into short-term holiday lets be banned without zoning changes, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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**.

Owners Corporations and Short-term Letting

Petition requesting that owners corporations be given the authority to control short-term letting in their buildings, including to place limits beyond State controls or to ban the practice outright, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

No-fault Eviction

Petition requesting the Government to end no-fault eviction and to act to make tenancies more secure, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to a petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Shelley Hancock—Coffs Harbour Local Government Precinct—lodged 17 September 2019 (Mr Gurmeh Singh)

The Hon. Shelley Hancock—Thirlmere Residential Development—lodged 18 September 2019 (Mr Nathaniel Smith)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Doonside Railway Station—lodged 19 September 2019 (Mr Stephen Bali)

Bills

WATER SUPPLY (CRITICAL NEEDS) BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:27:52): Nationals members believe the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019 and the Right to Farm Bill 2019 are the most fundamental bills to have come before this House because they go to the heart of who we represent: country people in country electorates. Both those bills go to the heart of looking after country people's interests. We saw how Labor members treated country people with their opposition to the Right to Farm Bill and how they have been dragged kicking and screaming to support the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill. They do want to support it, then they do not want to support it. They really do not want to come to the party at all because they have other interests at heart. We know that they do not really care about country people.

The bill will declare certain regional towns and localities in critical need of water supplies and specify the development that is required to bring water into these areas. About 98 per cent of New South Wales is in drought. The prolonged drought conditions experienced across regional New South Wales are unprecedented and will likely extend through until summer. The North Coast has an abundance of water, yet we have not had a flood in my area for about seven years. In fact, it is so terribly dry that even the weeds will not grow. Country people know what to do to alleviate these drought conditions. Even though dams will not bring more water or make it rain, we need them because they will conserve the water stored during high rainfall periods so that we can use it at times like this when, as I said before, 98 per cent of the State is in drought.

Major regional centres such as Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange and Bathurst have less than 12 months of town water supply remaining and an increased number of smaller towns have less than six months' water supply. It is absolutely critical that we provide them with whatever needs we can. Though it will not service the immediate needs of our communities, we know from Dorothea Mackellar's poem that we are a country of drought and flooding rains, and whilst we are in drought we know the flooding rains will come. In some cases the time required for the assessment approval of additional infrastructure that would secure town water is longer than these remaining supplies. Therefore, urgent action is required to accelerate the assessment and approval times for certain developments so that water can be delivered to these areas before town water supplies are exhausted.

We have a prolonged period of dry weather ahead—forecasts indicate hot and dry conditions are expected to extend until summer. Since 2015 the Government has committed more than \$1.8 billion in drought assistance for primary producers and regional communities. In August this year the Government announced an additional \$78 million to deliver emergency water projects to extend water supplies and protect over 180,000 residents in regional towns. The bill has a temporary life of two years unless the drought continues. We all hope the drought breaks within that period. The bill can only be extended for a further period of 12 months if the Minister is satisfied that risks to towns or localities declared in drought continue, or if new risks arise. Extensions can only be done by regulation and with the concurrence of the Minister administering the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2019.

By declaring the new dam and associated works to be critical State infrastructure under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, the bill ensures five important things: firstly, that the project must be subject to an environmental impact statement; secondly, that the project must be subject to public consultation on that Environment Impact Statement; thirdly, that the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's assessment report and the application determination, including conditions of consent or reasons for refusal, must be made public; fourthly, that the decisions on the project's approval and conditions of consent are made by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces; and fifthly, that an environmental planning assessment decision will be made in a timely fashion.

The Government still abides by the planning and assessment legislation but it knows that it needs to cut red and green tape because too often in this country there are more reasons to stop something from happening than there are for allowing it to happen. Opposition members can find every reason under the sun to stop things from happening, especially when they consider this will only happen in a regional community and they live in a coastal city or a city close to a metropolitan area. Dubbo, Wellington, Warren, Nyngan and Cobar all rely on the Macquarie River and the Burrendong Dam—this includes a population that exceeds 50,000 people—and at the end of September storages at Burrendong Dam were at 4 per cent.

From 1 November the Dubbo Shire Council will implement level 4 restrictions and if current inflow levels continue the remaining surface water for towns will be only the 21 gigalitres of water at the bottom of Burrendong Dam. Now 21 gigalitres is a lot of water—8,400 Olympic swimming pools full of water—but this water is currently inaccessible without new works covered by the Burrendong Dam access point relocation project. The Burrendong project is one of the three projects declared water supply developments in schedule 2 to the bill. Based on current advice, Dubbo may need access to this deep water of Burrendong Dam as early January 2020. The Burrendong deep water access needs to be operational in early 2020, as long as the drought continues, to ensure Dubbo stays open. Schedule 3 to the bill includes measures that affect Tamworth. Tamworth is currently on level 5 restrictions. Tamworth is a city of over 40,000 people, with water supplied by Tamworth Regional Council.

Mr Kevin Anderson: It is 60,000.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Tamworth that it is a community of 60,000 people. Tamworth draws its water from Dungowan Dam and the regulated Peel River. The Peel River is regulated via Chaffey Dam, operated by WaterNSW. Storage levels have been dropping and are currently below 20 per cent. The pipeline will run from Chaffey to Dungowan village, where it will join an existing pipeline to transport that water to Tamworth. The Government is building pipelines with this legislation, not just dams, doing everything it can to support the people in that drought-stricken area of New South Wales. This new pipeline needs to be operational by March 2020. This time frame will not be able to be met through the existing assessment and approval process, especially considering the time needed for construction.

The bill also declares the new dam to be built at Dungowan to be critical State significant infrastructure in schedule 3. The new Dungowan Dam is about protecting Tamworth for the future by securing the long-term water supply needed for the city's growth to 2050. Co-funded by the New South Wales Government and the Federal Government, this \$480 million dam is a game changer for water reliability for the city and the region's economy. In summary, one day this drought will ease. When it does we need to be sure that the water needs of regional New South Wales towns are not forgotten. This drought is an extraordinary situation with potentially

devastating impacts for the lives of residents of communities in regional New South Wales. I commend the bill and I commend the Minister for introducing it into the House.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (15:36:43): It is with a great deal of pleasure and pride that I speak in support of the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. I commend the Minister for Water, Property and Housing for bringing this critical bill before the House at a very important time—a crossroads, really, for a lot of our regional communities in the supply of potable water and using this critical moment where people not just in regional New South Wales but increasingly in metropolitan areas in Sydney are firmly focused on the issue of drought and water security. Now is the time to press ahead with the construction of these once-in-a-generation water storages. If we do not learn anything from this drought and if we do not take this opportunity to do these projects now, it is fair to say they will continue to languish on the shelves in offices throughout this State like some of the projects of yesteryear have for many decades before that—it just becomes all too hard.

Much of this debate has been consumed with talking about the drought. As agriculture Minister I am all too familiar with the devastating drought that over 98 per cent of our State is experiencing. In my contribution to this debate I will talk mainly about my own electorate of Northern Tablelands and the troubles that many of my communities are confronted with. I will start with the City of Armidale which, combined with the community of Guyra some 41 kilometres up the road, has just over 420 days left of water on current usage. Combined with Guyra there are 25,000 residents now on level 5 water restrictions and they draw exclusively from Malpas Dam, which is now at 40 per cent.

Unlike a lot of its contemporaries, Malpas is quite a small water storage, only holding 13,000 megalitres. Unlike other dams it is not in the Murray-Darling Basin; it is in the Macleay catchment, more akin to the member for Clarence who spoke prior to me in this debate. Malpas Dam is exclusively for potable water supply; it is not an irrigation dam or a dam that stores water used for productive purposes at all. Under level 5 water restrictions in Armidale and Guyra, watering gardens is banned, filling pools is banned and outdoor showers are banned. Using water pretty much anywhere outside of your home is banned under level 5. Historic trees that date back to the settlement of the City of Armidale are being hand watered with grey water to keep them alive, otherwise they too would die because watering anything outside is banned.

I commend Armidale Regional Council. It has been very proactive and on the front foot in educating the community about the severity of the situation. It was only six months ago that the average daily water consumption for a resident in Armidale or Guyra was 220 litres a day—that is, about 20 litres more than the average per person consumption in Sydney. Six months later that water consumption is now below 160 litres a day for an individual in Armidale and Guyra. That does not happen overnight or by accident; it happens because the council has done a really good job of educating the community about the severity of the situation and practical measures to save water.

In my house it is no different than in many others in Armidale. We have buckets in the showers. We have a pipe for grey water going out from the dishwasher and the washing machine. We cut back on how many times we do a load of washing each week. Everyone in Armidale has cut back and everyone has had to sacrifice their gardens and everything else. It is not until you are in that critical situation that you realise how important water savings are. There is nothing more sobering than staring down the barrel of having no water at all—it makes people realise how precious water is and how much of it we can save quite simply in our homes.

There has been a lot of commentary about this bill being too late; that the Government has been sitting on its hands and not doing anything for ages. In my electorate alone in the last two years \$43 million has been invested in 14 different water infrastructure projects. In that time three water pipelines have been built and one dam. The member for Summer Hill said this Government has not built a dam in years. I know the member has never been to Glen Innes and, apart from a couple of them, hardly any of the members opposite have been to Glen Innes.

If members opposite had been there they would know that we built a new dam at Glen Innes only a few years ago. In fact, the former water Minister, Niall Blair, opened that dam. We converted an old rock quarry at Glen Innes into a water storage off the Beardy Waters. It has been that water storage alone, which was funded by this Government, that has meant Glen Innes has not run out of water to this point. Glen Innes is just about to go to level 3 water restrictions but that new dam has kept that community going up until now. Without that they would have run out of water because the Beardy Waters is almost dry. The Government has also built a pipeline from Malpas Dam to Guyra—a \$12.8 million project—to make sure that community does not run out of water. Recently the Deputy Premier visited the area with me and turned that pipeline on. That has been a lifesaver for that community. It pumps 60 litres of water per second and it is crucial.

The bi-directional pipeline between Boggabilla and Toomelah has also saved those towns and meant Moree Plains Shire Council has not had to truck water to those villages. Just the other day I was out at Biniguy—a little village which, again, no-one opposite would have been to or would know the location of. Biniguy, a village of 150 people about 30 kilometres east of Moree, now has potable water for the very first time because the Government invested over \$6 million in constructing a pipeline from Pallamallawa 14 kilometres to Biniguy, and building water storage tanks and a reticulated supply.

That village has never, ever had potable water—never. It has relied solely on rainwater tanks and every time it got dry Moree Plains Shire Council had to truck water in. That no longer has to happen because of a significant investment. It is not that all of these things have happened only as this bill has been introduced. These things have happened over the past two years because in country areas we have been planning ahead, working collaboratively with the local water utilities, which are the local councils, and giving them the financial resources that they do not have to make these sound investments. But more needs to be done because we are now in uncharted territory. We are now in a drought and a situation of water shortage the likes of which we have never been in since records have been kept.

That is why I strongly support this bill. Even though this bill does not build a new dam in the electorate of Northern Tablelands, it will do so on the old boundaries at Mole River. I am really excited about that project, which has been talked about for 40 years. There has always been argy-bargy between the Queensland and New South Wales governments and the Commonwealth, but it is now going to happen. That dam will provide water security for productive water in the Border Rivers catchment, which will be crucial. Tenterfield Shire Council is cock-a-hoop about it and cannot wait. I spoke with Tenterfield Mayor Peter Petty this morning. He is absolutely delighted with double good news because their bore drilling program recently struck good water. That bore should save the community from running out of water again—something strongly supported by this Government both financially and with expert advice.

It is absolutely crucial that this bill passes the Parliament. I am pleased to hear that the Opposition will support the bill. It is about taking stock of the crisis and acknowledging that we need to use this crisis as an opportunity to build these dams. Why? Because we know that inevitably there will be another dry spell, another drought, and new dams will be crucial to enabling our communities to withstand any impacts of that drought. I commend the Minister for bringing this bill to the House. I look forward to this legislation passing, the dams proceeding and the ability to classify future projects as critical infrastructure.

When Armidale Regional Council finishes its plans to raise the dam wall at Malpas Reservoir, I want that reservoir added to the list because we will get that dam wall raised, double the capacity of Malpas Reservoir and turn it into a true regional water supply for Armidale and Guyra. That will ensure that the sky is the limit for both communities when conditions become more favourable. Again, I commend the bill to the House. I commend the Minister and I look forward to this bill being supported strongly in this House and in the other place.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:46:17): I support the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. I congratulate the Minister and the Liberal-Nationals Government on bringing this bill forward. It is critical and very much needed. I will begin by referring to some of the misrepresentations that have been made by those opposite during this debate. The first one is that this Government has done nothing. We have done nothing? Nothing could be further from the truth. Since 2016 the Coalition Government has built a dam and 14 pipelines, including a half a billion dollar pipeline that brings water to Broken Hill. Without that pipeline, the people of Broken Hill would be out of water right now. The Government has built 60 bores for towns in the west. The only water they have now is from those bores. We heard great news today that the test bore for Tenterfield is producing fantastic water.

Labor members have misled Parliament by saying that nothing has been done. Fancy Labor members coming into this place and saying that—when not one dam was built when Labor was in government for 16 years. Not one. Those opposite were in government during the millennium drought and did not build one dam. The second misrepresentation came from the Leader of the Opposition yesterday and again today from the member for Wyong, both of whom said that Barry O'Farrell stopped the Tillegra Dam. That is completely false. When Labor members say that, you know you cannot rely on what they are saying in any part of this debate, that they are misleading Parliament and that they are lying to the people. Tillegra Dam was cancelled on 28 November 2010 by then Premier Kristina Keneally.

She announced the cancellation of the dam. She cancelled it after the planning Minister refused to approve it—she could not even get her own planning Minister to approve it. The refusal was based on both the potential for environmental damage and the lack of proper consideration of the alternative water security measures. That was after the Labor State Government had spent \$100 million and had not disturbed one blade of grass or turned a sod. Then that site was sold by Hunter Water. When those opposite say that the dam was stopped

by Barry O'Farrell, that is untrue, it is a lie and it is completely false. The Labor Party should be condemned for spreading these sorts of misrepresentations and lies in the House.

Water supply is critical right throughout New South Wales. The interesting thing about this drought is that it is not only critical over the ranges but also on much of the coast. The coast is as dry as it has ever been. There are creeks, streams and rivers that are in trouble; they have never been seen like this. The water for my electorate of Myall Lakes, for the Manning Valley, including Taree, and for the Great Lakes, including Forster-Tuncurry comes from the Manning River. It is pumped from the river to the Bootawa Dam, which is not a catchment dam; it holds water. If there is a cease-to-pump order, that dam holds 80 days' worth of water. The river is being monitored daily. At the moment it is running at 70 megalitres. When it drops to 50 megalitres there will be a cease-to-pump order and from that moment that entire region, which services about 90,000 people and 600,000 tourists a year, will have 80 days of water. That is less water than some of the western areas we are talking about.

This legislation is critically important. Not only have we delivered the dams, bores and pipelines that I spoke of, but this bill will bring forth three major projects. They include the Wyangala Dam upgrade and height increase, the Dungowan Dam for the Tamworth district and Mole Creek for the North West. I have also heard that this bill means there will be no environmental impact statement. That is false and wrong. This bill will simply fast-track it. The people who do the environmental impact statement must do it, but they must do it more quickly.

The object of this bill is to facilitate the delivery of water supplies to certain towns and localities, to meet critical human water needs and to declare certain development relating to dams to be critical State significant infrastructure. A number of areas are in drought. Around 98 per cent of New South Wales is in drought, including on the coast and in my electorate of Myall Lakes, where a significant number of dairy farms are really struggling because of the drought. The dairy farms in my area get their dairy meal—the grain or feed for their dairy cattle—from over the range. When there has been a drought over the range, they cannot get their dairy meal to feed their cattle. Even now if we get a shower, it may make the grass look green but there is no depth or body to it and the cattle cannot eat the grass because it is not high enough.

Around 98 per cent of the State is in drought. The prolonged drought conditions that are being experienced across regional New South Wales are unprecedented and likely to extend through summer. Major regional centres such as Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange and Bathurst have less than 12 months of town water supply remaining, and an increasing number of smaller towns have less than six months supply. In some cases the time required for the assessment and approval of additional infrastructure that would secure the town is longer than the remaining supplies will last. Other regional towns such as Cobar, Tenterfield, Nyngan and Bourke have less than six months of town water supply.

Forecasts indicate hot and dry conditions are expected to extend through summer. Since 2015 this Government has committed more than \$1.8 billion in drought assistance for primary producers and regional communities. And that is not the end of it; it is continuing to increase funding for primary producers and regional communities. In August this year the Government announced an additional \$78 million to deliver emergency water projects, to extend water supply and to protect over 180,000 residents of regional towns. Urgent action is required to accelerate the assessment and approval times of certain developments so that water can be delivered to these areas before town water supplies are exhausted. The Minister, who is exceptionally good and will go down as the best water Minister, said:

In these cases, the time required for the assessment and approval of additional infrastructure that would secure the water supply of these towns and surrounding localities, plus the time to then construct that infrastructure, is longer than the remaining supplies. ... Legislative action is required to accelerate the assessment and approval times for these emergency projects so that water can be delivered to these areas before town water supplies are exhausted. That is one of the great things about this Government. This infrastructure will help these towns now and in the future. As sure as I am standing here, there will be rain; as sure as I am standing here, there will be floods. Hopefully, when the next lot of floods come, we will have the dams and catchments ready to be able to store that water so that when we come to the drought after the floods, we will be ready and communities will be ready to survive that drought.

I commend the bill to the House.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:54:48): I contribute to debate on the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. I take a moment to commend the member for Cessnock for his contribution to the bill and for his advocacy for people across regional New South Wales. It is clear, in speaking to the member for Cessnock, that he understands that the drought affects not only the land, but also the people who work the land and all people who call regional and rural New South Wales home. I note that the Opposition, led by the member for Cessnock, has tabled three amendments to the bill, all of which I support and one of which I will speak on in detail.

On a number of occasions I have stood up in this place and spoken about water. I made it clear in my inaugural speech that my electorate of Coogee cares about rural New South Wales. We know where our food

comes from. There was public outrage in my community when, during the election campaign, the Premier chose to stand on Coogee Beach to announce \$2.5 million for a stormwater drain while there was a mass fish kill in Menindee. The community of Coogee was outraged by that because while we want our stormwater problem fixed, we also understand the priorities of the State and where help should be directed first. No image was more jarring than the Premier standing on Coogee Beach, looking to help solve a problem in my community caused by too much rain, while millions of fish were dying because of a lack of water.

While the Government blamed the drought for the fish kill, numerous reports link such disasters to human impact, river mismanagement and policy failure. That is why it is so important to ensure that this bill and the associated works that will follow are well managed by well-resourced departments and that the elected Government is held to account for the process and the results. The second amendment proposed by the Opposition seeks to do just that. It seeks to ensure the Government is held to account for the execution of the works that this bill allows for. The bill is extremely time sensitive and the people of New South Wales already have been waiting far too long for action from their Government, and rightly so.

We must now act as quickly as possible. In times of haste, we must ensure we do not make errors, and cause unexpected and untold damage to our already drought-ravaged environment. The bill facilitates speed of action and, in the same breath, looks to remove responsibility from the Government for any mistakes or unintended impacts—like we saw with the mismanagement of the Murray-Darling Basin and the fish kills in Menindee. It is fair to expect that much of the work on the projects listed in the bill will be executed by third-party contractors that have the workforce and bandwidth to act quickly. That again will distance the Government from the flow-on effects of the work being done and will create a dangerous gap in accountability.

Clause 6 (17) of the bill prevents claims for compensation. Labor sees that clause as a removal of the onus of responsibility from the Government. If those opposite, who have been elected by the people of New South Wales, remove responsibility from themselves, who owns the responsibility? Is it the intention that no-one owns the responsibility for managing these projects? In that case, those with the most resources and clout in regional communities will benefit the most: Big irrigators that know The Nationals well and will, in turn, support their re-election. Meanwhile, as usual, it is the smaller irrigators, the townspeople, the wider bush communities and the environment that will suffer. If the bill goes through unamended, those people will have no avenue for compensation. For the proper execution of government works, those elected must bear the responsibility to ensure the works are performed well, rather than shirking that responsibility.

I note that the member for Dubbo spoke earlier in this debate. He resented the member for Summer Hill speaking about the drought, because she represents an inner-city electorate. To the member for Dubbo I will repeat what I said in my inaugural speech: I am lucky to have spent a significant part of my time on my family's farm in the bush at Bannister, New South Wales—not too far from Crookwell. I have done the fencing and planted trees, and I have mustered, tagged and castrated cattle. I speak on this bill today and on water management week after week after week because I made a commitment that I would always listen and respond as best I can to the needs of rural New South Wales.

I agree that there is a critical need for water in our regions, and we must facilitate the delivery of water supplies to towns and locations to meet critical human water needs. I am perplexed, though, why it has taken the Government so long to act. In 2011 the Government created Infrastructure NSW, with none other than former Liberal Premier Nick Greiner as its first chair. In its 2012 and 2014 reports to the Government, Infrastructure NSW supported the construction of new dams and mass water storage facilities. The Government has been in power for more than eight years. For eight long years the Government has been blaming Labor for its own inaction. For years, the Government has watched the slowly growing drought consume more and more of the State.

Despite further projections of dry weather, the Government has simply been hoping for rain so it would not need to spend money on critical infrastructure such as that contained in the bill. A wise rugby coach once said to me, "Hope is not a strategy." He was right then, and he is right when it comes to this. Hope is not a strategy, and the Government needs a plan now for how to impact water levels today. Our State is in drought now and we need immediate solutions. While Labor welcomes the building of dams, the reality is that their benefits will not be felt for years and years to come. We require the Government to start taking a proactive approach to managing the drought and to install solutions that will be of benefit today. It needs to install policies now so that people in electorates such as mine can do their bit.

I do not need to repeat in detail what I have said time and again, but I will because you simply are not hearing it. Statewide water tank rebate schemes, a washing machine rebate scheme, smart shower head programs and a proper marketing campaign are things the Government could allocate money towards today to have an immediate impact on water usage. The electorate of Coogee is currently sitting at 170 per cent above the average rainfall. We actually get rain. Do you understand that? People in electorates such as mine want to do their bit. They are using potable water to water their gardens.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Coogee to address her comments through the Chair.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: The electorate of Coogee gets significantly more rain than most electorates across this State. We want to do our bit to carry the burden of this drought. We are currently using drinking water to water our gardens. A statewide water tank rebate scheme would be beneficial, so that electorates such as mine that actually get rain can capture it.

Mr John Barilaro: So what are you saying? Are you saying the regions do not do that?

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: I am saying it should be statewide. I understand that your IQ is a little low. I hope that the Government accepts the Opposition's amendments.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (16:02:20): I speak in debate on the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. I flag that we might need to bring in the Coogee drought bill shortly. I feel for the people of Coogee, who for some reason have the highest rainfall. It was thrown in our faces so many times that they get the highest rainfall. They have so much water, but it felt like they were rubbing it in our faces, which is a bit disappointing.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Coogee has made her contribution.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I find it odd that in this debate we see Labor members jumping up and down and saying that the Liberals and The Nationals have had eight years to deal with the issue. The reality is that in some corners of the State this drought has been going on for two or three years, or four years in some quarters, and in other parts probably only 12 to 18 months. The impact of the drought is getting worse. At every stage of the drought, you have to react as a government. Firstly, we announced a \$1.8 billion investment to support farmers on the land through removing Local Land Services fees and truck registration fees, and through fixed water charges. We have put in place subsidies for transport so that farmers can get fodder. We have also put in place other measures to reduce costs and to reduce the burden on our landholders.

But as the drought has progressed through lack of rain and the inflows into our river systems have not appeared over the past couple of years, the Government has to step up its ability to respond to the drought beyond the farm gate. This is not just about our farmers; it is also about communities in regional and rural New South Wales who will run out of water. Members opposite say, "You've waited eight years and you've done nothing." I remind those members opposite that this Government has provided \$980 million in funding for 175 projects under the Safe and Secure Water Program to make sure that our communities do not run out of water. I remind members opposite that they campaigned against the pipeline to Broken Hill: \$470 million and 270 kilometres to make sure that the people of Broken Hill did not run out of water.

Those opposite in the Labor Party campaigned day after day against the pipeline. They come into this House and say that the Government has done nothing for eight years, but the truth is that the Government has spent \$980 million on 175 projects supporting regional and rural New South Wales so that we do not run out of water. In just the past couple of weeks I was able to turn up at Armidale and officially start the pumps on the pipeline from Malpas Dam to Guyra. This Government spent close to \$12 million to make sure that the people of Guyra did not run out of water. We have extended by 12 months their ability to use water. The Government announced a further \$5.6 million for Puddledock Dam in Armidale so that the availability of water in Armidale can be extended by another six months. If you look right across the State, you will see weirs, bores and filtration plants being upgraded to support communities. That has been in the part of the infrastructure spend of this Government. As I remind those opposite, \$980 million has been spent on 175 projects right across the board.

The Government understands that the severity of the drought means that urgent action is needed to deliver significant infrastructure. The bill allows for the truncating of processes to make sure that we can deal with the emergency infrastructure projects that have been identified. They are very important. We need those infrastructure projects today and tomorrow to meet the current need. The Government has been delivering projects, but this bill gives the Government the ability to deliver in a timely manner and not get caught up in red and green tape. The Government will get on with delivering the services and infrastructure to those communities.

The member for Coogee said, "You can't deliver hope." This Government along with the Federal Government has announced that we will construct dams. It is the first time in a long term that two levels of government have come together to fast-track the investment of \$1.1 billion in dams, which will result in the construction of the Dungowan dam, the raising of the wall at Wyangala and the commencement of works on the Moles River Dam. It has brought hope to communities in regional and rural New South Wales that governments are responding. Macquarie Street and Canberra are responding. Even though the member for Coogee does not believe in hope, the people of regional and rural New South Wales see that as a signal that gives hope that the

Government is responding. That is why this bill is so crucial. It is one thing to announce the construction of a dam but it is another thing to deliver it.

Those in the Labor Party are proud to come into this Chamber and say in this debate, "We will not build dams for years to come." They are proud to say that because that is exactly what happened on their watch. The bill identifies the issues, which enables us to fast-track the process to build dams. Early works in Dungowan and Wyangala will commence next year. The Government is sending that clear message because there is a need for such legislation. Those opposite continue to be naysayers. Those listening to the speeches by Labor Party members will think that they oppose the bill. They will vote for the bill because they see the politics in it. Last week Labor Party members criticised those of us on this side of the Chamber when we announced the legislation. They said that it would wreak havoc on the environment. They said that The Nationals should lose the portfolio of water because they cannot be trusted. Then Labor party members saw the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill—a modest approach that allows us to cut through red and green tape.

In the media I dared the Labor Party not to support the bill. Today, the Opposition will make minor amendments trying to shape the bill. I am sure the Minister will not mind if I say that the Government will not support any Labor amendments because they will be designed to water down any ability to deliver. Labor members want us to not be able to build the dams because they want to play politics with the people of regional and rural New South Wales. They continue to do that every day. This legislation gives the Government the ability to fast-track and truncate the process—whatever we need to do to get bulldozers on the ground.

I have said publicly and I will say it here: If a few frogs have to die, so be it. The threatened species that I am worried about in regional and rural New South Wales are the members of our regional communities; that is what I am focused on. I am focused on making sure that there is a future for our kids, and for regional and rural New South Wales. We must not let ideology take the lead; instead we must get on with delivering the infrastructure that is so important—emergency infrastructure—to meet the present needs but, more importantly, infrastructure for the future. If we have dams during the next drought we will be in a better position. Of course we believe in climate change. We know that drier, longer periods of drought will be intense and will continue in the years and decades to come. But climate change also means that—like in 2016, when the State flooded—when it rains it will be intense rain. So we need to store more water.

Dams are only part of the solution. There is a range of solutions. The Minister has spoken about recycling. In regional and rural New South Wales we will lead the way. We always lead the way because we are used to using innovative measures to survive. Our agriculture sector and our regional communities do the same. That is why this legislation is so important. It does deserve bipartisanship. It does not deserve members to play politics with it. But that is what Labor members will do. After listening to speech after speech by those opposite anyone listening will think, "These guys are going to vote against the bill," but those opposite will not vote against it. Even though they voted against the legislation about trespassers who tracked our farmers, Labor members will not vote against this bill. The Government could have put up any bill today and Opposition members would have voted for it, because they play the politics on the issue rather than consider good policy. This bill is very good policy.

I flag that the Government will move an amendment to the bill in relation to the declaration of further critical State significant infrastructure to include western weirs to make sure that western weirs are part of the project works, because they should be added to this emergency legislation. I encourage those opposite to support the Government on the western weirs component. I am sure that other amendments will be moved to the bill, but I make clear that The Nationals, led by the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, Melinda Pavey, have delivered the single largest investment in water infrastructure in this State at an emergency level and has given hope to communities that we are building the infrastructure for tomorrow.

On the weekend I had the opportunity to celebrate 70 years of the Snowy Hydro Scheme—a fantastic story in my region that is generational and transformational. In 1949 visionary statesmen delivered on a project that we now benefit from today. Today we have legislation that gives the Minister for Water, Property and Housing the ability to deliver on visionary investment including dams at a level that we have never seen in this State. Labor members say we have not built dams, but I remind the House of a small dam at Nimmitabel—a community of 150 people that had been on water restrictions for 10 years. The Government built that dam, but it was three years overdue because \$2.5 million was caught up in green tape. We cannot allow that to happen again. That is the lesson from the dams we have built in this term of Government.

I applaud Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack for coming to the table and backing this State's vision for water infrastructure. We have to deliver, and this legislation will enable us to do exactly that. I will not allow it to be hijacked in this place by those who oppose it. Those opposite will try to water the legislation down—mind the pun. Members of the Labor Party will talk against the bill, but they

will vote for it. They do not care about the people of regional New South Wales. They will continue to use the regions as a political football.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:12:29): I support the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019 with amendments. In 2011 the Liberal-Nationals Government under Premier Barry O'Farrell established Infrastructure NSW. He said:

The Government, through Infrastructure NSW, is determined to set New South Wales back on the path of investment in world's best practice infrastructure planning and delivery to improve the lives of our citizens across this State.

As part of the work of Infrastructure NSW the agency drafted and released the State Infrastructure Strategy 2012 to 2032, which has a bit to say about dams including:

Water Infrastructure NSW recommends a comprehensive program of new and upgraded dams across regional NSW to mitigate the impact of future droughts. Additionally, regional town water and wastewater systems should be brought up to national standards.

The strategy also highlighted that regional communities are facing the fact that their water systems are unable to meet future demand. The strategy highlighted work from multiple government departments that said climate variability is likely to cause a 30 per cent reduction in the secure yield of many inland regional water systems by 2030. The State Infrastructure Strategy clearly stated investment would be needed for new dams and new dam augmentations storing more water to counter prolonged droughts. I do note that out of this strategy there has been some work done including the Broken Hill pipeline. No-one can deny that the people of Broken Hill now have a much more reliable source of water, but I acknowledge that in Broken Hill there are very mixed feelings about the pipeline and the secrecy around the business case.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: But the water tastes good. Did you drink it?

Mr ROY BUTLER: Absolutely. I can give you an account of every town in Barwon and the quality of water.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: But Broken Hill water tastes beautiful, doesn't it?

Mr ROY BUTLER: It is very palatable, Minister.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The Minister will come to order. Members will not have casual conversations across the table. The member for Lakemba will come to order. The member for Barwon may continue.

Mr ROY BUTLER: In 2011 Infrastructure NSW noted that dams need to be planned before the next drought cycle, yet here we are again saying we are going to build dams in the middle of a drought when towns are literally running out of water. The drought has exacerbated decades of government negligence and underwhelming water infrastructure planning, plus underinvestment. As I have said previously, that is not limited to one party. Now is the time for an honest discussion about what we need to do to ensure an ongoing water supply for our towns. It is time for action and an honest discussion about how bad the situation is and what needs to be done. The Parliament of New South Wales—that means members of all political stripes—needs to get on with the job of funding and building water-saving infrastructure, including recycling.

This is an urgent and dire situation for our towns. In 2019 towns in Barwon are staring down the barrel of being without water in the months to come. That is how dire this situation is and that is what the whole Parliament needs to work on fixing. When it comes to Government action, there is a whole raft of projects that will preserve the water that is still available. In the short term, continued funding of drinking water delivery is a must. In the medium term, we need to look at water allocation and management to ensure more sustainable allocation or access to the water when it does rain. Later, there will be time to argue about what decisions have been taken and how we got into this situation and for an independent public inquiry, such as a royal commission. However, the current priority is preserving what water we have available for our towns.

The town of Walgett can survive without river water, but it urgently needs a desalination plant so it can survive off bore water. Ideally, residents should not face another summer with water that is second rate in taste and salinity. The capital and operating costs of all projects must be met by the New South Wales Government, not passed on to locals. At the moment water is delivered to Nyngan by an open-cut channel that loses 45 per cent to 50 per cent of water. Work should begin now on piping, which will double the life of the remaining water that comes from Burrendong Dam. Again, those costs should be met by the New South Wales Government.

Every day I hear about Barwon towns that are on the brink of running out of water. The sad part is there are some things that the Government could do right now to preserve the remaining water for as long as possible. There have been some positive announcements. I acknowledge the great work by James McTavish on town supplies. However, we are just not acting fast enough. I am supportive of building more water infrastructure. In fact, I also have some projects to add via amendments to the bill. They include upgrades to the Walgett and

Bourke systems and the re-establishment of rock weirs along the Darling River. Those natural rock weirs were removed originally for the passage of paddle steamers many years ago. They would hold water up in the river, meaning that the river is wet for longer and ensuring that when we get a flow it goes a lot further, with towns having much better supplies.

Water infrastructure projects are a long-run strategy. They are not something we should be dangling in front of people when they are desperate for water and putting back on the shelf if it rains. I absolutely support expedited time frames. However, we still have to use the best available science and evidence. We need to make sure that we do not create perverse outcomes for future generations. I cannot talk about water in this place without addressing the ongoing issue of water management in this State. I will not oppose the bill; I will support the bill but seek to make those amendments. Water security is too important. However, there will come a time when questions around water management and decisions made by former Government members will need to be answered. Later, there will be time to argue about those decisions that were taken and how we got into this situation. There will be time for an independent public inquiry. However, the current priority is ensuring people have water to survive.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:18:17): I contribute today to debate on the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. I begin by acknowledging the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, who is in the House. I thank her for the work she has done for many communities across the State. When the State is 98 per cent in drought many communities are facing critical water shortages. We are in uncharted territory. I congratulate the Minister on her proactive work in engaging with councils and communities across the State to address a situation we have never been in before.

There can be no more important issue right now than securing water supplies for our regional communities, and ensuring they have the infrastructure they need as well as futureproofing water supplies for the next drought. Around the State communities are facing critical shortages—Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange and, of course, my home town of Bathurst. Those towns are among communities with less than 12 months water supply remaining if we do not get much-needed rain. Last week my community of Bathurst moved to extreme water restrictions in an effort to extend existing water supplies for as long as possible and ensure that our town continues to have drinking water. As a government, we have been working closely with Bathurst Regional Council to investigate alternative water supplies. In August this year we announced \$2 million to assist the council in developing critical water initiatives. This will enable the council to look at options to extend the life of water security in its community.

One option it is looking at is upgrading the pipeline from Winburndale Dam to Bathurst, parts of which are wooden and almost 90 years old. Those kinds of projects are critical. The aged pipelines cannot handle the type of water pressure needed to efficiently pump water to the city. Upgrading parts of the pipeline will allow Bathurst to tap into greater volumes of water from Winburndale, which is used mainly for industrial purposes, parks and sporting fields. Upgrading this pipeline will mean we can move that water from the Winburndale Dam to the water filtration plant. The Government is investing \$10 million, in partnership with Bathurst Regional Council, to upgrade the dam to ensure it remains safe during times of high inflow—a scenario we look forward to seeing again in the future.

I know that the council is also considering other options including bores, stormwater harvesting and other pipelines. Earlier today in Parliament House representatives of Bathurst Regional Council met with the water Minister and me to discuss the options and efforts to get those projects to a shovel-ready stage. Once again, I congratulate the Minister, who is working with a council that is showing leadership but that wants to work in partnership with the State Government. We are in this together. We are facing the worst drought on record and we are working together to find solutions to extend supply and guarantee jobs.

The bill is about giving government the ability to fast-track water projects to secure short-term water supply. It is about giving government the ability to deliver key water infrastructure projects quicker—projects like the raising of Wyangala Dam wall. I cannot stress enough the importance of those works. The bill gives the Minister the power needed to secure regional town water supplies through a drought the likes of which we have never seen before. I call on those opposite not to oppose the bill just because that is what oppositions do. This issue is far bigger than politics. It is about ensuring that our regional communities have certainty of drinking water. The bill is targeted specifically at the challenges facing the regions and excludes the Sydney drinking water catchment.

We need the support of all members in this place. The bush needs their backing. There is no time to play politics. Members cannot do that to communities at this time. They cannot do it to regional families. They cannot do it to our kids. We must ensure that those communities have a future. We have seen the games that those opposite are willing to play with bills such as the Right to Farm Bill 2019. I implore them not to play games with the bill

before the House. Once more, I thank the Minister for Water, Property and Housing for her continued hard work on this issue. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:23:45): I contribute to debate on the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. Members might be wondering why the member for Lakemba would be interested in contributing to this debate, but the bill is not specifically for the regions. Water affects us all.

Mr Michael Johnsen: Because you're sensible. You're a sensible kind of guy.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Thank you. It is a sensible point to make. I will clarify one point for the Minister for Water, Property and Housing and the member for Bathurst. A little earlier the member asked whether I was interested in the bush. I actually go to the bush quite regularly, whenever I get the opportunity. I probably spend more time in the bush than anywhere else. I visit a number of—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Where do you go?

Mr JIHAD DIB: I often holiday in the Upper Hunter. I often go to Gundagai. Last week I was in Dubbo. I actually go out there a fair bit. If the Minister wants to check my Instagram, she will see some very nice photos. I detoured to Bathurst and went to Mudgee, where I bumped into Glenn McGrath—but that is a different story altogether. During a recent break I followed the advice that I have been offering other people and took my family out to the regions, because we need to make a contribution where we can. I also wanted my children to see the impact of the drought.

Although Opposition members are sometimes accused of playing politics, we do pay attention to what is going on. We all own and share this problem, and in the end we are all responsible for its resolution. My family and I drove out west to a number of different areas. We visited Dubbo, where I saw the effect of serious water restrictions. My family went to the zoo and I went elsewhere—after six hours in the car they needed a break from me; the dad jokes had stopped working. We stayed at a motel and saw the cautionary signs about water use. I had a chat to a couple of locals who told me what they were doing. I commend the local member for the work going on out there.

Dubbo residents do not really care what is going on here; they care that we have a solution to the problem. In the end, that is all they are interested in and it is our challenge to deliver. Our road trip continued through Cobar, where it is always hot and dry, and then Wilcannia. I have visited Wilcannia a few times. The last time was about 2½ years ago and this time the Darling River looked a little lower. It is a sad situation. I feel bad for Wilcannia, which was once a prosperous town with a lot going for it. There is not much there at the moment, which is sad. We continued on to Menindee and stayed there for a few days. I visit Menindee a fair bit. This time I had a good look around and went out to Menindee Lakes with some locals.

I visit Menindee because I have a good relationship with the local school principal. We are forming networks so that kids from my area can visit Menindee, and vice versa. Early next year we will be involving the parents also. I want some parents who live in isolated communities to come and spend time with us, and vice versa. That is a way to get to know the challenges facing each community. The locals showed me the Menindee Lakes, which I had visited previously. It was very different. The lakes were full then and everyone has a theory as to why they are empty now. We want to see the lakes full again. I drove past a place called Sunset Strip, where people used to holiday. Now there were sheep grazing in the distance. Once upon a time, this was a lake used for water activities.

Something else I noticed on this trip to Menindee that I had not noted previously were the massive grapevines that used to be irrigated from the Menindee Lakes and that had been left to fall into ruin. It is a tragedy to see acres and acres of former farmland left to fall into ruin. I accept and completely support the statement that many people have made that when the water dries up, so too does the town. The town chokes to death. If there is not enough water there are not enough jobs. If there are not enough people with jobs it impacts the local school and local businesses, such as the bakery. It is country racing season. But not as many prizes are being donated because people are doing it tough. Everybody suffers when there is a lack of water. If the regions are the nation's heart, then we must do everything we can to make that heart as strong as it can possibly be.

The bill attempts to address that problem. Everybody accepts that over 90 per cent of the State is in severe drought. One has only to drive beyond the Great Dividing Range to see it. Everyone accepts that this is a major problem and there has to be a solution. My heart breaks when farmers ring in to radio stations to tell stories of having to get rid of breeding stock that they have had for years and years. People are having to leave the land because they need to find another job. We hear about the mental health struggles and—the real heartbreaker—an increased number of suicides. That is a major problem. The lack of water has other impacts on a town. Water is the lifeblood of everything.

On the way back from our road trip we passed through Hay and visited Wagga Wagga. That was pretty good but even at Wagga Wagga the water was a bit lower. We stopped at Gundagai. I acknowledge the member for Cootamundra, Steph Cooke. Members do not often say nice things about each other but I think she is an outstanding local member who does outstanding work. Every time I visit her electorate people's comments about her speak volumes. She is a wonderful local member who does exactly what local members are meant to do. I generally try to let members know when I am about to visit their electorates, and I thank her for paving the way for me—I am only kidding. I have a beautiful photo taken driving down the road the back way from Wagga Wagga to Gundagai—my wife took it because I was driving. We had to slow down because the cows were crossing. We thought it was exciting and the kids loved it. Even the flowing Murrumbidgee River was not flowing like it used to; it is a lot lower. But people in that area are lucky because they have some water.

I listened to the Deputy Premier and a Minister speak to the bill. They claimed that the Opposition is playing politics, but we do not oppose the bill. We are simply ensuring it is sensible. We need rain more than anything else. But that does not mean Opposition members cannot identify a few things the Government needs to look at. Let us make sure the dams are built properly and that we do not push forward too quickly. I recognise that it is a matter of urgency but we must ensure that people are properly compensated. Let us put the correct procedures in place. It does not need to take too much time. But we should not throw out everything in a mad rush.

It is probably a good idea to look at the water sharing plans. I do not profess to be an expert, but that is the issue people raised with me over and over again, particularly farmers in the Far West. There are issues around the water sharing management plan. I know the Minister is across it and will consider that issue. It is not a case of saying that we do not want to see dams or we do not support the bill. On the contrary, we support the bill. The foreshadowed amendments are sensible; it is not about playing politics. Frankly, I get sick and tired of being accused of playing politics every time the Opposition raises an issue. We keep hearing that we need to take a bipartisan approach. But that does not mean we have to agree with the Government about every single thing. Being bipartisan means working together to find a solution.

The member for Coogee spoke with compassion. It is different in Coogee from how it is beyond the Great Dividing Range. But we are asking generally what people in the city can do. This is obviously a critical issue in the regions but we need to bear the load across the State. If those who live in metropolitan areas can do something to help, they should do it. We all want to see our regions strong and our farmers doing well. We do not want to hear tragic stories of suicide, of people on the brink or of towns closing down. We cannot afford that. The regions are the heartbeat of this nation and we need to do all we can to assist them. Earlier this year I was proud to join with Human Appeal Australia, a local charity, and raise quite a large amount of money. We bought a heap of bales of hay that we sent off to Cobar. I was proud of my local community for doing their bit. I know other members and electorates are doing their bit as well.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (16:34:15): It is with pleasure that I contribute to debate on the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. I congratulate the Minister for Water, Property and Housing on bringing the bill before the House. The member for Lakemba is a thoroughly decent person, as reflected in his contribution to the debate. He has genuine compassion and passion for the people of New South Wales, particularly people in rural and regional areas. I know that the member spends time with his family in my electorate, especially the area around Lostock Dam. The bill is important because it lays the groundwork for immediate action on critical infrastructure to extend existing dams and build new dams. There are plenty of reasons to put in place an efficient process for building critical infrastructure, and I note that in the past other critical infrastructure was identified in New South Wales.

It has been said that the current drought in New South Wales started in the Upper Hunter. People in the region are suffering a great deal, but we are fortunate to have some water catchments that have enabled the town to access good water allocations from the Hunter River. In fact, there is a 95 per cent allocation at the moment. We feel extremely lucky to have that resource. But are we lucky or is our access to that resource as a result of good planning done decades ago by successive governments? Those governments planned for infrastructure such as the Glenbawn Dam, which was doubled in size in the 1980s. We also have the Lostock Dam, the Glennies Creek Dam and the Chichester Dam. Those dams have served our community well in the decades since their construction and they will continue to serve us well for many decades to come.

Having resources such as those does not happen without the government of the day having a vision and a strategic plan, and then implementing that strategic plan. I refer to the 20-year water strategy dated June 2018 and published online in August 2018. In the Hunter a number of initiatives are part of that strategic plan. As I have said before, we have plans to build dual pipelines that will allow water to flow in both directions between Lostock Dam and Glennies Creek Dam. We are also investigating doing the same thing between Glennies Creek Dam, just north of Singleton, and Glenbawn Dam. In the past week or so I have mentioned that our strategic plan

includes a proposal for a new dam—Camerons dam. I have asked that some level of priority be given to initial work on Camerons dam, and I expect members to make similar representations if the strategy document affects their electorate.

In the meantime, some major investments are coming to fruition in the Upper Hunter electorate. We are building a \$14 million pipeline between Scone and Murrurundi. The State Government has invested \$12½ million in the project. Murrurundi is on level 6 water restrictions, as it has been for a very long time. The member for Maitland said in this Chamber earlier today that Murrurundi is out of water; it is not out of water but it is on level 6 water restrictions and water is being trucked in to supplement the available supply. Construction of the pipeline is about 60 per cent complete. Initially the expected completion date was sometime in the second half of 2020. But the lead contractors are doing a fantastic job and one benefit of the drought is that work is not held up by rain events. As a result, the lead contractors expect to complete the construction much sooner than originally expected.

We cannot give an exact completion date, but the contractors are working very well. Once the project is completed, there will be permanent fresh, clean water from Glenbawn Dam to Scone and from Scone to Murrurundi. I am looking forward to the completion of that project, which will likely be in early 2020. There have been other investments in my electorate of Upper Hunter. The State Government has made significant investments in new water infrastructure for Corindi in the Liverpool Plains shire and the town of Wallabadah. We invested a lot of money in connecting Willow Tree and Corindi via a pipeline using the same lead contractors who are building the Scone to Murrurundi pipeline.

More recently, the State and Federal governments, partnering with the Liverpool Plains Shire Council, announced the construction of a water treatment facility and a further pipeline from Quipolly Dam to Werris Creek. Werris Creek is just outside my electorate, within the electorate of Tamworth. Nevertheless, it is an important part of our water infrastructure. The pipeline and treatment facility project will be going out to tender soon—if it has not done so already. When completed, the Liverpool Plains shire towns and villages will be connected to town water. It is an outstanding achievement for a rural shire to have water security. Amazingly, the Liverpool Plains shire towns and villages do not currently have water restrictions, although farmers are suffering greatly as a result of the drought. However, we still need to connect all those towns and villages so they have water security for decades to come.

I fully support the bill because, as I said at the outset, it lays the groundwork for water security into the future. The bill is about critical infrastructure and making sure that processes are streamlined so that this infrastructure can be built sooner rather than later. The bill's provisions will expire, but it lays the foundation for the future of water security throughout rural and regional New South Wales. I support this legislation and I look forward to seeing it pass through this Parliament and implemented.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:43:50): I speak in support of the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. I thank the shadow Minister for Water for his comments and for putting on record the voices of farmers who live down river from the proposed developments. I also thank the Minister for Water, Property and Housing for bringing this bill to the House. It is crucial that we address the needs of people living in rural and regional New South Wales without being sidetracked by politics. I also congratulate the Minister's staff who have played a part in preparing the bill. I thank them for helping to answer questions on details in the bill that I was unsure about.

The more important parts of the bill are in fact the three water projects—not the dams, but the pipelines and pumps that will ensure as much water supply as possible is available to tens of thousands of people across regional and rural New South Wales. There are three main, critical projects. It is interesting that these need to be developed at the dams that are already in place. This indicates that there is more work to do to relocate available water, to add additional access to available water, to look towards storing additional water and working out how to move water to the communities that need it.

The Burrendong Dam access point relocation project will move the plughole to a lower part of the dam to enable access and this may be needed on the Central Coast at various locations in the future. The Chaffey Dam to Dungowan village pipeline is important to stop evaporation. It is interesting that in Australia we are only starting to deal with that. Massive evaporation is something that we need to look at very seriously in lots of locations around the country. Finally, the Macquarie River to Orange pipeline relocation is another plughole relocation, from what I understand, that allows greater access to something that was completed in 2015. It is interesting that the location of that plughole, or access point, was completed in 2015 and only four years later we need to consider moving it.

The member for the Upper Hunter talked about the 20-year strategic plan, which I understand is a 20-year water strategy. I think we need to take up the options in this strategy with greater urgency. Congratulations to the people in Infrastructure who pointed out that we need to address this sooner rather than later. I believe we need to

look at alternative options across regional and rural New South Wales but also in cities in regard to water usage. Cities and countries around the world have been recycling water for decades, including London and Singapore. We visited lots of cities and drank completely recycled water. Even Queensland is recycling water at the moment. We need to look at alternative recycling options.

I reiterate the concern raised by the member for Cessnock, the shadow water Minister, about the trucks that we will need to make available really soon and the logistics around transporting water from existing communities to other communities in need in the future. There is balance to be found here, too. The member for Upper Hunter talked about two-way pipes. The Tillegra Dam in the Upper Hunter, which itself was a political fight, was meant to be an opportunity to share water between communities depending on need at the time. I remember as a young person talking about a time in the future when there would be wars over water. It is almost embarrassing to be a member of Parliament at a time when that is the reality and the truth. Preparing for that is not political.

City dwellers have a responsibility to see what is happening and to take part in planning for the future to look after our communities, such as rebates for water tanks and washing machines. When we talk to farmers in New South Wales they say that the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, which the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government signed off on, has left a lot of our communities very dry. Meanwhile, over the border in Queensland there is a lot of stored water but none of it is flowing into the top of our State. Communities along the Murray-Darling are watching river water flow past their door as they pay their water dues and yet they are unable to deliver water to their dying crops. The review of water sharing and what that looks like will need to be addressed in the future.

We set up the Murray-Darling Basin Plan but we did not really have a period of review to see what that would look like in future. The concept of people owning and trading shares in water like shares on the stock market is ridiculous. People's farms are dying, school playgrounds are dying, root stocks are dying and breeding stock numbers are falling while someone sits with millions of dollars worth of water shares in their pockets. This is a challenge that we need to review in the future. How dare Government members or any member in this House say that Labor does not care about people in regional New South Wales. We care about people in our communities. We are elected to care for people in this State. There are farmers in my community who speak with me every day about their concerns over water.

We have great technology that can do good things with water, such as with cucumber farming in my electorate. It is great to have the technology and to invest in those things, but if the dams on those paddocks run dry and we start to take farm water to run this great technology to grow cucumbers, is that really the long-term outcome we want for our community? We hear about how businesses are suffering. I have family in New Zealand who are farmers and I know it is not only farmers in the community but also businesses around those communities that are interrupted if something changes. I give a shout-out to all those people with mental health issues who are doing it very tough. From this place it is hard even to imagine their challenges.

I talk about that with friends of mine who are wheelchair users. They paddled down the Murrumbidgee River about 35 years ago. They could stop, set up their wheelchairs and camp on the side of the river. They returned 25 years later and, with the change in the structure of water usage on the river, the banks were absolutely eroded. My friends feared they would not even be able to find a place to camp alongside the river during their camping trip. This river and our changing water systems in New South Wales are influenced by human practices. This has been going on for a long time and it will take a considerable amount of time and effort to fix.

I will talk about the hypocrisy about dams. We are building dams and talking about protecting our waterways when this Government has just given the approval to build a dam on the Central Coast, which it knows will prove a massive disruption to the Central Coast water supply. This will not just affect the current generation but it may possibly have an impact that will last 500 years. In the context of looking after our waterways today and into the future, and making up for the losses of the past, I beg this Government to review that approval. The water supply on the Central Coast is our water supply not only for today but also for the future. It may be another community's water supply for future generations over the hills.

Please review the impact that this company will have on our waterways with these approvals. I give a shout-out to our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, who know the land, who are the land and who have cared for the land and the water forever. I ask that they be consulted and cared for moving forward. This is not a political debate. This is a desperate cry on behalf of the people of rural and regional New South Wales to be able to continue their livelihoods. I thank the Minister for bringing this bill to the House. My only concern is that it has taken this long and that building the dams will take even longer.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (16:52:22): In reply: I genuinely thank all the members who made very passionate and involved contributions, particularly those on

my side who were fantastic, as were the member for Gosford and the member for Cessnock, and shadow Minister. I hope I do not get Mr Clayton Barr into trouble but this is a serious issue that deserves respect from all members, as has been shown on the whole. Many of our communities are in a very difficult situation, which requires the bill to ensure that our towns do not run out of water. As to the concern expressed by the member for Gosford about having the right number of trucks, this is what we are actually trying to avoid. We do not want to be trucking water into our major regional cities. We have had to do it in some communities like Murrurundi, but even for a larger town like Tenterfield we are talking about 1,300 trucks a month, which, on that road network and considering its isolated position, would be a very difficult task indeed.

I thank all members who have made contributions. As we have heard, our State is experiencing unprecedented drought conditions, which have really hit us over the past 31 months with the lowest rainfall ever recorded in many parts of the State. These regional towns and communities are doing it extremely tough, both socially and economically. Extraordinary measures are already being taken in these areas. The Government is committed to taking the necessary urgent action to combat the drought. This bill is a major weapon in the Government's strong response to the issue.

I thank the Deputy Premier and Leader of The Nationals who has supported me the whole way through this process of getting funds from the Expenditure Review Committee, outside normal budget provisions, with the support of the Premier and the member for Bathurst. It has been a big team effort to get the support and the funding to our communities that need it. It is because of the way that we in the Coalition have been able to manage this State that we have been able to tap into funds that are available for an emergency situation such as this. I very much appreciate the support that has been given to me by the Deputy Premier in supporting our communities in regional New South Wales.

While this bill deals with regional New South Wales—the provisions are not related to Sydney—we are in this together with our city cousins now. There is no doubt that we have seen the biggest, fastest drop in Warragamba Dam that we have ever seen. We are on level 1 water restrictions—it is called level 1 but it is virtually level 2—and we will have to monitor that closely as we head into summer. It is a challenging period for all of us. But the positive that comes out of that is the opportunity we now have to discuss water—to discuss more pipelines and ways that we can stop losing water in transmission and evaporation.

The people of Tenterfield have confronted all of us on the east coast of Australia with a most important conversation, keeping in mind that Perth recycles its water straight into the aquifer and back into taps. It is clean, beautiful water. Singapore and Israel also do it. Tenterfield has had to deal with that conversation because it was at the point of being about 120 days from running out of water. Fortunately a bore was found over the weekend, which was a eureka moment, no doubt. We are now having those conversations around the preciousness of water. I take exception to the comment by the member for Gosford; we are not in a warlike state in this country, thank goodness. But I feel for countries like Vietnam and Cambodia, when the nation state above them is putting in huge dams that greatly impact the ability of people in those countries to maintain their way of living and grow what they have grown. That is a very serious issue facing people of South-East Asia.

This is an opportunity for us to deal with and respect this notion of the resource that we simply cannot live without, and I appreciate that opportunity. Before we go to the public interest debate I foreshadow that the Government will be moving two amendments as flagged by the Deputy Premier, one in relation to western weirs and another in relation to a simple drafting error, which will be amended and fixed. The Government will not support the Opposition's amendments and it is not just because we on this side do not want to support them. There is no need to support them. They complicate things. In particular, I point out that the compensation provision is a standard provision in a bill. It is found in major events legislation and nation-building legislation.

The chief purpose of the compensation provision in the bill is to protect the State Government and local councils from compensation claims coming out of works carried out under the framework established by the bill. It extends only to things done in good faith. That principle is there and that is why we will not support the amendments. I highlight the contribution of the member for Cessnock and shadow Minister in relation to native title. I assure the member for Cessnock—and the member for Summer Hill and the member for Gosford, who also raised Indigenous issues—that the bill itself does not affect native title and it cannot override the Government's obligations under the Commonwealth's Native Title Act. The New South Wales Government will comply with the future acts processes under the Native Title Act if native title is to be affected by any actions to deliver water to towns under this bill.

In summary, the bill will achieve the following important outcomes. First, it will declare the towns and localities in critical need of water and streamline the assessment and approval process for the specified emergency works that are urgently required to protect the 200,000-plus residents of these towns and localities during this extraordinary drought. Secondly, while the bill will streamline the assessment and approval process for specified development, it will still ensure that environmental factors and good natural resource management are considered

at every stage with the concurrence of the environment Minister. Thirdly, the bill will support a historic partnership between the State Government and the Commonwealth Government by declaring the following dam projects as critical State significant infrastructure: the \$650 million upgrade of Wyangala Dam, the \$480 million expected cost of the new Dungowan Dam and the proposed Mole River Dam. Another important point is that the bill is a temporary measure.

The substantive provisions will expire two years after assent unless the Minister is satisfied that risks to declared towns or localities continue or new risks exist. In those circumstances, the legislation can be extended by regulation for a period of 12 months. However, we all hope that this drought will break soon and this extension is never required. I thank the members who have spoken on this bill. I acknowledge the positive contributions from two members of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, the member for Orange and the member for Barwon—a positive contribution in a very difficult circumstance, treating the subject matter with the respect and sincerity that it deserves. I thank Coalition members for their support. I thank my Cabinet colleagues, particularly the Deputy Premier, the Premier and the Deputy Leader of The Nationals, for their support as we stand shoulder to shoulder with all our communities across regional New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate interrupted.

Public Interest Debate

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:01:07): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Declares an environment and climate emergency.
- (2) Recognises that:
 - (a) the recent report of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], Special Report, *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, indicates that we are facing a climate emergency, and as a result, meaningful action on climate change is urgent, at home and internationally;
 - (b) this IPCC report has found that the world is not on track to limit global warming to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius;
 - (c) over 900 jurisdictions in 18 countries have declared a climate emergency, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Portugal, Ireland, Argentina and cities such as New York and Paris; and
 - (d) extreme weather events will devastate large parts of Australia and radically impact food production, water availability, public health, infrastructure, the community and the financial system.
- (3) Notes that the Government has acknowledged action is required to address climate change.
- (4) Calls on the Government to take urgent action consistent with the internationally accepted science and Australia's obligation under the Paris Agreement.

I am delighted to move this motion on behalf of The Greens and in particular my colleagues the member for Balmain and the member for Newtown. The member for Balmain will contribute to the debate after me. We are in a climate emergency. Never has it been clearer to me than today in the sincerity of members of this House, including The Nationals, Liberal, Labor and crossbench members, on the critical water supply bill. I listened to the whole debate and they each recognised that this is an unbelievable 30-month drought, the likes of which have never been seen before in our recorded history. You need only look around to see that we are in a climate emergency. That emergency should be top of mind, underpinning everything we talk about in here, and it continues to be disappointing that it is not.

This motion reflects the calls from more than 370,000 Australians who participated in the largest ever e-petition to the Federal Parliament on this issue and the overwhelming outcry in our communities calling for this Parliament and the Federal Parliament to recognise climate change as an emergency. Everything about a warming planet is moot. As outlined in the motion, it also follows the example of over 900 jurisdictions in 18 countries. Since October last year, in just the past 12 months, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has issued three reports, each more urgent than the last. Those reports tell us that the window is closing on our generation's ability to discharge our responsibilities set out in the Paris climate agreement.

I have no doubt that those opposite will talk about grandstanding and say this is a stunt. We saw that in the Federal Parliament. Again and again, our communities are being ignored, ridiculed and belittled for their absolute concern—including the millions and millions of young people who have taken to the streets. Earlier this year at the World Economic Forum global business leaders identified that the top three risks to businesses worldwide are extreme weather events, failure to mitigate climate change and natural disasters. So what does an emergency response look like? We are seeing it, finally, in this place around water, because the water shortages

in rural communities are real. That is that what an emergency response looks like. It is targeted, there is money, it is real and it is definite. Livability has changed already with fires, drought and extreme temperatures. How are we going to navigate this? It is going to happen so fast. We have all of the knowledge and all of the tools, so what are we doing about it?

I have been to the Pacific twice as part of the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Forum, and there is nothing more dire than sitting opposite women members of parliament who are buying islands in other nations to relocate their entire nation. I have sat opposite Fijians who are experiencing two to three extreme weather events each year. The Solomon Islands have had three cyclones in one year. Islands are going under. What do we need? The key problem, as identified by advice after advice, is the lack of a coherent national energy policy. *The Australian Financial Review* national energy summit, a very substantial annual occasion in the energy sector, was held only a few weeks ago. It saw body after body present the clear view that until we have a national energy policy that makes sense in this country, this crisis is only going to get worse.

I hear others ask, "How does this apply to New South Wales?" I never thought, as a Green, I would be lecturing the Liberals on how to stop interfering in the market. We should stop interfering in the market and do what we are meant to do, which is pull levers and make legislative changes but not play God. We are told by the experts that picking winners like Snowy Hydro and other massive projects that are not grounded in the market but are grounded in a vicious cycle of government intervention crowds out other investments that would be better able to deliver, smaller and cheaper to build. The industry keeps saying to government, "Can you just give us the assurances and the security of what we want?" "Decarbonisation and the maintenance of a strong industrial base are possible and consistent with a strong growing economy." That is from the United Kingdom's parliament.

The Government has aspirational targets and emissions, but what is the plan? We want those opposite to clarify the big issue shaping the electricity market, accelerate investment in transmission by giving networks confidence that they can recover the cost of early planning works and instead of the ludicrous ideology of The Nationals, who plan to interfere in the purview of the Independent Planning Commission and the New South Wales judiciary with regard to coalmine closures, change the law so that those companies have funds in escrow to ensure an orderly closure. Break the vicious cycle, and we in The Greens will continue to give global heating, wildlife extinction and pollution the urgent attention and prominence that they demand. We all need to fearlessly take a stand for future generations. Please support this motion. We know we have the support of Labor, and we welcome that.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:08:18): I thank the member for Ballina for bringing this motion to the House, as it gives me a good opportunity to speak on all the important and good initiatives that this Government is delivering with respect to climate change. Climate change will affect the natural social and economic welfare of New South Wales and by better understanding of impacts of climate change on our environment, communities and lifestyles we can prepare and adapt for the future. I reference a fact sheet produced by the New South Wales Government that outlines in detail the impacts of climate change in New South Wales. It covers everything from heatwaves to urban heat to impacts on human health to floods, storms, east coast lows, sea levels and coastal erosion issues, bushfires, soil issues, water resource challenges and biodiversity.

This Government has a strong track record in expanding renewable energy, helping households and businesses reduce their energy bills by helping them save energy and preparing for the impacts of climate change. Being from a coastal community myself, I am alive to the impact it has on coastal communities like Manly. Global average sea levels have increased by 210 millimetres between 1880 and 2009. That is not debatable; it is a fact. In addition to that, while there was considerable variability in the rate of rise during the twentieth century, there has been a statistically significant acceleration since the 1900s.

While we are seeing the effects of climate change in New South Wales, this Government, under the outstanding Minister for Energy and Environment, has taken steps to prepare. For example, we have developed the South East Australian Regional Climate Model, known as NSW and ACT Regional Climate Modelling, which provides climate change projections for New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory to 2030 and 2070, down to the nearest 10 kilometres. Instead of alarmist language and concern—which I acknowledge is out there—people in my community and in other communities across New South Wales want practical policies that will help them understand the solutions that governments like ours are putting towards the real challenge that is presented by climate change.

I will speak on three of those practical and real policies that demonstrate real leadership from this Government. The first is the Increasing Resilience to Climate Change grants program, which was announced recently. Our Government is calling for community groups across the State to apply for funding for projects that reduce the impacts of climate change in their local communities. The Minister, who is in the Chamber, outlined that these grants will help local communities plan, coordinate and take action to increase their resilience and adapt. These grants are of course funded through the Climate Change Fund, which enables the Government to better

support community in its response to the effects of climate change. This is one example of real practical policies to assist the Government.

The second policy I will mention is the recently announced solar for low-income households trial, where up to 3,000 low-income households in five areas will be offered free rooftop solar systems and installation worth \$4,000 as part of a funded trial that will also shave more than \$300 off their energy bills each year. This is another practical example of how this Government is leading the way and assisting with the roll-out of solar and renewable energy in low income areas across the State. Finally, not only are we implementing practical policies across the State, but we are also acknowledging and shining a light on those who are leading the way in the market. I speak of course of the Green Globe Awards. The finalists of those awards will be revealed on 27 November.

There are 14 different categories to be presented at Taronga, including environment excellence and regional sustainability awards. We are rolling out our own policies to support the issue of climate change and we are also supporting and acknowledging those in the community who are leading the way. Those opposite made a comment about interference in the market, but the market is doing incredibly well and leading the way in solving the issue of climate change. Global investment in new and renewable energy capacity over this decade from 2010 to 2019 inclusive is on course to hit nearly US\$2.7 trillion, with more gigawatts of solar power installed than any other generation technology, according to new figures published by a Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment 2019 report. I am proud of what this Government is doing in the climate space and we are leading the way.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:13:13): This week we have heard a lot of talk about how the Government should be on a war footing and that there is an emergency around dams. We have seen laws changed and dramatic action taken. Yet when it comes to the issue of climate change the member for Manly has outlined some issues, a few hundred thousand dollars for climate adaption, some awards and some creditable solar for low-income properties. The argument we are putting forward today is that this Parliament should follow the example of the United Kingdom, Canadian, Irish and other parliaments, not to mention the dozens of councils here in Australia, that have made a declaration that this is an emergency and urgent action needs to be taken.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change tells us that the window is closing on our generation's ability to discharge our responsibility as set out in the Paris climate agreement—that is, to ensure that global warming is kept well below two degrees above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees. On this issue, the science is in. It tells us we need to cut carbon emissions substantially in the next decade to have any real hope of keeping to those important thresholds. The Australian Medical Association has followed its British and American counterparts in declaring that climate change is a health emergency. The association tells us that climate change will cause higher mortality and morbidity from heat stress. It will cause injury and mortality from increasingly severe weather events. It will cause increases in the transmission of vector-borne diseases and cause food insecurity due to declines in agricultural outputs. The association also predicts that climate change will cause a higher incidence of mental ill health.

As we heard from the member for Ballina, even the World Economic Forum—the leading organisation of business globally—has identified that the top three risks for global business include extreme weather events. There will also be a significant risk to property and the insurance industry. Dramatic hikes in insurance premiums combined with tighter lending in response to climate risk could trigger property market issues. Research from Climate Risk shows that by the turn of the century, the number of uninsurable addresses in Australia is expected to double to nearly 720,000, or one in 20, if nothing is done to address escalating extreme weather and climate change. The data reveals that the insurance premiums of thousands more addresses will increase within decades.

That is not even to mention the catastrophic effect that warming is already having on our natural environment. We have seen the recent United Nations report on accelerating extinction rates. The world is currently on track to exceed three degrees of global warming, which would be catastrophic for the planet and for humanity. A dangerous level of complacency has crept into the public debate and particularly into the parliamentary debate. Commendably, the New South Wales Government has committed to an "aspirational" long-term objective of net zero emissions for New South Wales by 2050. As has been highlighted previously in this place, that target does not come with a significant suite of actual policies that clearly demonstrate how it will be met. It is important to recognise that achieving net zero emissions is just one part of the effort needed to address climate change. It is within our power to ensure that global warming is kept below two degrees.

As a State, we need to pull our weight, as other States and some national jurisdictions are doing. According to the world's leading climate scientists, even two degrees of global warming will mean that more than 99 per cent of the world's coral reefs will be vulnerable and at risk. Wheat production will be reduced by 16 per cent, heatwaves will occur for up to 1.5 months per year globally and the seas will rise by 50 centimetres. Today we have an opportunity to help change the direction of our State, our country and our world. This motion

does not attack the Government or anyone in particular. It is a motion calling for action. It calls on the House to focus on these issues, to recognise they are serious and to commit to fixing them.

We have heard the drought discussed using language that describes an emergency and the need for a war footing. We need to make sure that climate change receives the same level of urgency and commitment from this Parliament and this Government to ensure that we can meet the targets that our nation and our world need. I hope today marks a change for New South Wales to help lock in a future in which we do not see damage, suffering and loss for the people of our State and our country. We need to ensure that we take urgent action to save people's homes and livelihoods and, for many, even their countries. This is an emergency. We need to start acting seriously to ensure that we have not only aspirational targets but also real, concrete measures that reflect the urgent nature of this issue.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:18:29): On behalf of the Labor Opposition and as shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage, I am pleased to contribute to this debate on the motion of the member for Ballina. Like many of my colleagues on this side of the House, I attended the recent climate strike rallies. I was in Newcastle, where 10,000 students, parents, grandparents and workers stood side by side and marched in the streets, demanding that climate change be taken seriously. Councils across New South Wales have been moving motions just like this one. A similar motion was even passed at last week's Local Government NSW conference. A climate emergency is being declared across New South Wales because there is a complete absence of leadership from the Liberal-Nationals governments in New South Wales and in Canberra.

I would much prefer to see actions than words any day. But in the absence of meaningful action from those with the levers of power—the Federal and State Liberal-Nationals governments—people are doing all that they can to send a message. They are saying that this is important. They are saying, "Do something." The alarm bells are ringing but this Government is deaf to them. It is not only community and councils sounding the warning. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. As we have already heard today, it is ringing the alarm bells loud and clear. It is not just our responsibility to meet a commitment to an international agreement; it is a commitment that we all have to our children, their children and the generations to come. But members opposite are deaf to the booming alarms. They are not taking meaningful actions and are also making it worse.

On this Government's watch, we have seen water mismanagement. A 10-year clean air strategy and action plan was promised in 2016 but has never seen the light of day. The Government has introduced laws that have facilitated a 300 per cent increase in land clearing. It has undermined protections for native forests and national parks. The Forestry Corporation of NSW is now on the privatisation chopping block. There are no meaningful plans for rising sea levels or extreme weather events. Recently we saw Stockton Beach just wash away. The Government is overseeing the extinction of native species. Right now native species are under threat of extinction because the Government has no plan for managing feral horses in the Kosciuszko National Park. It has no plan for energy or for reducing emissions, apart from privatising everything and making people pay more and more. It does not have a plan for plastics and last week could not even ban plastic bags.

Mr Matt Kean: We haven't voted on it! You are pre-empting people exercising their democratic rights.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I am pre-empting a speech you have already given to say that you will not support the bill. There is a lot at stake and the chips do not get any bigger than this. People want to see action from the Government. The market is driving change in electricity generation, vehicles and transport, recycling and waste management. But we cannot just leave it to the market, as the member for Manly suggested. Governments need to provide certainty, leadership and support to business. We need a broad response. We need investment in innovative technologies. The Government needs to back the industries that will drive the change towards thriving in a low-carbon economy. Instead, what we see from the Liberals and The Nationals here in New South Wales and in Canberra is a complete lack of leadership and a complete lack of policy. They have no meaningful plan.

If the actions that the member for Manly mentioned are the only ones, that is a very sad state of affairs. We have a press release put out only this week about \$600,000 going to community groups for three years and we have solar panels—again, a meagre offering in a press release that was issued, I think, earlier this week or last week. If they are the actions that the Government is pointing to today to justify not supporting this motion, that is a very sad state of affairs. When the chips are this big, we should all be working together to support our communities to make the change. The longer the Government does not act, the more it is going to cost us in human suffering. It will cost us at the bottom line. If nothing else makes a difference to members opposite, maybe we should all start talking about the bottom line and not worry about people suffering. It is all well and good to come to this place and talk about aspirations. People want to see actions. That is what they need. There is now an absolute urgency in the need for the Government to act.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (17:23:40): This is indeed a very rare day in this House because The Greens are talking about the environment. Usually their agenda is focused on overthrowing the capitalist system, but today they have gone into very rare territory for them and talked about the environment. I welcome The Greens talking about the environment. It is very exciting. I am very proud to be the environment Minister in a Liberal-Nationals Government that is determined to take decisive action to deal with the issue of climate change. During budget estimates the Premier, under heavy questioning from those opposite, said what she would do. New South Wales will reach zero net emissions by 2050.

If imitation is the best form of flattery, the New South Wales Government should feel very flattered because recently the Tory Government in the United Kingdom copied Premier Berejiklian's plan and committed to a policy of zero net emissions by 2050. But it is not just the Tory Government in the United Kingdom that is copying the Liberal-Nationals Government in New South Wales; President Emmanuel Macron of France has also copied our policy of zero net emissions by 2050. If those on the Left want some endorsements from their side, I can tell them that Justin Trudeau—the once great, now diminished leader of Canada—has also introduced a policy of zero net emissions by 2050.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Balmain that he was listened to in silence. I ask that he show the same respect to the member with the call.

Mr MATT KEAN: I do not think one could get a better endorsement than the one given by Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, who has also introduced a policy of zero net emissions by 2050. So there you are—Johnson, Macron, Trudeau and Merkel all copying Berejiklian.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is already on two calls to order.

Mr MATT KEAN: The Government will take decisive action to tackle climate change, but it will also take responsible action. Declaring a climate emergency is not going to reduce a single emission. It is not going to fix the dry. It is not going to make it rain. It will not have an impact. The Government will have a plan to deal with carbon emissions. It will reduce carbon emissions in the energy sector, in the transport sector and in the agriculture sector. I am not going to be lectured by The Greens when it comes to the issue of climate change because no-one has done more in this country to stop us lowering carbon emissions than The Greens. If it wasn't for The Greens we would have an emissions trading scheme [ETS] in this country right now. When The Greens had the opportunity to reduce carbon emissions they did nothing.

No-one is more responsible for the climate situation that we are facing at the moment than The Greens. The Greens had an opportunity to lower carbon emissions and they squibbed it because they do not care about lowering carbon emissions; they just care about virtue signalling. The Greens are all talk and no action when it comes to tackling the climate emergency. The Greens are all tip and no iceberg when it comes to dealing with the issue of climate change. So those on this side of the Chamber will not be lectured to. We have a positive plan to deal with climate change.

Ms Kate Washington: Did you support the ETS?

Mr MATT KEAN: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Port Stephens. Yes, the Government wants to see carbon emissions lowered and will have a plan to deal with it. We will take that plan to the Cabinet, to the party room and to the Parliament in the usual course.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the third time.

Mr MATT KEAN: If the member for Port Stephens wishes to introduce an ETS I would welcome that because that is more than the policy vacuum we are currently seeing from the Opposition when it comes to climate change, the environment or anything else.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Gosford will have an opportunity to make a contribution to the debate.

Mr MATT KEAN: The Government will take decisive action in dealing with climate change. It is already expanding the footprint of the national parks. The Government is going to tackle plastics decisively and responsibly. It will do things that will deliver for the environment. The Government is taking direct action for our environment. It will leave our planet a better place for our kids than the one we found. I repeat: I am not going to be lectured to by those opposite. They had an opportunity to take action on climate change and they squibbed it. They were more interested in virtue signalling than delivering carbon reductions.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:28:54): I thank the member for Ballina for initiating this public interest debate and I acknowledge the incredibly shallow words of the Minister for Energy and Environment in

talking about great international leaders and policies they will develop. This Government has had 8½ years and we are still talking about something that we are waiting to see. That is fantastic! I can tell the Minister that the people in my electorate care about this, so do the people of New South Wales. We can and should do better than promise that something will happen in the future. This Government needs to come along with the people of New South Wales. It should not abandon the 77 per cent of Australians who believe in climate change or the 84 per cent of 18- to 34-year-olds who are worried about the future that this Government is going to leave them. I acknowledge that this will result in serious policy challenge moving forward. We need to design policy in accordance with science and at the same time legislate for a liveable, affordable future for everyday Australians. You guys are in government; we want to see that delivered.

Mr Matt Kean: A climate emergency is not going to deliver those policies.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister will come to order. The member for Gosford will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms LIESL TESCH: We must act to reduce carbon emissions but at the same time not ignore the needs of people across the broad communities of New South Wales. Those needs are intermingled. The long-term health costs of international failure to limit emissions will be massive for the health of everyday Australians. I thank the Doctors for the Environment Australia and the Australian Medical Association for recognising the climate change emergency and the impact of Australia's poor emissions controls on the health of the people of New South Wales. The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change paints a scary reality for Australia—one that sees our already harsh climate become effectively unliveable. The path on which the State and Federal Liberal-Nationals governments are taking us leads to an increasingly uncertain and dangerous world. Australia has always had droughts and floods, but the new reality will mean that what used to be one-in-100-year events will become one-in-10-year events, or even worse, and even less unpredictable.

I am being lobbied by insurance companies who want people to insure their homes for more than they currently are because of looming natural disasters. We have a massive economic impact to consider. Australia, as a First World nation, should be leading the way into an environmentally responsible future. We should not need to call a climate emergency in our parliaments. We have an international responsibility, even way over here on the other side of the world, yet we are listening to this Government playing catch-up. The Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019 is probably a little bit late for the people in regional New South Wales. There is a 20-year plan for recycling but New South Wales is already way behind the eight ball with recycling compared with other nations. New South Wales does not have a statewide quality waste education program or water tank and washing machine subsidies, and we have seen the privatisation of electricity.

I care about the environment. People in my electorate are paying through the roof for electricity, yet we have this meagre commitment by the Government to solar panels. That is an absolutely atrocious response. I give a shout-out to Woolworths today. Woolworths is spending more money giving seeds to kids than this Government is delivering. It is trying to replace the trees that are being ripped out on this Government's watch. Nothing is more urgent than when people's lives and livelihoods are under threat.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Upper Hunter to order for the first time.

Ms LIESL TESCH: New South Wales is experiencing a record-breaking drought. Some communities are running out of water now and more will do so in coming months. We have had fires like we have never seen before. Increased carbon dioxide will have a massive impact on agriculture production. Changes in rainfall will change soil characteristics, water and nutrient cycling, plant productivity, species interaction, ecosystem composition and function. Our food producers are already telling us they have no water. What will happen when we have to rely on other nations because Australia has not delivered support where it is needed? But the Government says there is no climate emergency. Finally, I give a shout-out to all those kids who care about the future of this State. We want a government that cares about the future. One that takes innovative action to provide communities with a safe, livable future and also protects our economic and environmental future.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:33:54): In reply: I welcome the speeches of the member for Manly, the member for Balmain, the member for Port Stephens, the member for Hornsby and Minister for Energy and Environment, and the member for Gosford and commend them for their passionate contributions to this public interest debate. This motion calls for urgent action. To hear the Government reciting a shopping list of things as we heard in contributions is a lost opportunity. I am sorry, but talking about awards in the context of a global, imminent crisis—in the face of entire nations and entire cities declaring a climate emergency—and giving a shopping list of things that the Government is doing just does not fly,

We get that the Government has great aspirations. We actually think it is fantastic that the Premier has the zero net emissions by 2050 aspiration. However, we have seen the report card and unfortunately we are not

headed in that direction. Just saying it will not make it so. If saying things made them so, there are a lot of things I would have achieved in my life. To say we will have a plan is not good enough. To just say that we are virtue signalling—

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

Ms TAMARA SMITH: The only reason I am involved in politics is because of the environment and the warming planet. Those are the only reasons I am involved. David Attenborough has said that this is a climate emergency—he is hardly a left-wing think tank. We have 24 months of hope. I encourage members of the Liberal-Nationals Government please to know that we have 24 months of hope. That is what the experts are telling us. Beyond those 24 months we are going to spend the rest of our lives adapting and they are going to spend the rest of their lives explaining to their constituents, to their children and to their grandchildren how they bungled this.

The Greens recognise the climate emergency as the defining issue of our time. If the Minister wants to call that virtue signalling or moralistic, that is such a shame. We had great contributions but it was such a shame to hear members basically taking an adversarial approach. This motion is an olive branch to say that we are here and want to work with every member in this place. We have moved this motion to declare a climate emergency so that every time members get up and speak in this place they tell their communities what they are doing to that end. It is all moot on a warming planet.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes38
Noes46
Majority.....8

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lynch, Mr P
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Parker, Mr J
Scully, Mr P
Voltz, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
O'Neill, Dr M
Piper, Mr G
Smith, Ms T.F.
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Lalich, Mr N
McGirr, Dr J
Mihailuk, Ms T
Park, Mr R
Saffin, Ms J
Tesch, Ms L
Washington, Ms K

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Donato, Mr P
Gibbons, Ms M
Hancock, Mrs S
Johnsen, Mr M
Lindsay, Ms W
Pavey, Mrs M
Preston, Ms R
Saunders, Mr D
Smith, Mr N
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Dalton, Mrs H
Elliott, Mr D
Griffin, Mr J
Hazzard, Mr B
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidgreaves, Mr P
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L.J.
Gulaptis, Mr C
Henskens, Mr A
Lee, Dr G
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tuckerman, Mrs W
Williams, Mr R

PAIRS

Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Hornery, Ms S

Conolly, Mr K
Davies, Mrs T
Singh, Mr G

Motion negatived.

*Bills***GAMBLING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (ONLINE AND OTHER BETTING) BILL 2019****First Reading**

Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

WATER SUPPLY (CRITICAL NEEDS) BILL 2019**Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Ms Melinda Pavey, Mr Clayton Barr and Mr Roy Butler.

Consideration in Detail

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: By leave: I will deal with the bill in one group of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 21, and schedules 1 to 4 be agreed to.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:47:25): By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2019-199A in globo:

No. 1 Regulations disapplying and modifying Water Management Act 2000

Page 7, proposed section 11(1), lines 5 and 6. Omit "critical town or locality water supplies". Insert instead "development described in Schedule 2 or 3".

No. 2 Regulations disapplying and modifying Water Management Act 2000

Page 7, proposed section 11(2)(a), line 10. Omit "critical town or locality water supplies". Insert instead "development described in Schedule 2 or 3".

No. 3 Compensation not payable

Page 10, proposed section 17, lines 13–35. Omit all words on those lines.

I spoke to the proposed amendments during the second reading debate, so I will not spend much time on them now. There are three amendments. The first two are dealt with together and the third one is about compensation. The first two identify that it is the preference of the New South Wales Opposition that the ability to change water sharing plans should be limited specifically to the water catchments and the water plans that would be directly affected by the projects that are listed in schedule 2. Hence, I propose that certain lines be omitted and other words inserted. I seek to omit the term "critical town or locality water supplies" and instead insert "development described in Schedule 2 or 3". That is about limiting the water sharing plan changes that are possible under legislation.

The third amendment is about compensation. I take on board the Minister's comments in her speech in reply. The intent of the Labor Party was that in rushing these projects through the Government would not seek to give itself a free ride. These amendments are not intended to delay the projects at all. They simply seek to add an extra layer of justice and fairness to the rushed projects that are essential to water supply in the future. I commend the amendments to the House.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (17:49:55): In finalising my speech earlier I should have acknowledged Amanda Chadwick, Kieran Hayden and Jonathon Schipp from my Department of Industry - Water for their enormous effort and expertise in putting this bill together.

I acknowledge their work and thank all my ministerial team. Labor's first and second amendments will limit the ability for regulations to modify by tying the regulations to development projects only. The connectivity of New South Wales water sources means we cannot afford to limit this part of the legislation to new works or projects being fast-tracked. We know there are towns in need where the infrastructure has already been approved, but the legal framework does not allow water for these towns to be prioritised above all else.

To limit the regulation-making power, as the Opposition proposes, would stifle efforts in delivering water to towns and localities in critical need, such as the towns of Dubbo, Cobar and Nyngan. The Raising of the Warren Weir is a temporary project implemented by WaterNSW to ensure water supplies for Dubbo, Nyngan and Cobar. Work has already been approved and it does not require any fast-tracking under the bill. The weir has been raised so that the water can be held back to enable water to be delivered to these towns. However, there are water sharing plan requirements to provide flows downstream of Warren Weir. Without the regulation-making power it may be unlawful to suspend the water sharing plan due to the water sharing priorities in the Act.

I thank the member for Cessnock for his comments in relation to compensation, which is a normal part of any legislation requiring major projects. The third amendment will remove the compensation provision in the bill. The provision is standard for special legislation of this character. It can be found in the major events legislation and nation-building legislation. The chief purpose of the compensation provision in the bill is to protect the State Government and local councils from compensation claims coming out of works carried out under the framework established by the bill and extends only to things done in good faith. I take the member for Cessnock at his word that he was trying to improve the bill, but that is the advice and evidence I have. The Government will not support the amendments.

The SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2019-199A be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes39
Noes45
Majority.....6

AYES

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Aitchison, Ms J | Atalla, Mr E | Bali, Mr S |
| Barr, Mr C | Butler, Mr R | Car, Ms P |
| Catley, Ms Y | Chanthivong, Mr A | Cotsis, Ms S |
| Crakanthorp, Mr T | Dalton, Mrs H | Dib, Mr J |
| Donato, Mr P | Finn, Ms J | Harris, Mr D |
| Harrison, Ms J | Haylen, Ms J | Hoenig, Mr R |
| Kamper, Mr S | Lalich, Mr N | Lynch, Mr P |
| McDermott, Dr H | McKay, Ms J | Mehan, Mr D (teller) |
| Mihailuk, Ms T | Minns, Mr C | O'Neill, Dr M |
| Park, Mr R | Parker, Mr J | Piper, Mr G |
| Saffin, Ms J | Scully, Mr P | Smith, Ms T.F. |
| Tesch, Ms L | Voltz, Ms L | Warren, Mr G |
| Washington, Ms K | Watson, Ms A (teller) | Zangari, Mr G |

NOES

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Anderson, Mr K | Ayres, Mr S | Barilaro, Mr J |
| Berejiklian, Ms G | Bromhead, Mr S | Clancy, Mr J |
| Conolly, Mr K | Constance, Mr A | Cooke, Ms S (teller) |
| Coure, Mr M | Crouch, Mr A (teller) | Davies, Mrs T |
| Dominello, Mr V | Elliott, Mr D | Evans, Mr L.J. |
| Gibbons, Ms M | Gulaptis, Mr C | Hancock, Mrs S |
| Hazzard, Mr B | Johnsen, Mr M | Kean, Mr M |
| Lee, Dr G | Lindsay, Ms W | Marshall, Mr A |
| McGirr, Dr J | O'Dea, Mr J | Pavey, Mrs M |
| Perrottet, Mr D | Petinos, Ms E | Preston, Ms R |
| Provest, Mr G | Roberts, Mr A | Saunders, Mr D |
| Sidgreaves, Mr P | Sidoti, Mr J | Singh, Mr G |
| Smith, Mr N | Speakman, Mr M | Stokes, Mr R |

NOES

Taylor, Mr M
Ward, Mr G

Toole, Mr P
Williams, Mr R

Tuckerman, Mrs W
Wilson, Ms F

PAIRS

Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Hornery, Ms S

Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Upton, Ms G

Amendments negatived.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (17:59:05): I move Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-203A:

No. 1 **Application of Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979**

Page 6, proposed section 9(3), line 10. Omit "Division 5.2". Insert instead "Division 5.1".

This amendment will tidy up the bill in relation to a simple drafting error. This is a simple change to ensure clarity. I commend the amendment to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-203A be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (18:00:20): By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2019-210E in globo:

No. 1 **Further regulations to amend Schedule 2**

Page 4, proposed section 7 (4), lines 32 to 34. Insert instead—

- (4) A regulation of a kind referred to in subsection (2) may not amend Schedule 2 to insert or alter a description of development that relates to the following—
 - (a) the construction of a new dam or new weir (other than a temporary weir),
 - (b) the increase in storage capacity of an existing dam.

No. 2 **Declaration of further critical State significant infrastructure—Western Weirs**

Page 15, proposed Schedule 3. Insert after line 3—

5 Western Weirs program

- (1) Development for the purposes of regulating the flows of water in the Barwon-Darling unregulated river system from the Queensland border to Menindee Lakes, and the Lower Darling regulated river system from downstream of the Menindee Lakes to the junction with the Murray River at Wentworth, including the following—
 - (a) the construction of new regulating structures,
 - (b) the removal or decommissioning of existing weirs,
 - (c) the construction of structures to enable the passage of fish.
- (2) Development that is ancillary to other development in this clause (including the upgrading or construction of access roads, utilities infrastructure, construction accommodation and construction compounds).

These amendments are in relation to the Western Weirs Program, a major initiative. In February the Government announced that it would commit \$4.2 million to the program and that is why it is important that we include western weirs as part of schedule 3. These amendments provide clarification of weirs and dams. The amendments clarify that a new weir, a new dam or an increased storage capacity are all major developments. These are the kinds of major works that should be assessed as critical State significant infrastructure. For the benefit of members, I note that the exception is temporary weirs or work such as maintenance of an existing weir. Temporary weirs are emergency works, often soil that is used to erect banks for a temporary purpose to help to manage drought and other emergency situations.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2019-210E be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:02:35): By leave: I move Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet C2019-207B in globo:

No. 1 Further declared water supply development—Walgett

Page 3, proposed section 5(1)(a). Insert after line 10—

(iv) the locality that includes Walgett,

No. 2 Further declared water supply development—Walgett

Page 13, proposed Schedule 2. Insert at the end of the Table in the Schedule—

Walgett weir and Walgett water treatment plant project

the locality that includes Walgett

No. 3 Further declared water supply development—Bourke

Page 3, proposed section 5(1)(a). Insert after line 10—

(iv) the locality that includes Bourke,

No. 4 Further declared water supply development—Bourke

Page 13, proposed Schedule 2. Insert at the end of the Table in the Schedule—

Bourke weir, bore water supply and water treatment project

the locality that includes Bourke

Amendments Nos 1 to 4 seek to include projects in the Bourke and Walgett shires as critical town water supplies for the purposes of this bill. The Government will say that these projects are well progressed, and to a degree that is true for Walgett, less so for Bourke. Walgett will benefit from its weir wall being raised when either the Barwon or Namoi river flows. Given current conditions, that is an unknown. Walgett has a reliable artesian bore water supply; however, the water from this bore is not palatable. Walgett requires a proper water treatment plant to make the bore water palatable. This project is also well progressed.

Bourke's water supply is less assured until a third bore is commissioned in the coming months. Currently there is a deficit to the daily demand without water in the weir pool. The bores today are able to produce 1.6 megalitres to 1.8 megalitres of water per day; they need at least 2.5 megalitres per day to meet the town water supply demand. This will be satisfied by the third bore. These two projects are promised and underway. My point in placing them on the list is to allow the councils involved to call for a fast-tracked process if problems arise.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (18:04:10): I thank the member for Barwon for his amendments. I understand his loyalty and dedication to Walgett and Bourke, communities, where the member has acknowledged the Government is doing good work. The basis of this legislation is to ensure that we provide emergency provisions in a timely way. At this point the Government cannot support the amendments because they are duplications. A new weir will not actually provide relief to the town in drought. While the weir will be important for Bourke's longer-term water needs, unfortunately it will not solve its current needs. Bourke draws water from the Barwon-Darling river system. There is no flow between Mungindi and Wentworth. The council can supplement its drinking water supplies with water sourced from bores.

The member for Barwon rightly acknowledged that in Bourke and in Walgett that quality is sometimes frustrating for communities in town. This is why we support the reverse osmosis plans. But this source can be used more when the river water source becomes less reliable or usable. A new weir now, ahead of the Western Weirs Program, will not help. The Western Weirs Program is an important one. It was acknowledged and moved by the Deputy Premier and accepted by the House. The Government actively supports Bourke by funding new bores and pipelines, and it continues to work closely with Bourke Shire Council to ensure a safe and secure supply of water for residents. I advise the House that the new artesian bore at Stoney Rise in Bourke and its connecting pipeline are now operational. Council also has available funding to install a duplicate pipeline from the bores to town.

I will update the House on the progress of the fully Government-funded Walgett Weir. This project is underway to raise the weir level by about a metre. The council put out the project to tender a few months ago and the successful tenderer has been advised, so construction will begin shortly. Further, works to improve water

quality at the Walgett treatment plant is also underway. The New South Wales Government leads on this project to add treatment capability at the plant, which recently went out for tender. The project is due to be constructed this summer. I genuinely appreciate the member for Barwon's intentions, but these projects in Walgett do not need amendment. Change to the applicable regulatory frameworks at this stage could create unanticipated headaches and delays to projects and initiatives that are already underway. The Government does not support the amendments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet c2019-207B be agreed to.

Amendments negatived.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:07:16): By leave: I move Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendments Nos 5 and 6 on sheet c2019-207B in globo:

No. 5 Further declared water supply development—Darling River

Page 3, proposed section 5(1)(a). Insert after line 10—

- (iv) the locality that includes Bourke and the Darling River between Bourke and its junction with the Murray River,

No. 6 Further declared water supply development—Darling River

Page 13, proposed Schedule 2. Insert at the end of the Table in the Schedule—

| | |
|---|---|
| Re-establishment of natural rock weirs on the Darling River between Bourke and its junction with the Murray River | the locality that includes Bourke and the Darling River between Bourke and its junction with the Murray River |
|---|---|

These amendments include the re-establishment of natural rock weirs in the Darling River, many of which were broken down to allow for paddle-steamer passage in the era of river trade.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will be heard in silence.

Mr ROY BUTLER: I seek support to reinstate the natural weirs to their natural height and storage capacity to assist a quick restart of flow in the river and allow a habitat for native fish when flows stop. If I do not receive support for the natural rock weirs to be included in schedule 2, clause 5 of part 2 I will seek to move amendments on sheet c2019-208 that the re-establishment of rock weirs be placed in schedule 3 as a critical State infrastructure project. At least this will allow a focus to be placed on restoring the natural rock weirs and seeking funding for this.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (18:08:39): I acknowledge the intent and the goodwill of the member for Barwon in relation to these amendments. He proposes reinstating the natural flow to the river pre-white man's arrival, before the natural weirs were blown up in western New South Wales to enable the paddle-steamers to get up to Bourke. I am confident and satisfied that the amendments moved by the Deputy Premier in relation to the Western Weirs Program will incorporate the work needed to create a more natural river flow and to ensure into the future that those communities do not run out of water.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendments Nos. 5 to 6 on sheet c2019-207B be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes38
Noes45
Majority.....7

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Donato, Mr P
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H

Atalla, Mr E
Butler, Mr R
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dalton, Mrs H
Finn, Ms J
Haylen, Ms J
Lalich, Mr N
McGirr, Dr J

Bali, Mr S
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lynch, Mr P
McKay, Ms J

AYES

Mehan, Mr D (teller)
O'Neill, Dr M
Saffin, Ms J
Voltz, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Mihailuk, Ms T
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Tesch, Ms L
Washington, Ms K

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Gibbons, Ms M
Hazzard, Mr B
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Smith, Ms T.F.
Taylor, Mr M
Ward, Mr G

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Elliott, Mr D
Gulaptis, Mr C
Henskens, Mr A
Lee, Dr G
Pavey, Mrs M
Preston, Ms R
Saunders, Mr D
Singh, Mr G
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Williams, Mr R

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L.J.
Hancock, Mrs S
Johnsen, Mr M
Lindsay, Ms W
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidgreaves, Mr P
Smith, Mr N
Stokes, Mr R
Tuckerman, Mrs W
Wilson, Ms F

PAIRS

Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Hornery, Ms S

Upton, Ms G
Griffin, Mr J
O'Dea, Mr J

Amendments negatived.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:15:21): I move Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-208:

No. 1 **Declaration of further critical State significant infrastructure**

Page 15, proposed Schedule 3. Insert after line 3—

5 Re-establishment of natural rock weirs on Darling River

- (1) Development for the purposes of the re-establishment of natural rock weirs on the Darling River between Bourke and its junction with the Murray River.
- (2) Development that is ancillary to other development in this clause (including the upgrading or construction of access roads, utilities infrastructure, construction accommodation and construction compounds).

This amendment amends schedule 3 to declare rock weirs to be critical infrastructure. It allows for focus on restoring natural rock weirs and for funding to be sought for the project.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (18:15:47): My comments in relation to the previous amendments apply also to this amendment. The Government believes this issue will be dealt with through the Western Weirs Program and improved natural river flow. That is what the Government will work towards. The Government does not believe the amendment is necessary.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-208 be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes37
Noes45
Majority.....8

AYES

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Aitchison, Ms J | Atalla, Mr E | Bali, Mr S |
| Barr, Mr C | Butler, Mr R | Car, Ms P |
| Catley, Ms Y | Chanthivong, Mr A | Cotsis, Ms S |
| Crakanthorp, Mr T | Dalton, Mrs H | Dib, Mr J |
| Donato, Mr P | Finn, Ms J | Harris, Mr D |
| Harrison, Ms J | Haylen, Ms J | Hoenig, Mr R |
| Kamper, Mr S | Lalich, Mr N | Lynch, Mr P |
| McGirr, Dr J | McKay, Ms J | Mehan, Mr D (teller) |
| Mihailuk, Ms T | Minns, Mr C | O'Neill, Dr M |
| Park, Mr R | Piper, Mr G | Saffin, Ms J |
| Scully, Mr P | Tesch, Ms L | Voltz, Ms L |
| Warren, Mr G | Washington, Ms K | Watson, Ms A (teller) |
| Zangari, Mr G | | |

NOES

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Anderson, Mr K | Ayres, Mr S | Barilaro, Mr J |
| Berejiklian, Ms G | Bromhead, Mr S | Clancy, Mr J |
| Conolly, Mr K | Constance, Mr A | Cooke, Ms S (teller) |
| Coure, Mr M | Crouch, Mr A (teller) | Davies, Mrs T |
| Dominello, Mr V | Elliott, Mr D | Evans, Mr L.J. |
| Gibbons, Ms M | Gulaptis, Mr C | Hancock, Mrs S |
| Hazzard, Mr B | Henskens, Mr A | Johnsen, Mr M |
| Kean, Mr M | Lee, Dr G | Lindsay, Ms W |
| Marshall, Mr A | Pavey, Mrs M | Perrottet, Mr D |
| Petinos, Ms E | Preston, Ms R | Provest, Mr G |
| Roberts, Mr A | Saunders, Mr D | Sidgreaves, Mr P |
| Sidoti, Mr J | Singh, Mr G | Smith, Mr N |
| Smith, Ms T.F. | Speakman, Mr M | Stokes, Mr R |
| Taylor, Mr M | Toole, Mr P | Tuckerman, Mrs W |
| Ward, Mr G | Williams, Mr R | Wilson, Ms F |

PAIRS

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| Daley, Mr M | Griffin, Mr J |
| Doyle, Ms T | O'Dea, Mr J |
| Hornery, Ms S | Upton, Ms G |

Amendment negatived.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 1 to 21, and schedules 1 to 4 as amended be agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 21 and schedules 1 to 4 as amended agreed to.

Third Reading

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

DESIGN AND BUILDING PRACTITIONERS BILL 2019

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Kevin Anderson, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (18:24:05):
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am proud to introduce the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019. The bill delivers on the New South Wales Government's promise to introduce a suite of new obligations on design and building practitioners to ensure that each step of construction is well documented and compliant. It forms part of the New South Wales Government's response to the national *Building Confidence—Improving the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement systems for the building and construction industry across Australia* report, authored by Professor Peter Shergold, AC, and Ms Bronwyn Weir. The Building Confidence report found that the accountabilities of different parties were unclear and there were insufficient controls on the accuracy of documentation. It identified that, particularly for design practitioners, there was a systemic failure to expressly require documentation to demonstrate compliance with the National Construction Code.

Modern buildings are no longer four walls and a roof. Construction is complex, integrated and evolving. Future occupants of buildings deserve to know they are buying a quality design and expert construction that is protected by strong and modernised building laws. They also deserve to have an avenue of recourse available in the event of a defect during a building's life. This bill is a priority for our Government. It is critical to support the building and construction sector, and provide New South Wales with a built environment where safety and quality is prioritised and where there is strong consumer confidence. The New South Wales Government contracted Ms Weir, the co-author of the Building Confidence report, to provide her insight, expertise and support throughout the drafting of the legislation. Ms Weir has provided invaluable advice on the legislation and is supportive of the direction New South Wales is taking and the leadership role assumed in implementing these reforms.

I note that, while the bill sets out the framework and provides Parliament with clarity on the Government's intent, further detail will be included in the supporting regulations that will be developed throughout 2020. I want to specifically note that the Government will not do this reform work alone. As committed, we will continue to partner with key stakeholders representing practitioners and trades from across the sector and get their feedback as we develop the regulations. This bill and its policy proposals have already been the subject of significant public consultation. The Government has facilitated the feedback of stakeholders through a series of targeted roundtables, public consultation through the "Building Stronger Foundations" discussion paper, and public consultation on the bill itself. We have carefully considered the feedback received and listened to the voices of industry and the public. And, importantly, we have actioned a large amount of that feedback directly through this bill.

Specifically, over 80 submissions were received on the exposure draft of the bill and I am confident that this bill responds to the significant portion of those submissions, either through further refinements to the bill before us or through broad regulation-making powers affording us the scope to make refinements under the regulations. To further enshrine the Government's commitment to partner with industry, I have established a building reform expert panel. The panel has been established to provide advice and industry insight to me, the Building Commissioner and the Department of Customer Service on both the existing reforms before us, including the development of the regulations and the agenda to come, ensuring we get these important reforms right.

The bill reflects only the first tranche of reforms this Government expects to make as part of the biggest overhaul of the New South Wales building sector. The Building Commissioner has started to develop a strategy and implementation plan for 2019 to 2025 to regain public confidence and create a new customer-focused facing construction industry. This implementation plan will be publicly available as a detailed work plan as soon as possible in early 2020, following Cabinet approval, with key milestones spelled out. The plan will outline a new regulatory playing field, place a greater focus on financiers taking an active and constructive role, work to bring private insurers back to the market and see public confidence returned through a chain of stewardship that enables the observation and enforcement of the design and construction of buildings.

As part of this plan, a method for dealing with existing buildings facing major defects will also be developed in consultation with critical stakeholders, including the finance and insurance markets. This will complement measures being introduced in this bill. This Government is aware that design and building practitioners are a critical part of the building and construction industry, an industry that is a vital contributor to the growth of the State's economy. The industry employs more than 300,000 people, representing more than 8 per cent of its workforce and accounting for nearly 10 per cent of the State's industry output. While supporting growth, this Government is strongly committed to ensuring the quality and safety of buildings through effective regulation and enforcement. Importantly, the bill makes clear that the Government expects—and will insist—that those who perform work on a building comply with the Building Code of Australia and produce quality designs and construction for the benefit of consumers in New South Wales.

I turn now to the substance of the bill. The Government's response to the Building Confidence report committed to critical reforms to improve the quality and quantity of plans prepared to be relied upon for building work. This bill delivers on that commitment by introducing a number of new requirements, which will ensure that key practitioners are held accountable for their work across the planning, design and construction stages. This bill

achieves this by introducing prescribed categories of regulated designs and a requirement for registered design practitioners who prepare regulated designs to issue a compliance declaration stating compliance with the Building Code of Australia. The bill makes it a requirement that major variations to designs must be declared as compliant before being provided to the builder, and that registered building practitioners must obtain, rely upon and build in accordance with these declared designs and issue a compliance declaration stating that the final building, including any variation, complies with the Building Code of Australia.

Moreover, the bill makes it a requirement that any practitioner who makes a compliance declaration must be registered and qualified to do so. The bill also enshrines in statute that a duty of care is owed for construction work to certain categories of owner. The bill introduces a series of new obligations on three categories of practitioner: design practitioners, principal design practitioners and building practitioners, who will play a critical role for prescribed classes of buildings under this new legislation. Clause 4 of the bill enables the regulations to prescribe the classes or types of buildings that the reforms will apply to. Recent building incidents have emphasised that residential home owners are particularly vulnerable to building defects. To respond to growing community concerns and provide the greatest benefit to home owners, it is intended that the new obligations under the bill will initially apply to class 2 buildings, which are those buildings that are multistorey and multi-unit residential buildings.

Acknowledging the realities of modern construction, the reforms are also proposed to apply to mixed-use buildings with a class 2 component, such as a shopping centre or office block that has residential apartments located above the block, so that every part of class 2 building is appropriately regulated under the reforms. It is necessary to be clear on this point—some stakeholders have raised concerns that these reforms will only ever apply to class 2 buildings. While the obligations under the bill will initially apply to class 2 buildings, additional classes of buildings, such as hospitals, schools and other multistorey buildings are intended to be included in the new scheme as part of the regulations over time. The Government has listened to feedback of stakeholders and has taken this feedback on board.

Part 1 of the bill defines a series of key terms that are used throughout the legislation. These terms underpin the new functions of design and building practitioners in this bill. Clause 4 of the bill defines building work for the purposes of the Act. Building work includes the carrying out of the work, as well as the coordination or supervision of the work involved in construction of a building, making of alterations or additions to a building, or any repair, renovation or protective treatment of a building. It is noted that building work may be expanded or limited through the regulations. To ensure that the legislation is consistent with the Home Building Act 1989, the regulations will be drafted to exclude work that is valued at less than \$5,000.

We have also fine-tuned the scheme in direct response to comments made by stakeholders. Adopting stakeholder feedback on this point, the regulations will further exclude repair or renovation work that is valued under a certain monetary threshold to ensure that there is no unnecessary burden placed on persons who perform minor repairs and renovations on a property. In addition, clause 5 of the bill captures regulated designs that relate to performance solutions. A performance solution is one of two pathways of achieving compliance with the Building Code of Australia, which is the national mandatory compliance levels that all buildings in Australia must meet. The other pathway is a prescriptive compliance method known as a Deemed-to-Satisfy Solution.

While the bespoke nature of a performance solution enables flexibility and innovation, it also requires careful and detailed assessment so that the building solution can meet the performance requirements of the building code. Extending the application of the bill to performance solutions will ensure that they are properly documented and can continue to be a reliable method of compliance under the Building Code of Australia. The bill also makes it clear that a regulated design includes a design for a building element. Clause 6 sets out these critical building elements, including the fire safety systems for a building, waterproofing, an internal or external load-bearing component of a building that is essential to the stability of a building or a part of a building—such as foundations, footings, floors, walls, roofs, columns and beams—and a component of a building that is part of the building enclosure.

These designs are considered important as they are more likely to have a greater impact on the safety and proper construction of a building. To futureproof the new legislation, the bill enables the regulations to broaden the types of elements in the future. As part of further consultation with stakeholders, consideration will also be given to including hydraulic, electrical and mechanical systems as building elements under the legislation. This recognises that these types of elements may also have a significant safety impact if poorly designed. This also responds to some concerns raised by stakeholders that these building elements should be included as part of this scheme. Clause 8 sets out the three types of compliance declarations that will be required by this legislation: design compliance declarations, principal compliance declarations and building compliance declarations. These declarations will become evidence of whether the registered practitioner carried out work or oversaw or supervised the work of others in a manner that complies with the Building Code of Australia.

I will now explain in turn each of the compliance declarations and the associated obligations on registered practitioners. Various reports have identified issues with compliance and quality of design documentation prepared for the building approvals process. Inadequate design documentation increases the potential for disputes and non-compliance, which can impact on the quality of the final building. In response to this issue, the bill imposes a new obligation on any practitioner who prepares a regulated design for building work, including a plan, specification or report detailing a design, to lawfully declare that the design complies with the Building Code of Australia. For example, this would include architects, engineers and others involved in the design process.

Under part 2 of the bill, a design practitioner must prepare a design compliance declaration for any regulated designs, including designs relating to a performance solution or a building element, which states whether the regulated design prepared for the building work complies with the requirements of the Building Code of Australia or any other applicable requirements prescribed by the regulations. Under the declaration, a practitioner will also need to detail whether they applied other standards, codes and requirements, and any other matters prescribed by the regulations. Collectively, this information will make it clear how the design was developed and what the practitioner relied upon. The bill will additionally require the declaration to be accompanied by any other specific key information that is deemed necessary by the regulations.

While the details of this information will be set out in the regulations, it is intended that a regulated design that, for example, is for a performance solution will be accompanied by details of any methods used to assess and verify compliance with the Building Code of Australia. The issuance of a design compliance declaration will ensure that, for the first time in New South Wales, design practitioners will have responsibility for the compliance of their designs that are ultimately relied upon for building work. Under clause 9, a registered design practitioner must provide a compliance declaration if they prepare a regulated design for a person and that design is in a suitable form for use by that person or another person in connection with building work. Registered design practitioners will also have obligations to provide another declaration if the practitioner provides a further varied design before building work starts.

It is important to be clear that under clause 10 only registered design practitioners will be able to issue a design compliance declaration and prepare or coordinate and supervise the preparation of a regulated design. To emphasise the seriousness of these obligations, any practitioner who fails to make a declaration or who makes a declaration when they are not registered will face a maximum penalty of \$165,000 as a body corporate or \$55,000 in any other case. Moreover, any person who makes a declaration that the person knows to be false or misleading in a material particular could face a hefty penalty of up to \$220,000, two years imprisonment, or both. This offence makes it clear that making a non-compliant and false declaration for designs will not be tolerated by this Government. Importantly, design practitioners will be required to prepare better-quality and more-completed plans earlier in the design process and will not be able to issue a declaration for a design until it is detailed enough to comply with the code.

In modern construction there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Buildings may be constructed under various contractual arrangements that assist with meeting tight time frames or costs. A popular method of construction is the design-and-construct contract, where many aspects of the design change after initial approval is obtained. This contractual arrangement enables flexibility and supports large-scale developments where there are various subcontractors performing work. However, under this arrangement many key documents are provided for "just in time" compliance and are prepared by a range of parties at different times in the design and construction process. Recognising these complex contractual arrangements, clause 12 of the bill introduces the forward-looking and optional concept of a principal design practitioner to support industry with compliance.

It is intended that where multiple registered design practitioners provide declared regulated designs, these documents may be provided to one single principal design practitioner appointed in relation to the building work. The role of the principal design practitioner is not a mandatory role. A building practitioner may choose to appoint one in relation to building work, for example, to support with administrative efficiency or to keep track of the multiple declarations that are being developed for the project. However, if one is appointed, that principal design practitioner would bear the responsibility for ensuring all necessary design compliance declarations have been issued and that such declarations have been issued by suitably registered design practitioners. Under clause 12, the principal design practitioner will be obliged to make a declaration known as the principal compliance declaration, which evidences this work.

To ensure that the role of principal design practitioner is not compromised, where one is appointed in relation to building work but fails to provide a principal compliance declaration, they will be subject to heavy fines of up to \$165,000 for a body corporate or \$55,000 in any other case. As with design practitioners, only registered principal design practitioners will be able to make a principal compliance declaration. Failure to register will attract a penalty of \$165,000 for a body corporate or \$55,000 in any other case. Furthermore, any person who makes a false or misleading compliance declaration that the person knows to be false or misleading in a material

particular will be subject to substantial penalties of \$220,000, two years imprisonment, or both. The bill futureproofs this legislative scheme by enabling the principal compliance declaration to extend to other matters in the future.

One area that will be considered in developing the regulations is providing the principal design practitioner with a power to make a holistic declaration. This would involve recording whether the appropriate design practitioners were engaged for the work and whether all the documents have been properly integrated by looking at the design holistically and analysing the documentation for gaps in its quality. A principal design practitioner would thereby be making a declaration that the designs and variations, as a whole, comply with the Building Code of Australia. It is acknowledged that build-only contracts are unlikely to require this role, given their need for a complete set of designs before works commence. However, for the design-and-construct model, which now represents the reality for how the majority of high-rise residential apartment blocks are built, I will be exploring the need to introduce this requirement.

While this bill imposes new obligations on the design side, a compliant design is only part of the picture. The construction of the building is equally important. Under existing laws, building practitioners have a broad range of responsibilities to undertake work in accordance with their contract and in line with specific requirements under the planning approvals system. While these responsibilities are important, the Building Confidence report nonetheless highlighted discrepancies between as-designed building documentation and the final as-constructed building as a failure in building systems across Australia. The bill tackles this issue by placing additional, more stringent obligations on building practitioners. For the first time in New South Wales registered building practitioners will be required to declare whether building work complies with the requirements of the Building Code of Australia.

Part 1 of the bill sets out who is taken to be a building practitioner under the bill. If one person agrees under a contract or other arrangement to do building work, then that person is taken to be the building practitioner under the legislation. Where more than one person agrees through contract or other arrangement to do building work, the building practitioner is taken to be the person who is the principal contractor for the work. The drafting of the bill intentionally places the obligation on one practitioner so it is clear who is responsible for issuing a compliance declaration. This approach also mirrors the chain of responsibility that currently exists under the Home Building Act 1989 where the principal contractor is responsible for ensuring that the subcontractors properly carry out work.

Clause 16 of the bill requires a registered building practitioner to provide a building compliance declaration and other required documentation to a person for whom the building work has been done. The declaration needs to be made and provided before an application is made for an occupation certificate for the building work. Providing a compliance declaration before the application of such a certificate is important, as an occupation certificate allows final sales to take place and for purchasers to take up occupation of the premises.

To ensure that the Government can track whether the principal contractor is properly performing their role and overseeing the work of their staff, the regulations may require the principal contractor to provide a list of all of their subcontractors who performed building work on site. It is proposed that this list would need to accompany the building compliance declaration. It is a proposal we took on board having considered stakeholder submissions on the bill. This will enable NSW Fair Trading to have oversight of the practitioners involved in any project and actively monitor and regulate conduct and performance for construction work.

It is recognised that a building practitioner may not always be in a position to know when an application for an occupation certificate may be issued. This issue was a concern to some industry stakeholders. We have listened and redesigned the legislation. To assist the building practitioner with meeting this obligation, clause 15 of the bill now requires them to be notified of a person's intention to apply for an occupation certificate within a prescribed period under the regulations. The regulations will determine the appropriate time frame for this following further stakeholder consultation.

Under the declaration there is an opportunity for the registered building practitioner to declare that the building work or any part of it does not comply with the Building Code of Australia. In this circumstance the practitioner will need to provide the principal certifier with the required steps to be taken to ensure compliance. This is necessary. It recognises the practical reality that part of a building may not comply with the Building Code of Australia and provides an avenue for the practitioner to record and address the noncompliance appropriately.

While building practitioners are expected to build to plan wherever possible, variations are a practical reality of modern and more complex construction projects. While some significant variations are captured under the planning system, there may be many types or instances of design variations that are never recorded or properly checked for compliance. To overcome this problem the bill introduces a new and adaptable process for managing

variations to designs so that they may be prepared by registered design practitioners and become known to the regulator. These obligations will rest on both the registered design practitioner and the registered building practitioner.

Registered design practitioners will have to make and provide further declarations in relation to designs for a building element or a performance solution where the building work varies from any previously declared designs while building practitioners will be required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that these declared and varied designs are prepared and obtained. This is considered important as these designs are more likely to have a greater impact on the compliance and safety of a building if incorrectly prepared. This requirement will ensure that building work that varies from critical designs—so often the catalyst for building defects—will be picked up in the process. A maximum penalty of \$330,000 in the case of a body corporate or \$110,000 in any other case will apply for a breach of this provision.

A building compliance declaration sets out a range of matters that the registered building practitioner must declare before finishing their work, such as whether the building work complies with the requirements of the Building Code of Australia, whether building work was built in accordance with each regulated design prepared by a design practitioner and whether a design compliance declaration was obtained for each regulated design. Building practitioners will, under the bill, have an obligation to ensure compliance with declaration obligations.

Clauses 17 to 21 set out additional obligations under the bill in relation to building work. For example, clause 17 provides that a building practitioner must take all reasonable steps to ensure that prescribed designs are prepared by a registered design practitioner and accompanied by a design compliance declaration and a principal compliance declaration, if relevant. Clause 18 ensures that a building practitioner must not, except with reasonable excuse, carry out any part of building work for which a regulated design is to be used unless they have a design for the work. The design must, of course, be from a registered design practitioner and be accompanied by a design compliance declaration and the declaration must state that the design complies with the requirements of the Building Code of Australia and other applicable requirements.

The building practitioner must also take all reasonable steps to ensure that variations, other than in relation to a performance solution or a building element, are recorded in a form and manner prescribed by the regulations. In the future it is proposed that this form will need to be submitted alongside the building compliance declaration. Failure to do so is an offence punishable by a maximum penalty of \$330,000 for corporations and \$110,000 for individuals. While the penalty is large, the potential for serious building failures calls for penalties that are proportionate to the nature of the risks involved.

A building practitioner must also take all reasonable steps to ensure that the building work complies with the requirements of the Building Code of Australia applicable to their work or work carried out for them. These additional responsibilities will provide greater transparency over the role of building practitioners in the construction phase and ensure that practitioners are held accountable for their work. These responsibilities will also mean that design and building practitioners have to work together cohesively throughout the life of the construction project to ensure that both the design and build components comply with the Building Code of Australia.

While this bill introduces tough new powers, our aim is not to penalise compliant practitioners. As I have stated previously, building practitioners will be required to take all reasonable steps to ensure compliance with the Building Code of Australia. However, directly in response to stakeholder feedback, this bill will offer a defence to building practitioners in situations where they reasonably rely on and build in accordance with a regulated design and its declaration. This defence will apply if the designs and declarations were provided by a suitably registered and authorised design practitioner stating the design's compliance with the code. The defence will ensure that builders are not penalised for properly complying with their obligations under the bill and that NSW Fair Trading can take action and hold the appropriate party responsible for any noncompliance.

It is important to note that the bill, in clause 25, provides a broad regulation-making power to prohibit the issue of certificates under relevant legislation unless compliance declarations and/or regulated designs have been provided to the issuer of the certificate. For example, this could include a construction certificate or complying development certificate under planning legislation or a strata certificate under strata legislation. This head of power will reinforce and strengthen existing obligations under the planning system, ensuring that it and the scheme set out under this bill work together cohesively. The head of power also makes it clear that the Government will not allow noncompliant development to proceed to the detriment of property owners. Only those practitioners who comply with the obligations set out by the bill and produce compliant designs and construction will be permitted to proceed to the next stage of development or be entitled to register a strata plan.

To make it easier for registered practitioners to meet their obligations, the bill sets up further heads of powers under clauses 9, 12 and 16 to be able to compel practitioners who make declarations to lodge them in a digital format, such as an online portal. While the development of a digital portal will occur in the future, it is intended that it could eventually hold an end-to-end digital record of who designed the building, the types of designs that were used, any changes to designs during construction and who was involved in developing the building. Although the reforms relating to design and building practitioners are critical, the bill goes a step further and introduces specific protection for consumers.

Currently residential building owners have a number of existing protections against and avenues of redress for building defects. These include statutory warranties under the Home Building Act 1989, home building compensation cover for buildings up to three storeys, the strata scheme building defect scheme as well as civil actions through the legal system. Members would be aware of the recent devastation caused by defective buildings, such as at Mascot and Opal towers. These incidents, coupled with a number of legal cases, have reduced consumer confidence and provided uncertainty about the extent of protections available for financial damages or pure economic loss. Part 3 of the bill establishes key reforms that will significantly improve the redress available to consumers for building defects.

For the first time in New South Wales, clause 30 establishes a statutory duty of care that eradicates any uncertainty that may exist in the common law that a duty is owed to the end user and in respect to liability for defective building work. Any person who carries out construction work will, under the provisions of the bill and for the first time, have an automatic duty to exercise reasonable care to avoid economic loss caused by defects in or related to a building for which the construction work is done or arising out of that work. Clause 30 expressly provides that people who carry out construction work owe a duty of care to certain categories of owner. These owners are prescribed by clause 29 and include individual titleholders and subsequent owners of a building, owners corporations and a community, precinct or neighbourhood scheme association. It is these categories of owner whose protections have been weakened and this bill seeks to protect them.

This means that owners of property will be receiving protections that are owed to them against any kind of defect that arises from construction work and will be properly safeguarded under this law. The duty deliberately does not extend to owners who are developers or large commercial entities, as the Government considers these entities to be sufficiently sophisticated and able to contractually and financially protect their commercial interests. The bill sets out that construction work means building work, regulated designs and other types provided for building work. But it is also futureproofed so that the regulations may prescribe or exclude certain types of construction work if it is determined appropriate. While the regulations have not been finalised, it is envisaged that the duty of care will apply to construction work in a building that is a class 1, 2, 3 and 10 under the Building Code of Australia.

Therefore, houses, multi-unit residential buildings and other buildings such as boarding houses, hostels, backpackers' accommodation, residential parts of hotels, motels or schools will all obtain the duty of care provided for under this bill—that is, people will be protected where they live or intend to live or reside. Clause 30 also sets out the specifics of the duty. It is important to note that the duty of care is owed to each owner and subsequent owner of the land on which the construction work is or was carried out and whether it was carried out under a contract or other arrangement with the owner or a previous owner. Therefore, the duty would be owed, for example, to the owners corporation of a strata scheme and its members and to other owners who may not have been owners at the time the construction work was carried out.

Clause 30 makes it clear that a beneficiary of the duty will be entitled to seek damages for the breach of the duty as though the duty was established by the common law. This means that while a duty of care will be automatically owed, any person who wants to proceed with litigation will be required to meet the other tests for negligence established under the common law and the Civil Liability Act 2002. This includes determining that a breach of the duty occurred and establishing that damage was suffered by the owner as a result of that breach. The hurdle of establishing that a duty is owed, however, will no longer be required, saving valuable court time and expense for the owner.

This legislation takes an extra step and under clause 31 specifically provides protections for owners corporations and associations. The bill states that these owners are taken to suffer economic loss if they bear the cost of rectifying defects, including damage caused by these defects, that relate to the breach of the duty. This provision recognises that owners corporations and associations may not be in existence when the construction work is occurring and puts beyond doubt that these owners are considered beneficiaries of the duty. Importantly, this provision does not operate to limit the economic loss or damages that other prescribed owners may claim. The bill continues to safeguard the rights of owners through clauses 32 and 33 by preventing a person who performs construction work from delegating or contracting out of their duty.

This is important, as practitioners will need to accept individual and collective responsibility for their work. Clause 34 sets out the duty of care relationship with other duties of care and the law. The bill makes it clear that the obligations imposed under the Home Building Act 1989 or the common law are not limited by the new duty provided by the bill. Consistent with the existing position under the common law, the duty of care will be subject to the limitation period that applies to negligence claims under the Limitation Act 1969. This means that there will be strict time limits to bring a professional negligence claim and that court proceedings need to be commenced within six years from the date on which the damage or loss accrues.

The duty-of-care model provided for in the bill will also work alongside existing well-established principles under the common law and the Civil Liability Act 2002 and will not operate to extend any limitation periods under these or other current laws. One of the recommendations of the Building Confidence report was to register a broad range of practitioners involved in the design and construction of buildings. New South Wales already has a broad licensing system under the Home Building Act 1989 that extends to persons who undertake residential building work valued over \$5,000. This includes builders who work on high-rise buildings.

The Government response to the report committed to extending regulation to design practitioners and other unlicensed categories of builder. This bill delivers on that promise and introduces a comprehensive registration system that will ensure that only persons who are competent, suitably qualified and properly insured will be able to perform the declaration functions proposed by this new scheme. Clause 35 of the bill enables the regulations to make provision for or with respect to classes of registration. While this detail will be prescribed by the regulations, at minimum architects, engineers, draftspersons and various designers will need to be registered as design practitioners. This recognises that these practitioners would provide the types of plans that would need to be declared as compliant with the Building Code of Australia.

Clause 36 sets out the standard application procedure for registration, including that an application must be in a form that is approved by the secretary and include or be accompanied by information that the secretary reasonably requires to assess the application. To ensure that applicants can be thoroughly vetted, clause 37 confers on the secretary the power to request and obtain information from third parties concerning the applicant or close associates of the applicant. This clause will assist the secretary in more closely scrutinising applicants and makes it clear that only individuals who are fit to undertake the role will be able to do so.

Of course the secretary will be afforded a broad range of grounds under which they must refuse an application, such as where the person—including where the person is a body corporate the director of that body corporate—is an undischarged bankrupt or where the registration does not comply with the requirements of the bill. The registration procedure reflects other, longstanding licensing and registration schemes that Fair Trading is well equipped with administering so that consumers have more certainty about the registration of persons within the building sector.

Under clauses 42 and 46 the secretary will also be able to impose conditions on the suspension or cancellation of a registration in addition to conditions that can be issued on a registration that is in force. This new compliance tool will encourage registered practitioners to comply with the prescribed conditions and provides another form of oversight for the secretary. Clause 48 of the bill makes it clear that any registered practitioner who fails to comply with any condition imposed on a registration will be subject to a maximum penalty of \$66,000 for a body corporate, or \$33,000 in any other case.

The bill also sets up an important head of power under the regulations to enable a recognition procedure to be established for persons or classes who are already registered as practitioners under other licensing schemes. This head of power, which is at clause 47, allows the regulations to provide for the qualifications, knowledge, skills, experience and, importantly, the insurance requirements necessary for all recognised practitioners to hold in order to be able to issue a compliance declaration under the bill. This will include, for example, recognising certain architects under the Architects Act 2002 as design practitioners and certain contractors under the Home Building Act 1989 as building practitioners for the purposes of this bill. The specifics of this recognition procedure will be developed in close consultation with key stakeholders and detailed in the regulations.

Consideration will also be given to leveraging existing inter-jurisdictional licensing frameworks for engineers so that they may be recognised as design practitioners for the purposes of the bill. This approach will avoid imposing unnecessary duplicative registration and licensing requirements on some practitioners and ensure consistency across the sector. The bill provides that any person who is aggrieved by a decision of the secretary can apply to the tribunal under clause 55 to seek an administrative review of that decision. This provision is key to ensuring that registered practitioners have procedural rights and can review decisions made about their registration under the standard procedures outlined in the Administrative Decisions Review Act 1997. This bill, however, is only as effective as its disciplinary powers. Under the bill the secretary will be equipped with a modern process for taking disciplinary action that will ensure better compliance outcomes.

Clause 56 of the bill clearly outlines the grounds on which the secretary can take disciplinary action against a registered practitioner. For example, the secretary may take action where the registered practitioner has failed to comply with a statutory or other duty under the law or they have wilfully disregarded matters that they should have considered when making a compliance declaration. Clause 57 includes and introduces a show cause process where the secretary may serve a written notice on the registered practitioner, inviting them to show cause as to why disciplinary action should not be taken.

However, under clause 57 (7), if the secretary issues a show cause notice he or she will be able to act immediately on a disciplinary matter if it is considered in the public interest to do so. That will ensure that the secretary can put the safety of the public first. Should the secretary determine that disciplinary action is necessary, the secretary will be afforded a broad range of options for taking such action, such as making a determination that requires the registered practitioner to pay \$220,000 for a body corporate, or \$110,000 for an individual, or reprimanding the practitioner. The high penalties in the bill make it clear that the Government will not tolerate noncompliance and it will be a firm regulator across the building sector if and when required.

Furthermore, the bill imposes strict obligations on directors of registered body corporates, making it clear that they are responsible for the conduct of the body corporate, including the performance of their staff. Clause 59 requires any director to report conduct that is or is suspected to be a ground for taking disciplinary action on the part of the body corporate or a registered individual who is performing work on behalf of the body corporate. Failure to do so is punishable with a maximum penalty of \$33,000. The bill also contains provisions to hold directors and others involved in the management of a corporation accountable for their involvement in breaches of the legislation.

Clause 87 of the bill provides that if a body corporate contravenes, whether by act or omission, a provision of the bill or the regulations, each person who is a director of the body corporate or who is concerned in the management of the body corporate will be taken to have contravened the same provision if they knowingly authorised or permitted the breach. Directors and those involved in the management of companies can no longer remain silent if they know that an offence is being committed. The provision holds key personnel involved in the management of the corporation accountable and reduces the likelihood that companies will be set up as fly-by-night operators. With this provision and the new investigative and enforcement powers, Fair Trading will be able to make inroads into addressing the significant issue.

To ensure procedural fairness, however, the bill adopts the standardised internal review provisions found in the Administrative Decisions Review Act 1997, which aligns with other registration and licensing systems in New South Wales. Parts 6 and 7 of the bill provide for a more robust investigation and enforcement framework. The framework will implement the standard suite of investigation and enforcement powers used in other laws administered by Fair Trading, such as the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018 and the Home Building Act 1989. The reforms include the standard powers for authorised officers to gather information and enter premises for investigating, monitoring and enforcing compliance and administering the Act. Under part 6 of the bill authorised officers will be granted a suite of powers to be able to do their job more effectively.

Under clauses 69, 70 and 71 authorised officers will be able to require information and records, require answers and record those answers as evidence. To support the investigatory powers, clause 72 allows an authorised officer and their assistants to enter any premises at which business is in progress, including building work, without a search warrant. However, under clause 73 an authorised officer will be able to enter residential premises only with permission of the occupier or with the authority of a search warrant. When on the premises, authorised officers will be afforded a suite of powers under clause 76—such as the ability to examine or inspect anything, take and remove samples of a thing, open up, cut open or demolish building work—if the authorised officer has reasonable grounds for believing it is necessary to do so because it is connected with an offence.

It is noted that authorised officers will also be able to enter without a warrant or an occupier's permission common property under a strata scheme or association property under a scheme. The power will ensure that authorised officers can respond quickly and begin their investigations based on observations and findings related to the common property of a building, such as its exterior, the car park or its surrounds. Any person who obstructs, hinders or interferes with the exercise of an authorised officer's functions under clause 78 or fails to comply with a direction issued by an officer under clause 79 will be subject to large fines of \$110,000 in the case of a body corporate or \$22,000 in any other case.

The bill also introduces a suite of strong compliance and enforcement powers by providing the secretary with a broader set of powers to ensure that registered practitioners are compliant with the law. The bill outlines a range of prohibitions to ensure that registered practitioners act in an honest and impartial manner when undertaking certification functions. A practitioner who seeks or accepts or offers or agrees to accept a benefit for providing a compliance declaration other than impartially can be subject to heavy penalties with a maximum of \$220,000 or imprisonment for two years or both. However, concerns have also been raised by members of the

public about practitioners being unduly influenced by the builders and developers they work for. Stakeholders, in particular, raised this concern. Undue influence can have serious implications on the outcomes of a building, leaving property owners and residents to deal with buildings that are noncompliant and potentially unsafe.

The Government has listened to the comments of industry and the public. The bill provides that any person who unduly influences a practitioner, including by altering or threatening to alter or alert the position of a practitioner to their detriment or failing or threatening to fail to pay remuneration payable to the practitioner, is taken to have unduly influenced them. Harsh penalties of \$220,000, two years imprisonment or both apply to make it clear that the Government will not stand for poor conduct. Under clause 84 of the bill the secretary will be able to conduct proactive investigations of former or current registered practitioners, regardless of whether a complaint is received. The power makes it clear that the secretary can investigate and target the conduct of practitioners who are doing the wrong thing.

In support of the new power the secretary will be provided with a suite of complementary powers under parts 7 and 8 of the bill. For example, clauses 80 and 91 gives the secretary the ability to accept a written undertaking from a registered practitioner and the ability to issue a warning notice about particular risks of dealing with a registered practitioner. Under clause 80 undertakings provide an opportunity for a registered practitioner to rectify a breach of the law that could otherwise lead to a harsh financial penalty. Similarly warning notices issued under clause 91 will be a key tool to help consumers be on the lookout for risky practitioners and assist the public with making the right decisions about choosing a registered practitioner for work. To ensure that clause 91 is used only where there are genuine concerns, the secretary will be required to conduct an investigation into the registered practitioner before publishing the notice.

The practitioner will also have at least two business days to make representations to the secretary about the publication but only if there is no immediate risk to the public. There may be circumstances where the regulator needs to directly intervene in situations that may cause public harm. The secretary is provided with powers to act immediately on disciplinary matters if it is in the public interest to do so. Similar powers were supported in this place for certifiers and are considered necessary, given the important function of the practitioners. Importantly, clause 81 of the bill introduces the power for the secretary to issue a stop-work order for building work if such work is or is likely to be carried out in contravention of the bill and if this breach could result in significant harm or loss to the public or occupiers or damage to property. The power is absolutely necessary and will enable the secretary or their delegate to manage noncompliance so that buildings are safe for occupation.

The bill provides that proceedings for an offence against the legislation or the supporting regulations, once developed, cannot be commenced later than three years after the alleged date on which the offence was first committed. However, in the building sector many cases of noncompliance are not discovered until well after the completion of building work or the date of the offence. The same is true for building defects: In many cases, defects of a latent nature do not arise until many years after the work or noncompliance first occurs. To better protect property owners and ensure that NSW Fair Trading can take action under the bill, clause 85 (5) makes it clear that proceedings may also be commenced within two years after the date that evidence of the alleged offence first comes to the attention of an authorised officer. This can only be done with leave of the court.

This extended time frame is important, and will ensure that defective buildings and non-compliant practitioners and work are subject to the heavy penalties and enforcement procedures set out by this bill when new evidence comes to light. The bill makes it clear that the Government is taking a robust approach to the safety of buildings in New South Wales. Increased compliance powers are necessary to drive the message home that poor conduct and non-compliant design in building work will not be tolerated by this Government. I am pleased to introduce this bill. Buildings are designed and constructed to become places where families gather, where communities flourish, where businesses grow and where memories are made. Occupants of buildings deserve to feel safe and secure within their walls, and our laws are a critical part of achieving this.

The completion of this bill delivers on the Government's commitment in its response to the Building Confidence Report. While there is still more work to do on the supporting regulations, I thank Bronwyn Weir and David Chandler of the Better Regulation Division within the Department of Customer Service for their invaluable efforts and my dedicated, professional and passionate staff within the ministerial office for their assistance in producing a quality bill. This team deserves a round of applause for their hard work. This Government is taking a no-nonsense approach to regulation in this State. This bill will reflect a new era in the industry, and is about putting public safety first to ensure that New South Wales has a leading system of design and building regulation that delivers well-constructed buildings into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

*Private Members' Statements***BLACKTOWN RELAY FOR LIFE**

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (19:17:02): On Saturday 19 October I had the pleasure of attending the Blacktown Relay for Life, which was held at the Blacktown International Sports Park at Rooty Hill, one of the legacies of the Sydney Olympics. The event has been held for the last 17 years. Councillor Cathie Collins, who was present, played a key role in initiating the event in the Blacktown Council area. I was not the only member of Parliament who attended. Others who were there included members representing the electorates of Mount Druitt and Prospect from this place; the Federal member for Chifley, Ed Husic; Mayor Tony Bleasdale from Blacktown Council; and councillors Collins, Singh and Israel. The large number of elected representatives who were present is an indication of the esteem in which this cause is held by people right across the community and the respect that we have for the volunteers who run this event, year on year, to raise important funds for the causes of the New South Wales Cancer Council.

This year a target of \$100,000 was set. More than \$50,000 of that had been raised before the first step was taken, which was great to see. I am confident that they would have achieved the 100,000 target by the end of the weekend. I particularly congratulate Michael Richardson, who was chairperson of the organising committee, and all the volunteers who put in their time and effort. The task of getting ready for the occasion and mopping up afterwards often takes much of the year. It is not just a fundraiser. The hundreds of participants are in teams that represent local organisations, supporters of cancer survivors and those remembering victims. Those teams use the event as an occasion to celebrate the lives of those who have lost the battle with cancer or to support those who are still fighting and, in many cases, winning the battle against cancer to enjoy a good and long life.

For those who have not been to a Relay for Life event, I will describe it. It is a team effort. People undertake to ensure that somebody from the team is walking the relay track throughout a 24-hour period, typically starting at 10.00 a.m. on a Saturday and finishing at 10.00 a.m. on a Sunday. It means that somebody is carrying the flag or baton for that team throughout the 24-hour period. In doing so, they are also carrying the flag or the baton for the cause of finding a cure for cancer, supporting those who are fighting cancer and remembering those who have passed away. The Cancer Council NSW is the beneficiary of the funds raised at this event. It uses these funds to provide information about cancer and how to live with it; to provide support to patients, families and carers; to fund research into cancer treatment and possible cures; to advocate for better services and government funding; and to organise fundraising events to do all of those things.

Approximately 48,000 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in New South Wales this year. That is an enormous number of people who will be touched by this disease. Very few people will not know of someone in their family, in their circle of friends or in the workplace who has been directly affected by cancer. I have been attending these events and supporting Relay for Life in one capacity or another for 15 years. In part, my motivation is that my younger brother died of melanoma when he was only 28. Since that time I have been particularly aware of the slip, slop, slap message to protect people, especially children, from exposure to the sun. That is just one form of cancer that, in Australia, has a particularly devastating effect.

Fortunately, trends in population health show that the message is getting through. The generations that did not practise good sun care are suffering more, but they are the ageing part of our population and our children are benefiting from what we have learnt and from hearing these positive health messages. We are making progress in other areas as well, in part thanks to the effort of fundraising and research that the community have been coming together to work on through things like Relay for Life and the Australia's Biggest Morning Tea events. I commend the Cancer Council NSW. I particularly commend the volunteers who give up their time to make these events possible. I am sure that every member of this Parliament supports the efforts of those who fight to end cancer.

PARRAMATTA SPEEDWAY

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:21:41): I acknowledge the speech of the member for Riverstone. I lost a sister-in-law to melanoma. It is an insidious disease and a terrible way to die. It takes people far too young so it is important to keep putting the message out there. Government members like to think they are young and hip and love a hack. A "hack"—for those who do not know—is a cool shortcut. Unfortunately, this Government is pretty good at shortcuts but it is hardly cool. Its hacks are quite often aimed at sporting communities. The latest hack by this Government is to the Parramatta speedway. We have heard similar stories over and over again in this Chamber. I call on any sporting organisation to beware if they happen to be standing in the way of a Government infrastructure project. It happened with respect to the Parramatta and District War Memorial Swimming Pool, the Robin Thomas Reserve, the Newington Gunners' Wilson Park, the Parramatta Park Trust and now the Parramatta speedway.

There has been a racetrack at Parramatta since 1938. Certainly since 1977 there has been a clay track at Granville Showgrounds. It is not some piece of Crown land that does not belong to anyone; it is the Granville Showgrounds. Anyone who knows the history of Granville knows that is where the Agricultural Society of New South Wales was based. Members who are always talking about the bush and the origins of our food should realise that. When the Government announced that the speedway would be closed no notice was given to the speedway. The acting Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans did not appear to know anything about it. He certainly did not consult the owners of the speedway. They were simply told that it was being ripped up.

The Government, which was doing a clean-up, told the owners the next day that the speedway would be moved to Eastern Creek and that it would be holding a meeting there on 15 November. That came as a surprise to the people at Eastern Creek, who had organised a meeting for 15 November because they had spent a decade trying to get a lease for their facilities from this Government. The Eastern Creek organisation was having the same problem that the Parramatta speedway had been experiencing. In particular, there are organisations like the Moto X Dome, which has just invested \$5 million in Eastern Creek on the assurances by the previous sport Minister that its lease would be renewed yet over a decade it has failed to get that lease renewed.

Garry Holt from Eastern Creek Karts has spent substantial amounts of money and has had numerous meetings with the New South Wales Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and the Office of Sport trying to tie down leases for the facility, which sees five million people pass through its doors. When the Government suddenly says it is moving this speedway out there you can excuse the cynicism. There is a dragway out there; there is also a motorsport park. The motorsport park has just been given a 20-year lease, so where is this new facility going? Is it going on the dragway or is it going on the Western Sydney Parklands? That is what the land out there actually is. It is not, as the Minister describes it, excess land that they have plenty of. It is actually land that belongs to the parklands.

The Government's press release states that it will pay for the move. It is very good that it is going to pay for the move, but who is going to pay to rebuild the speedway out at Eastern Creek? There was a master plan done for the motorsport park in 1996. At that point it was to cost \$15 million to build the speedway at Eastern Creek. In today's building costs it is actually closer to \$60 million to replace that speedway. Nowhere in the Government's press releases or statements is a commitment to pay for that speedway facility to be rebuilt. If the Government says it will do the right thing by motorsport it had better move pretty quickly and tell the public—particularly the people who love their sprint cars and love their speedway—exactly how much it is committing to this facility.

I bet my bottom dollar this was a cover-up by the Government and that it will walk away and not put one cent towards building this facility, as it did with Parramatta pool when it ripped that out. We spent three years fighting the Government to get just half the money for a facility that is now disenfranchising other parklands, the Parramatta Park Trust lands. It is typical of the hacks that this Government makes—not good hacks but bad hacks.

HUGH MITCHELL

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:26:49): In the wake of Australian rugby's sadly unsuccessful World Cup campaign, I convey a story of positivity that has its genesis in Dubbo but shows what the sport is all about. While the coach and the head honchos of the national organisation are tearing each other apart, this is a story that shows the spirit of rugby—and, to be frank, humanity—at its finest. This story was actually told by a friend of mine, Geoff Mann, in the *Dubbo Photo News* a couple of months ago, but I thought it was so good it deserved to be put on the record and shared in this place. The story is about Hugh Mitchell, a young rugby nut from Dubbo who, aside from playing the game, also volunteers as a ball boy for the Dubbo Kangaroos. During a 'Roos home game this year young Hugh chased a ball that had been kicked into touch and was bitten on the backside by the pet dog of a fan sitting on the sideline—I point out the dog was on a leash. Hugh ended up spending four hours at the Dubbo Base Hospital being tended to. Later on his dad, Terry Mitchell, called the dog's owner to let him know everything was okay.

As you can imagine, the owner was horrified at what had happened. A while after that he dropped a card into the Mitchell family's mailbox; inside it was a \$100 sports shop voucher for Hugh. The story goes that Hugh did not think it was right to accept the gift, but it was decided that the giver of the gift might not feel too comfortable taking it back. It was decided the voucher would go in the drawer and be used at an appropriate time in the future to pay it forward, if you like. Shortly after all that happened Hugh was picked in the Central West under-12s representative team that was to travel to Yokohama for the Kids Rugby World Festival. He trained hard and was understandably extremely excited about the prospect of going overseas to play rugby. The day before they jetted off the Mitchells decided to use the voucher to purchase a couple of pairs of football boots, which they figured would come in handy on the trip for a couple of reasons. One pair was in Hugh's size and the other was to fit his younger brother George.

Hugh's dad, Terry, explained the story of the boots to Hugh's coaches. As luck would have it, every country was to do a cultural presentation of some sort to players and coaches from one of the other teams from around the world involved in the festival. The mighty Central West Blue Bulls were drawn with Indonesia. That is where the story that started with a dog bite to the bottom turned into something pretty remarkable. Interpreters told the Indonesian team of the story about the dog bite. Then Hugh stood up in front of 16 teams of under-12 players and their coaches to present the boots that had been purchased with his voucher. At this point the story took a particularly amazing twist of fate. The young Indonesian side had been funded by Japanese junior rugby to take part in the tournament. Two of the players in the team had turned up to play in joggers as they could not afford proper footy boots.

It was explained to the Central West boys that one of those players was an orphan and one came from an extremely poor family. Unfortunately, as we know only too well, there is quite a bit of disadvantage in parts of Indonesia. However, like Hugh, those boys were at the carnival because of a love for the game of rugby. There literally was not a dry eye in the room when Hugh Mitchell from Dubbo presented boots to the Indonesian boys, Feri and Saimi, who were unable to afford their own boots. Making the story all the more amazing is that when the boys pulled on the boots for the first time—those bought for Hugh and his brother—they fitted perfectly. You could almost say it was fate. It is an amazing story, one that not only speaks volumes for young Hugh and his family but also speaks to the value of sport and the innocence of youth. In a world where we hear so often about the bad things that are happening, the tale of Hugh Mitchell and his generosity needs to be shared.

In his own way, perhaps small, he has changed the lives of Feri and Saimi by not only giving them the gift of football boots but also showing them that someone from another part of the world is thinking of them and cares about them. It is a nice story and one that many of us here can learn from. I am extremely proud to have Hugh and his family in my electorate. I congratulate him on his spirit of generosity and fair play, and wish him and his family well for the future.

NORTHERN DISTRICTS LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (19:31:36): The Northern Districts Local Business Awards has long been a prized and respected institution within our community that awards outstanding local businesses and acknowledges what each business brings to Ryde and the wider northern regions. The 2019 awards were presented on 2 October at The Epping Club's gala presentation dinner. There were numerous award categories to be celebrated, including bakeries, beauty, butchers, jewellery shops, real estate and travel agencies, fitness and pet stores. Furthermore, education and automotive services and early childhood centres were commended along with service and trade businesses, retail and food stores. Sole traders and new businesses were recognised along with performing arts, home stores, specialised businesses and retail stores.

Ryde is up there with the best of them and continues to display an outstanding commitment to local business. The businesses from Ryde recognised at the awards include Australian Skin Clinics in Top Ryde City Shopping Centre, for Beauty Services. The business is known for its calm, clinical approach to service and frequent information through stalls in local events. The Fitness Services category winner was Teambros Fitness Club, an independent gym located in West Ryde. Panetta Mercato in Macquarie Shopping Centre won for its fresh produce in the Fruit and Vegetable Shop category. Also located in that shopping Centre was Paran Hair Design, which claimed the Hairdresser award. The Health Improvement Services award went to KaRa MINDS, the KaRa Institute of Neurological Diseases that looks at early diagnosis for neurological diseases such as dementia.

The Jewellery Store category winner was Prouds the Jewellers in Macquarie Shopping Centre and the Pharmacy award went to Pharmacy 4 Less in Top Ryde City Shopping Centre. Sydney Law Group, which has been a family business for 10 years, took out the Professional Services award. The Handymanastic Group in Ryde won the Service and Trade award. The Specialised Retail Business award went to North Ryde Delicatessen, which has been in the business for over 30 years. The overall Businessperson of the Year was awarded to Lani Sujono of Sound Expression, located in North Ryde. The business assists children and adults with a disability via music therapy, a wonderful and extremely important initiative.

I am also proud of and congratulate this year's Inclusion Award winner, Hunt and Hunt Lawyers in Macquarie Park. The Inclusion Award celebrates local businesses that welcome people of all backgrounds and abilities. Hunt and Hunt has provided services in a way that accommodates and celebrates the diversity of customers and staff so that more people can access and participate. Their demonstrated commitment to creating a welcoming environment for all shows how the business is adopting inclusive practices that go above and beyond. These awards offer our remarkable local businesses a chance to showcase their outstanding goods and services. I join the chorus of many in Ryde in congratulating the worthy award recipients.

TAXI LICENCES

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:34:51): I place on the public record the appalling situation many taxi plate owners and drivers find themselves in after the Government's reforms to allow ridesharing to flourish alongside licensed taxis. This was the subject of a recent petition in this place, with over 10,000 signatures, calling for the Government to reconsider the miserly compensation paid to taxi plate owners, who have seen their investments collapse in value as a result of the Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Bill passed in this place in 2016. The Granville electorate is home to Premier Cabs, the largest taxi network in New South Wales based outside the Sydney CBD. Between the drivers, the call centre staff, the car wash, the owners and the administrative staff, it is directly or indirectly the largest employer in my electorate, apart from the Department of Education and the Catholic Education Office.

There are also many local taxidriviers who drive for other networks, plate owners who use the other Sydney networks, many rideshare drivers and these days there are many people who do both but struggle to earn enough to live on in Sydney. In 2016 I raised concern about the lack of financial modelling to justify limiting compensation to \$20,000 and whether the Passenger Service Levy would be sufficient. As it has turned out, \$20,000 is woefully inadequate and made all the more pitiful when the Australian Tax Office takes its share. The Additional Assistance Payment Scheme is very difficult to access. Less than half of those applications have been approved, yet the levy is bringing in an income of \$150 million per annum to the New South Wales Government. It can do more, and it should. The value of a taxi licence has collapsed. What was worth up to \$500,000 at the peak of its value is now worth around only \$70,000, if it can be sold.

Some would argue that that is the risk anyone faces when opening a business. Normally I would agree; however, these families invested in a taxi plate with the knowledge that they were buying into a regulated market, constrained by the Government with certain standards in place in relation to training, regulated fares and service standards. The Government then withdrew that protection, which is where the inherent value in a taxi licence lay. While taxis still theoretically retain a monopoly on ride and hail services, their value has been slashed. I have spoken to many owners and drivers over the past few years and the impacts of the reforms have been heartbreaking. Gunay from South Wentworthville told me:

I bought my license at the end of 2007. It cost me with stamp duty and loan costs about \$385,000. I took out a business loan from NAB, after paying deposit, it had a balance of \$280,000. Lease income I was getting was over \$2000 per month.

In 2015 when they legalised Uber, my lease income went from \$2,500 now down to \$1000 per month. I refinanced my home loan which went from \$200k up to \$550k which is still where it is now because we cannot earn any money from taxi to ever pay back this loan, you gave it all to Uber for free.

I can hardly get three or four jobs a day only from airport with my maxi which I have been operating since 2005. Lease income from my license as well as from my mother combined not even cover the interest repayment on my home loan, tell me how am I ever going to pay this debt or bring it down ever in this kind of situation?

I am 40 and got married in 2015 when they introduced these reforms. I was never able to concentrate on my marriage because all the time busy working and stressing out about how am I going to get myself out of this situation. My wife left me because I am drowning in debt and she said you cannot sustain a family.

Tell me how you reckon I am not eligible for assistance when two plate incomes do not even cover my loan repayment and my income is not enough to support me only yet I have old parents to think about, are you kidding me?

Everyday, seven days a week from morning till midnight I cannot get three or four decent jobs, until when I am going to work and live like this and ever have family of my own?

Gunay's story is one of many. I know others who have been forced to sell their homes and move to a much smaller house or have been forced back into the rental market. I know plate owners in their seventies who, long after they had planned to retire, are forced to keep driving their own cabs to pay off loans for taxi plates that have collapsed in value. Mahmoud invested in a number of taxi licences. He said:

The government keeps asking for more money, more for the green slip, more for new cameras in his vehicle—they treat taxis like they are easy money makers. Meanwhile, income keeps declining. They need someone to stand up for them. The government is not listening.

Julie came to be the owner of three taxi plates after her husband died suddenly. An asset worth close to \$1 million is now worth only \$240,000. She is a mother of four and is working six days a week but is really struggling financially and with mental health challenges. These stories are real, as are the challenges faced by people who invested in taxis in good faith. The Act is due to be reviewed after five years. In this case, the review needs to be brought forward as a matter of urgency. Hundreds, if not thousands, of families are suffering and need our support. The introduction of ridesharing has placed them at a huge disadvantage and, given they invested in a government issued and protected licence, we have a responsibility not to leave them to rot.

OXLEY ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (19:39:41): The electorate of Oxley is celebrating after taking out a major prize at the 2019 NSW Health Awards in Sydney. The Dorrigo Multipurpose Service [MPS] was recognised as the winner of the Supporting Our People award for its work in reinventing aged-care nursing and changing the language and culture of care. This achievement is particularly thrilling as the centre was chosen from a record field of 193 entrants representing NSW Health organisations. We know that engaging the hearts and minds of staff in a positive, supportive work environment inspires and empowers individuals to innovate. Within two years, the Dorrigo MPS aimed to reinvent aged-care nursing, improve the relationship between residents, families and staff and increase resident wellbeing and quality of life.

The Dorrigo MPS is the only one of its kind on the east coast of New South Wales. Through these efforts there has been improved attendance, increased accountability, collaboration and productivity, and aged care elevated to specialty status. Staff at the MPS have a comprehensive knowledge base, wide skill set and ability to manage competing priorities across emergency, acute and residential aged care. I pay tribute to the local staff, some of whom I know personally. They work very hard and are proud of the work that they do. The award recognises the depth of talent and creativity that runs through our region and their absolute dedication to being better carers for our locals.

Last week as the local member and Minister with responsibility for Crown lands I was delighted to announce funding to help improve and maintain a range of local community facilities and public reserves. Major recipients were the Wauchope Showground and Kempsey Showground. Crown land and the associated organisations that manage and use it are the lifeblood of our communities. The facilities and reserves are accessed by many. It is not just the big projects like Wauchope and Kempsey. It was brilliant to be there with my team at Raleigh Hall with the local council and hall committee to announce a \$49,560 grant to improve wheelchair accessibility. One of the major organisers and the lady who was responsible for the hall receiving the grant was so excited because it meant that a wedding booked at the hall for March next year will be able to go ahead because there will be wheelchair accessibility for the mother of the bride.

The hall is used for a range of community functions including musicals, social and recreational events, weddings and fundraisers. It is a great hall and symbolises the type of community infrastructure that keeps our communities alive. Other projects included the Macksville Girl Guides hall, which will get a new iron roof and guttering on its auxiliary building with the support of \$9,500. The Country Women's Association received \$5,690 to repair damaged vinyl flooring at its community hall in Bellinger. Further funding will be available to maintain local public reserves, including improvements to walking trails, foreshore protection works and control of noxious weeds. The Macleay Valley has a major noxious weeds problem with the dreadful tropical soda apple, which comes from South America and is spreading to other areas on the north coast.

A \$22,000 grant was provided to improve the management of that noxious weed on the Macleay River. Funding of \$150,000 was provided to go towards rock revetment works by Crown lands to help protect foreshore recreational land from coastal erosion in Bellinger Heads State Park. This is something the entire local community was seeking. The Goanna Trail walking track between Wakki Beach at Scotts Head to Middle Head Beach in the Kempsey shire will see \$33,000 put towards track design, interpretive signs, a brochure, and weed control. I also update the House and my local community that we are still working towards a solution for the old ambulance station in Belgrave Street, Kempsey. Kempsey identifies as one of the most socioeconomically troubled and challenged towns in New South Wales—like a lot of our river towns on the east coast of Australia, whether it be Taree, Grafton or Kempsey. They were major economic powerhouses last century but they have some real challenges and we are working towards fixing some of those.

The Indigenous community makes up about 14.5 per cent of the population of Kempsey. We are working hard with the Kempsey Place Plan to create a unique model for emergency accommodation in Kempsey for the youth of our district as well as access to food and mental health services. I pay tribute to the Federal member for Cowper, Pat Conaghan, who is working collaboratively with me and the Kempsey Place Plan. This could be an amazing opportunity to show that at a State and Federal level we have found a way to support our local community that does not burn the recurrent budget but actually works.

WESTERN SYDNEY FOOTBALL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (19:44:55): Tonight I speak about the most popular sport in my electorate of Seven Hills and across western Sydney: the beautiful game of football. It was only last week in this place that I celebrated the opening of stage one of the Western Sydney Wanderers' new Centre of Football in Blacktown. That new Centre of Football is indicative of how far the sport of football has come in western Sydney and where it is headed. Once completed, the Centre of Football will be one of the biggest club sporting facilities

in Australia, with a new academy facility, community offices and six more pitches still to be built, including three elite training pitches housing the Western Sydney Wanderers A-League and W-League teams, as well as its academy teams. It also features designated change rooms, physiotherapy rooms, a state-of-the-art gym, offices and media centre.

The facility truly is state of the art, but it has also been set up for to meet the needs of a growing population and interest in football. The Centre of Football will provide elite pathway development for young men and women as they take the next steps from junior and club football to representative and professional games. The Centre of Football will also have the capacity to host international teams when they are visiting Australia for friendlies and to host entire youth football tournaments, bringing the world's best right to our backyards in the electorate of Seven Hills and greater western Sydney. The Centre of Football is a monumental achievement and a testament to the Wanderers' Chairman, Paul Lederer, and CEO John Tsatsimas, and their commitment to creating and developing excellence in football in western Sydney. This morning I had the pleasure of meeting members of the Western Sydney Wanderers W-League team and their coach, Dean Heffernan, as part of the W-League season launch.

It was pleasing to see the mutual support shown between the Wanderers organisation, its teams and the New South Wales Government, which built the brilliant new home ground, Bankwest Stadium, right in the heart of Parramatta. As many in this place know, it is all well and good to have a strong professional team in a national competition, leading the way—two-from-two so far, I might add—but it is important that there are young people taking up and enjoying the sport at a grassroots level. They are the A-League and W-League superstars of tomorrow, the coaches and managers of junior teams and the proud and loyal supporters of the future. This Saturday night I will be representing the Premier at the Football NSW State dinner held in the neighbouring electorate of Baulkham Hills. For grassroots football in this State, Saturday is a night of nights, and I am pleased to award and congratulate all the incredible achievements and successes of so many teams—young and old, boys and girls, men and women.

None of those successes would be possible if it were not for all of the volunteers involved in grassroots football across New South Wales. Whether it is setting up the nets around the goal posts at six o'clock on a Saturday morning in the middle of winter, or manning the canteen until dark on a Saturday afternoon, through to the coaches, managers, mums and dads—none of whom are paid for their roles—all of them are worthy of our thanks and admiration. Without those volunteers, football in this State would not be what it is today—by far the most popular junior sport at club and school level, and growing with more and more opportunities to play at a higher level.

Earlier this month I had the privilege of attending the Hills Football Awards at Bankwest Stadium, which was established for the very purpose of recognising hard work, leadership and innovation at a club level. The bar is high; it has been raised even higher by Vargha Zare, chairman of the Hills Football Association, general manager Kurt Johnson and the entire management team. I wish the Hills Football Association all the best in its preparations for the winter season. Football is now a year-round sport in western Sydney. The Blacktown District Soccer Football Association has already commenced its summer sixes and competitive football competitions on the synthetic surface of the Blacktown Football Park.

Likewise, the Hills Football Association has started its summer soccer season at Bella Vista and Caddies Creek. On Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 August the Blacktown Association hosted its grand final weekend, which was an incredible success for all its member clubs. The board and its leadership team of Bill Owen, Rod Gaete, Shanna Schoer, Martin Todrovitch, John Boyle, Brian Vella, Mik Carraro, Chris Bassili and Sue Sim showed their outstanding commitment to the sport. I wish the Blacktown District Soccer Football Association and the Hills Football Association all the best for their summer season and 2020. Football in western Sydney is in great shape and I hope the beautiful game continues to rise to greater heights.

CANTERBURY HOSPITAL NINETIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (19:50:00): This year Canterbury Hospital celebrates its ninetieth anniversary. Canterbury Hospital is the heart of the electorate of Canterbury. More than 100,000 people rely on Canterbury Hospital to care for them and their families. Canterbury Hospital has a very special place in my heart—it is where I was born and where my parents would take us for health care. A number of years ago, when my dad was ill, he was admitted to Canterbury Hospital. When Canterbury Hospital opened in 1929, it had 28 beds. Today, it has 175 beds. In its first year, the hospital cared for about 600 patients. Now Canterbury Hospital cares for around 100,000 patients each year. This includes around 20,000 inpatients and around 80,000 outpatients. The hospital has changed a lot since 1929. In 1998 it underwent a major redevelopment following enormous community pressure and a fantastic campaign.

Canterbury Hospital now provides services, including an emergency department, community health care, Tresillian family care, geriatric assessment, paediatric care and rehabilitation. More than 900 staff now work at Canterbury Hospital. These staff include doctors, nurses, allied health workers, cooks, cleaners, security personnel, community nurses, admin staff and management. The staff at Canterbury Hospital are highly skilled and they are dedicated to caring for all members of our community. The hospital serves one of the most diverse communities in Australia. Around 80 percent of people in the electorate of Canterbury have at least one parent who was born overseas. People in Canterbury trace their roots to every corner of the earth. This is a particular challenge for the staff at the hospital. They must always be ready to provide treatment to people who may speak a language other than English, or who may have a unique cultural background.

The staff at Canterbury Hospital are very experienced at providing care that is culturally appropriate. They provide care that recognises the dignity and worth of each individual. They are tireless in their service for our community. Tonight I thank all staff who have worked at Canterbury Hospital over the last 90 years, particularly those who are no longer with us and whose families take a lot of pride in the work they did and their contribution to our community. Their dedication to health care has helped hundreds of thousands of people, including my family. I am looking forward to the gala dinner that will be held this Friday to celebrate with our community this very important milestone. Happy birthday, Canterbury Hospital. I know that we will work together for another redevelopment to start soon—hopefully.

TRIBUTE TO RUSSELL KING

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (19:53:10): Over the weekend I heard the very, very sad news that Russell King, a well-known and loved local community leader in the eastern suburbs, had passed away after losing a battle with cancer. Russell was the CEO of WAYS Youth Services on Wairoa Avenue, North Bondi, a role that he held for 30 years. Russell joined WAYS in 1987—32 years ago—as a volunteer and became CEO in 1989. This year WAYS turns 40, which means that Russell generously served the organisation for three-quarters of its life.

WAYS provides care, services and education for young people when times are tough and to their families to help them along their way. It provides counselling, dentistry, acupuncture and GP services, holiday programs, after-school care and youth training courses. Most importantly, they also provide alternative education through WAYS Secondary, an independent high school for students in years 10 to 12 who struggled with mainstream education. WAYS also provides workshops at schools, including at my local public high school, Rose Bay Secondary College, to supplement their personal development, health and physical education course. Staff from WAYS also deliver workshops on alcohol and drug use, building resilience and dealing with bullying in the school environment.

Russell was the heart and soul of WAYS. He changed countless young lives by helping them find their own path. He encouraged and supported students to transition back into the classroom when they disengaged from formal education or into vocational and training programs. Most importantly, with his amazing team he helped to build the confidence and self-esteem of these young people. Times were not always easy for Russell or for WAYS, which was defunded by the Federal Government at one point, but in his hopeful and quiet way Russell and the management committee cobbled together a way to keep the important youth work alive. With such a strong sense of purpose they found a way through and have grown to help even more youth in many ways.

In 2016 year 12 student Muru Rudolph was the first WAYS student to gain a HSC—a significant achievement that has inspired WAYS students to follow in his footsteps. In 2017 four students sat the HSC and last year 11 students sat the HSC. Two progressed to full-time university studies, one began a full-time TAFE course and another started a course at WAYS in Bondi Junction, a registered training organisation that has delivered nationally recognised qualifications and certificates of attainment since 2009. Six students are currently sitting the HSC and 20 year 11 students are enrolled to sit the HSC next year in 2020. What an incredible achievement for these young people who lost their way in mainstream education. I wish them the best of luck.

On Friday 24 February 2017 I surprised Russell when I visited WAYS to present him with a New South Wales Premier's Community Service Award. I was so delighted to present this important award to Russell in front of management committee president Leo Wassercug, along with staff and students during an afternoon class. Russell was characteristically humbled by the award but no-one in the room could think of anyone more deserving of such an award than Russell. I was so lucky to see the amazing work Russell did and I have supported WAYS where possible over many years through the Community Building Partnership program—for example, there was the shade cloth for a refurbished outdoor learning area, a new fully functioning science lab, \$40,000 to refurbish the general learning area and the purchase of an additional high school and after-school care bus.

The buses are important because they help transport young people from across the eastern suburbs of Sydney who are not going to school or to tertiary education to and from WAYS Secondary every day. I also

supported the biannual WAYS art auctions, which auctioned off artwork created by the students to raise funds for the school. I acknowledge the rest of the team at WAYS, including general manager Terri Said, who has stepped into the role of acting CEO, and president Leo Wassercug, who I have mentioned. Special mention to the rest of the board: Damien Babb, Waverley councillor Sally Betts, Eleanor Findlay Sophie Harvey, Ralph Joseph, Bartley Melocco, Linda McDonald, Mark Raven and Thelma Thomson. I thank them all. My heart goes out to Russell's wife, Sallie, and his daughter, Kerianna. They have the warmth and unyielding support of our community behind them at this very sad time.

"YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW" CAMPAIGN

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (19:58:24): I support the "Your Right to Know" campaign launched on 21 October 2019 by combined media corporations, including the ABC. Last night ABC chair Ita Buttrose spoke in support of the campaign. One of my local papers, *The Northern Star*, carried on its front page a heavily redacted article with words such as "news restrictions, secrecy, jail terms for journalists and whistleblowers, it couldn't happen in Australia and it's happening now". The article was entitled "When the government starts hiding the truth from Australians what are they covering up?" It was stamped "secret" and "not for release" and was authorised by "Michael Miller, 2 Holt Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010.

The same redacted page was repeated at the start of the editorial entitled "Media raids will hurt exposure of misdeeds". It went on to say that free speech in Australia is under attack. The catalyst for the campaign was the Australian Federal Police raids on the home of *A Current Affairs* journalist Annika Smethurst on 4 June and the ABC's Sydney offices on 5 June. The ABC raids named four journalists in its search warrant. After the raids I immediately moved a notice of motion that this House, inter alia, affirms its support for our democratic freedoms and freedom of the press. Unfortunately this issue was not considered valuable enough to be discussed in the Chamber.

Yes, we are dealing with drought, water shortages, bushfires, a curriculum review and more, but parliaments are meant to protect our freedoms. The right to free speech and its cousin, the right to know, are fundamental principles that underpin a democratic state. Members of Parliament are charged with protecting and preserving such freedoms, though it is not in our job description. It is one of our unwritten key performance indicators but it is not to be unspoken. Secret files and secret trials are becoming the order of the day. Right now in Canberra there are two cases before the courts that go to the heart of the issue of the right to know and whistleblowing. The cases are known by the names of the accused: Humans rights lawyer and former ACT Attorney-General Bernard Collaery and former Australian Security Intelligence Organisation officer Witness K.

The nub of the cases is that the whistleblower is alleged to have revealed that the Australian Government spied on the fledgling Timor-Leste Government by inserting listening devices into its prime ministerial offices under the guise of aid. This matter was characterised primarily as "commercial". The lawyer who acted for Timor-Leste is also accused of crimes. The Government does not want the public to know that these events occurred. As such it has not only charged these men for revealing their own alleged misdeeds but also it is trying to keep the hearings secret. These trials must be kept public. It is shameful that the Australian Government spied in these circumstances and it is shocking that the case continues. *The Northern Star* article stated:

Since 2002, there have been 75 pieces of federal legislation intended to protect the public from national security threats but that have become ways to block the public's right to know what the Government is doing.

What does Australia's Your Right to Know campaign seek to do? It seeks to inform the public that some of our national security laws have trampled our freedoms and damaged our democratic State. There are six planks to the reforms the campaign calls for. They include the right to contest any kind of search warrant on journalists or news organisations before the warrant is issued, law change to ensure public sector whistleblowers are adequately protected, a new regime that limits which documents can be marked "secret", review of freedom of information laws, journalists to be exempt from national security laws enacted over the past seven years that currently can put them in jail for doing their job, and reform of defamation laws. I will leave the last words to the ABC managing director, David Anderson, and Nine Entertainment CEO Hugh Marks. David Anderson said:

Australia is at risk of becoming the world's most secretive democracy.

Hugh Marks said:

This is much bigger than media. It's about defending the basic right of every Australian to be properly informed about the important decisions the Government is making.

BARMAH CHOKE OVERFLOW

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (20:03:15): The drought continues to stalk New South Wales. It is remorseless and relentless. There is no end in sight and towns in regional New South Wales are running out of water. Imagine for a moment that in these terrible times you are aware of a situation where water in regional

New South Wales might be wasted, or a situation in which a critical piece of water infrastructure has the real potential to be damaged beyond repair. This is exactly the scenario faced along the mighty Murray River at the aptly named Barmah Choke, where the river narrows down and where, without proper management, the river may be damaged beyond repair.

We like to think of a river as a long, consistent body of water. In reality this is far from the case. Rivers have wider, narrower, deeper and shallower sections. They twist and turn their way from wherever they rise to wherever they finish. In some cases they can even flow underground. For the Murray, this journey continues for a staggering 2,500 kilometres as it flows through New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. After rising in the Australian Alps, the Murray marks several significant milestones along its journey. One is the Hume Dam, which I have previously spoken about in this House. Then there is the Barmah Choke. This is a classic example of how rivers are unpredictable.

About 25,000 years ago an uplift of land created the Cadell Tilt, a north-south geological fault in the earth's surface near Deniliquin and Echuca. Its impact on the Murray River led to the formation of the Barmah Choke, a narrow section of the Murray River where it flows through the Barmah-Millewa Forest. The forest formed as a result of regular flooding in this section of the river caused by the Cadell Tilt and the Barmah Choke. While it is generally referred to as the Barmah Choke, it is actually made up of three key flow constriction points: the Tocumwal Choke, the Barmah Choke and the Edward Choke.

The channel capacity of the Barmah Choke is about 8,500 megalitres per day downstream of Picnic Point. During summer and autumn, river operation aims to keep flows at or below channel capacity to minimise unseasonal flooding of the Barmah-Millewa Forest. This constraint provides challenges in meeting downstream peak water use demands and transferring water to Lake Victoria and South Australia, even in relatively dry years. This constraint has led to a restriction in water trade from areas upstream to downstream of the Barmah Choke. With no water coming down the Darling, and little flowing into the Murray's other tributaries, this short section of the river will be doing the heavy lifting, supplying water users in three States this summer. The choke is running hard. Being consistently run like a channel increases the risk of damage.

When the river is run hard for long periods of time there is damage to the bank and silting of the choke. There are real risks of banks collapsing, which may lead to unseasonal flooding and loss of precious water. Any breakout will require consideration of closing down flows through the choke or accepting massive losses of water until the season allows repair work—either option catastrophic, particularly during this period of drought. Furthermore, silting of the choke means that the choke is losing capacity of flow—over time its capacity to carry water is reducing.

Winter and spring flooding are important not just for the red gum forest but also for fish stocks, to bring organic matter back into the river system and reduce the risk for future hypoxic events, and to help build the resilience of the river banks. We need to note that flows into the forest are less during this drought than during the previous millennial drought. As we reach critical levels of water, though, we need to consider decision-making around utilising eWater for environmental purposes versus maintaining a level of storage or even restricting it for critical human needs.

Communities are seeing the choke and river run hard, with zero allocations for their own communities. Water requirements downstream are a mix of high-security entitlements for both New South Wales and Victoria, conveyance water, environmental water and water for South Australia. However, perception is reality. Communities tell me that they need real time data that has integrity and is transparent so that everyone can know what this water is used for. As it stands, without this clarity it is just salt in the wounds.

We also need to start examining our own practices downstream of the choke. Victoria is faced with the same concerns. We need to continue to work with our Victorian and South Australian counterparts. Put simply, the choke cannot continue to run hard. I thank Minister Pavey and the member for Cootamundra for being with me on the choke earlier this month. I also thank locals for their insights. This time helps to provide invaluable insights and reaffirms that we need to address how we deal with the choke as we move towards droughtproofing our great State.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (20:08:14): If we are serious about taking action on climate change it is time to end the conflict and polarisation between traditional and new industries. We must dispense with the presumption that the mining and steel industries only contribute to the problem, rather than having a role in the solution. I believe in the science of climate change. I also believe that today the mining and steel industries are part of addressing our climate change challenge. The men and women who work in steelmaking at Port Kembla in my electorate as well as those in mining who produce its raw materials recognise this too, as do those who

transport the raw materials and the tradespeople, machinists and fabricators who turn raw steel into finished products.

The Port Kembla steelworks started in 1928 and was located near to the Illawarra coking coalfields, which still produce arguably the highest quality coking coal in the world. Today it produces around three million tonnes of steel a year. As we lack the scrap steel needed to recycle it to meet demand, today metallurgical coal is an inescapable part of steel production in Australia. The "just-in-time" Illawarra coking coal blend from the Bulli and Wongawilli coal seams is part of the efficient design of the Port Kembla steelworks. Changing the blend to a lower-quality coking coal risks increasing the carbon produced, not to mention the additional carbon from transporting alternate coal thousands of kilometres to Port Kembla. But producing steel in a carbon-constrained world will require further innovations and those innovations are underway at Port Kembla. We must do better.

BlueScope sources around 20 per cent of its energy from a solar farm in the Riverina. Scrap steel is blended into the blasting process. Processes are continually refined to reduce the volume of inputs. But changing the carbon intensity of steel will also require changes in demand. Manufacturing and construction are the highest steel-using sectors. Altering the amount of steel those industries demand will require considerable industry modification. It will require consumers to adjust and it will not happen overnight, nor will it be costless.

Some have suggested that the best way for Australia to reduce its carbon footprint would be to stop producing steel, largely because of its coal demand. If only it were that simple. Ending domestic steel production does not change steel demand. It also ignores the impact on tens of thousands of jobs that rely on steel, most crucially in the Illawarra. It ignores that steel, in the absence of alternate products, is an essential part of addressing climate change. Wind, solar, gas and hydro-electric energy generation rely on steel. More efficient buildings, consumer products and cars need steel, and steel is the ultimate recycled product.

I have always maintained that if we are serious about addressing climate change, traditional industries and new ones must work in harmony, not exist in conflict. The challenge is how to do this sustainably and responsibly. We can do better. I would rather steel is produced in Australia using local coking coal, iron ore and other raw materials sourced subject to the toughest environmental standards in a well-regulated environment than to import steel from nations that do not impose the same rigour on production, the supply chain or quality at a company, community or government level. Poor-quality steel creates considerable environmental, social and consumer risk. Poor public policy responses create similar risks and unintended consequences.

Past industry transitions have left too many people behind. This does not have to be, and must never be, the case in moving to a low-carbon economy. To address climate change we need to redesign markets and set new rules. Governments and parliaments must be willing to intervene to address inequities, leaving no community behind. While it is inescapable that things will change, communities need to be certain and reassured that a government focus on well-paid, secure jobs will not leave them worse off. What they have every right to is economic, employment and energy security, never the risk of being abandoned and their communities destroyed. However, these changes will come at considerable cost. I do not think this is well recognised in the current debate.

By way of comparison, between now and 2038 the German Government will provide €40 billion—around \$65 billion Australian—to support change in brown coalmining communities. In addressing climate change we must not foist the cost of change on communities at the, dare I say it, coalface of the economic, social and industry change, by demanding the people in some parts of New South Wales pay more than others in terms of job losses, lost opportunity and erosion of their community. In the 1980s and 1990s we had the Labor Accord—a historic agreement of cooperation between governments, business and labour to address economic and social change. It is time for a new accord-like structure to be established to address the long-term structural adjustments of communities, economies and employment.

Our policy objective must be to avoid families and communities needlessly suffering from the sharp edges of any adjustment. Well-designed, well-regulated markets set by government and our institutions in partnership with business and unions is the best way to manage very difficult adjustments. The Illawarra and its mining and steel industries, along with the new industries emerging in the region, stand ready to contribute to helping move to a low-carbon economy. We understand the importance of our industries and our products in achieving our national targets, as do other areas of New South Wales. We will also not have our community left behind. It is time that in this debate on climate change action idealism and realism are blended together like the great quality strong steel we produce in Wollongong.

COFFS-CLARENCE POLICE DISTRICT AWARDS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:13:19): The finest men and women are attached to the Coffs-Clarence Police District. They engage around the clock with my community to detect, disrupt and prevent crime. A police officer's job must be extremely challenging and difficult at times as they respond to emergencies

and encounter traumatic circumstances. But on other occasions their role can bring satisfaction when they have made a positive difference to someone's life or when they have saved a life. It is fair to say we do not thank our police often enough, but awards ceremonies such as the one I recently attended, representing the Minister, at Coffs Harbour Police Station are times to celebrate outstanding policing and show appreciation for their work. I congratulate all award recipients and the entire Coffs-Clarence Police District workforce, led by their commander, Superintendent Steve Clarke.

Those receiving the National Police Service Medal were senior constable Stephen Bostock, leading senior constable Peter Hughes, detective senior constable Geoffrey Kendall, senior constable Brooke O'Connor, sergeant Joseph Roach, sergeant Peter Saunders, former senior constable Amy Scott, senior constable Jane Shaw, former detective inspector Christopher Clarke, former inspector Glenn Gilbert and former senior constable Karen Rann. Those receiving the National Medal were senior constable Stephen Bostock, leading senior constable Peter Hughes, detective senior constable Geoffrey Kendall and senior constable Brooke O'Connor. Those receiving the New South Wales Police Medal were senior constable Ben Crews, senior constable Scott Fowler, senior constable Terrence Mackney, detective senior constable Daniel Trotman and senior constable John McCarthy.

Those receiving the Clasp to the New South Wales Police Medal were senior constable Stephen Bostock, leading senior constable Peter Hughes, detective senior constable Geoffrey Kendall, senior constable Brooke O'Connor, sergeant Joseph Roach, senior constable Jane Shaw, detective senior constable Matthew Sippel, senior constable Kehani Smith, sergeant Darren Williams, acting sergeant Darren Worthing, former detective inspector Chris Clarke, former leading senior constable Scott Jackson, former senior constable Karen Rann and former sergeant Darren Taylor. Those receiving the Certificate of Service were former senior constable Damien Buckley, former detective inspector Christopher Clarke, former leading senior constable Scott Jackson and former senior constable Karen Rann.

Those receiving the Region Commander's or Police District Commander's Certificate of Merit were detective sergeant Aaron Van-Schaik, sergeant Joseph Roach, detective senior constable Daniel Trotman, detective senior sergeant Peter O'Reilly, former detective senior constable Scott Carpenter, detective senior constable Dean Taylor and former senior constable Damien Buckley. Senior constable Mark Baxter received the Region Commander's Unit Citation. Those receiving the Police District Commander's Certificate of Recognition were PC senior constable Adam Gill, senior constable Lauren Hollis, senior constable Justin Hooymans, detective senior constable Geoffrey Kendall, senior constable Scott McLean, detective senior sergeant Peter O'Reilly, detective senior constable Tegan Sigley, detective senior constable Daniel Trotman and detective sergeant Matthew Zimmer.

I will always support the team at the Coffs-Clarence Police District. It is important for them to know their good work is acknowledged and appreciated. They constantly face new pressures every day. That is why the New South Wales Government made a commitment to deliver 1,500 new frontline police. The Coffs-Clarence police have done a fantastic job driving down crime, and now with this Government's record investment in police our frontline troops can continue on that trajectory because they have the resources, the powers and the technology to make the community of the Coffs Coast an ever safer place to live and do business. Our local police are wonderful ambassadors for the NSW Police Force. They are dedicated to their work, and the people they protect and serve.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his contribution and also acknowledge police officers across New South Wales. I note how fortuitous it is that we have the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the Chamber at the moment. I am sure he was pleased to hear the member for Coffs Harbour's statement.

BAULKHAM HILLS ELECTORATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (20:17:42): I join with Temporary Speaker Piper in commending the member for Coffs Harbour for expressing his appreciation for our police. It does not happen enough. I have been in his electorate and I have seen the high regard that the police have for him and that he has for them.

The Baulkham Hills electorate is home to a wealth of incredibly young and talented individuals. I am continually astounded by the level of dedication our youngest and brightest invest to achieve their ambitious pursuits whether in academia, athletics or the creative arts. Last Thursday 17 October I witnessed a dazzling display of the talent and sublime costumes of Baulkham Hills High School students in their electrifying rock and roll rendition of *Grease The Musical*. It is clear the students prepared intensely and practised tirelessly to perform this exciting and action-packed musical for their parents, friends, and the local community, with a flawless

triple-threat cast who were able to sing, dance and act. I congratulate the cast, band and crew on an unforgettable evening.

The cast were Aidan Biju as Danny; Ashna Rajasingham as Sandy; Hei "Kitty" Chau as Marty; Diya Goswami as Jan; Mahee Iyer as Frenchy; Shanuka Nagaratnam as Rizzo, who was fantastic; George Zhang as Kenickie, who I have a fair bit of empathy for; Arian Ali as Roger; Shaan Goradia as Sonny; William Dang as Doody; Aishani Ravichandran as Patty; Aniketh Chennapragada as Eugene; Yovela Han as Miss Lynch; Fahiyaan Faisal as Vince Fontaine; Maxwell Han as Teen Angel; Shane Naidoo as Johnny Casino; and Felicity Fe as Cha. In the band were Glen Stewart, Prakul Sahai, Shivesh Chengappa and Girish Ganapathy as the chorus; Neil Nag and Anna Cheung on tenor saxophone; Robinson Tong on guitar; Sidhu Malhotra on bass guitar; Thomas Han and Jennifer Tran on keyboard and Briony Kown on percussion. The crew were video technician Ava He, audio technician Andrew Xu and lighting technicians Rishi Jaiswal, Alex Horvath, Liam Hoang, Aiden Or and Bob Chen.

It would be remiss of me to not acknowledge the parents and carers who assisted with transportation and supported each student's musical journey, as well as the senior executives at the school. I particularly acknowledge my dear friend Dr Jeanne Bathgate and deputy principals Wayne Humphreys and Megan Clarke, who are always very accommodating when I visit the school. Their enthusiasm in and support for the production of the show was in a class of its own; the musical would not have been possible without the collaborative foresight and genius assistance of all those involved.

This is an exciting time in the electorate more broadly, with all public school students in the area set to benefit from the certainty of funding in the school budgets for next year. The allocations are part of \$1.25 billion in needs-based funding for 2020 that will be used to deliver targeted support, quality and specialist teaching, innovative learning, wellbeing programs and educational resources. The funding delivers support where it is needed the most—to students and schools with the greatest need. As we move into the next decade, 2020 will be the seventh year that the Resource Allocation Model has given schools the certainty in funding they need to enable them to plan so that every student and every teacher improves each year. Needs-based loadings underpin the great strength of public education—equity of opportunity. They will ensure schools in the Baulkham Hills electorate continue to flourish and deliver those opportunities. Schools in the Baulkham Hills electorate with increased student needs and enrolments will receive additional funding in 2020.

Baulkham Hills High School will receive an increased allocation of \$14,864 to bring its total planned funding to \$536,035; Baulkham Hills North Public School, an increased allocation of \$35,753 to bring its total planned funding to \$728,391; Crestwood High School, an increased allocation of \$53,139 to bring its total planned funding to \$635,867; Excelsior Public School, an increased allocation of \$63,884 to bring its total planned funding to \$574,546; Matthew Pearce Public School, an increased allocation of \$19,627 to bring its total planned funding to \$1.187 million; Model Farms High School, an increased allocation of \$28,246 to bring its total planned funding to \$744,002; and North Rocks Public School, an increased allocation of \$62,043 to bring its total planned funding to \$724,172. I commend the Government and Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning Sarah Mitchell, whose ongoing commitment to needs-based funding will ensure our public school students are at the centre of all decision-making and that funding is distributed fairly, transparently and efficiently.

CENTENNIAL PARKLANDS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (20:22:53): I inform the House of the development occurring at 194-214 Oxford Street, Bondi Junction, in my electorate of Coogee. The community is outraged over this development for many reasons, but one of the most significant is that it overlooks the Centennial Parklands. The overshadowing of the people's park will be devastating for the biodiversity and importance of this park as a community asset. The Centennial Parklands is listed on both the State Heritage Register and the National Heritage List. The National Heritage List describes the park as having "outstanding heritage significance". It was also the home of the Federation Pavilion, the place where the official inauguration of Australian Federation took place. Centennial Park, as a landmark of Australian history, is deserving of surroundings that promote and elevate its historical significance and natural beauty. Centennial Parklands needs an appropriate physical and visual curtilage, including its skyline.

It is important that new structures and landscape elements erected in the vicinity of the Centennial Parklands do not negatively impact on the historic precinct, nearby heritage streetscapes/areas, the setting of Centennial Parklands and views to and from Centennial Parklands.

Members will find that the last two sentences are quoted from the Centennial Parklands' Plan of Management, a plan that this development directly contravenes. It is jarring enough that this development will overshadow the history and heritage of the land, but it is the complete disregard for the community that makes the development so egregious. The fact that the decision was made through the process of spot rezoning, despite the rejection of the application by Waverley Council and the consistent advocacy against the development, is a slap in the face

for the local community and their views. It is a slap in the face to Waverley Council and the residents who work to create the strategic document of its local environmental plan [LEP]—a document that should be respected.

At the Local Government NSW conference last week, when asked what tools local councils have to stop the rampant overdevelopment that is destroying our beautiful suburbs, even the Premier herself said that local councils need to use their LEPs as tools. If the Premier truly believes that, she should intervene in this case and allow the Waverley LEP to reign supreme. Through the process of spot rezoning, the planning Minister has refused to take the decision into his own hands and instead hot potatoed it to a panel of unelected officials. The Minister knows that it is a controversial development, which is why he does not have the guts to make the decision himself.

It is clear why the planning Minister has done so over and over again: He has stated his own opposition to spot rezoning. And why has he attempted to end spot rezoning? It is because he believes that "we need to make sure that planning is something that continues with the community." The Minister should put his money where his mouth is. He should intervene and stop this egregious development, because it will have a devastating impact on our park. I share the view of the Minister, which is exactly why this development should not proceed. I urge the Minister to refuse the planning proposal, given that it will create stark inconsistencies with height limits governing other sites around the perimeter of the parklands. In so doing, it creates significant precedent risk and thus weakens the framework that currently protects the Centennial Parklands.

I further urge the Minister to consider creating a State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP] for Centennial Parklands, or another legally enforceable instrument conferring similar protections to those for the Western Sydney Parklands, Moore Park, Parramatta Park and the Carlton Gardens. A SEPP would ensure that the height of buildings surrounding our park—the people's park, Centennial Park—is limited to protect the park. Such a SEPP would be appropriate given the number of local government areas whose development controls govern development on the park's perimeter. In conclusion, I call on the Government and the planning Minister to reverse their decision and reject the development proposal for 194 Oxford Street for the sake of our community, and for the Centennial Parklands' historical significance and natural beauty.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (20:27:09): I first raised the drought in this place more than two years ago, back when this Government refused to acknowledge it. After bleating on about it and trying desperately to get the Government to respond with assistance measures, the Government reluctantly introduced freight subsidies—though not before I went blue in the face—and later introduced a cessation on Local Land Services rates. Both were measures I was seeking on behalf of drought-affected primary producers. I later sought modifications to the subsidy criteria for freight of fodder so that primary producers could access financial assistance for transporting fodder purchased from interstate, which was necessitated by dwindling supplies. The Government again responded reluctantly, instead of leading and taking any initiative.

The drought has persisted, and there are no signs of it ending any time soon. Today the combined drought indicator says 99.4 per cent of New South Wales is in drought. Our State's primary producers despair. They are unable to grow or yield crops, and are struggling to keep stock alive and pay mounting bills. In many cases they are struggling to put food on the table and are now resorting to the sale and slaughter of their breeding stock, the genetics of which took decades to develop. Farmers are being forced to walk off their land and sell to free themselves of debt. In many cases, their land had been passed on from generation to generation.

Many farmers and their families are suffering psychologically, as are many people in their communities whose livelihoods are directly or indirectly impacted by drought. In fact, this week I discovered that there are reported cases of schoolchildren from Trundle Central School—a community significantly impacted by drought—suffering physical reactions to severe stress as a result of the impacts of drought on their families and community. In November last year I sought the assistance of the Government to provide Trundle and Tullamore schools with counsellors who are constantly available, instead of just one day per fortnight. Perhaps now the Government might react—late, as per usual.

The plight of farmers is unnecessarily exacerbated by unreasonable limitations, thresholds and criteria preventing their access to financial assistance. Farmers report that they have been deemed ineligible to apply for Rural Assistance Authority loans or farm household assistance benefits. Farmers have been rejected for disaster relief funding and loans, in spite of support from rural financial counsellors demonstrating an ability for applicants to maintain a loan. In August last year I called on the Government to facilitate placement of additional rural financial counsellors in Orange and across the Central West to help the few overworked counsellors who travel vast distances to help hundreds of farmers. Unfortunately, the Government passed the buck to its Federal counterparts, leaving farmers in the lurch.

Rural communities are now suffering the knock-on effects of this drought. Many farmers no longer have the financial means or capability to pay for goods and services to the degree that they did before the drought. Discretionary spending at restaurants and pubs, and for leisure activities has all but ceased for many of them. The result is that many businesses in rural townships are closing or having to let staff go because they no longer generate enough business to pay them. Indeed, some of those newly unemployed are having to withdraw their children from school to leave their town in search of work opportunities. Those students may well have been needed to retain a teacher employed at the school or, indeed, to keep the doors of the school open.

A solution to the drought's financial impacts is the immediate and direct injection of government funds into our drought-affected communities. Earlier this year I asked the Government if it would consider immediately initiating a bias towards rural and regional businesses that submit tenders for regional government procurement contracts. This would maintain local employment and assist country-based businesses to remain economically viable and sustainable during the drought and the consequential economic downturn. Did the Government listen? I have since learned that it awarded government procurement contracts to big interstate companies to construct overtaking lanes on the Newell Highway. Neither local councils nor local business were given the opportunity to tender for the projects. The Government was complicit in sending New South Wales taxpayer dollars to profit interstate businesses instead of employing locals and keeping desperately needed money in our regional and rural drought-stricken communities.

This Government holds the purse strings to money that could keep people employed and businesses afloat, and that could help save our rural and regional townships from financial doom. It is not the job of charities to sustain the people of the bush. The Government could, if it wanted, deliver rural and regional communities the billions of dollars it owes the people of the bush in unpaid Restart NSW funds for infrastructure projects. Imagine what that could do to improve rural and regional economies and those communities' spirit. More can be done, but this Government must listen to the people of the bush. It must listen to their representatives in this place, even if they sit on the crossbench. This Government must take the initiative to do things before a crisis occurs. This Government can do more and it must do more now.

BOOROWA COMBINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS TOUCH FOOTBALL AND NETBALL CARNIVAL

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (20:32:15): I bring to the attention of the House the Boorowa Combined Primary Schools Touch Football and Netball Carnival, which will be held this Friday 25 October at the Boorowa Showground. An annual event, this year 431 teams nominated from the local areas of Goulburn, Crookwell and Yass and even includes entrants from the Australian Capital Territory, and the electorates of Cootamundra and Monaro. It is no small feat; this year there are 248 touch football teams and 183 netball teams. Approximately 4,300 students from years 2 to 6 will participate, not to mention the involvement of parents, friends, managers, referees and staff.

Over 7,000 spectators will attend—almost five times the size of this wonderful community. The carnival is the major fundraiser for St Joseph's Primary School and Boorowa Central School. The canteens are run by parents and community volunteers. Community volunteers also assist with car and bus parking. The carnival is not possible without the co-operation of Boorowa Central School and St Joseph's Primary School and their communities. Many hours are spent in preparation for the carnival, as well as on the day. Both schools are very grateful for the support given to them by the local secondary students and also to the wider community.

The carnival commenced in 1965 as a rugby league carnival and in 1968 netball was added. Due to dwindling numbers in the late 1990s, the carnival was changed in 1998 to its present format of touch football and netball being played on a Friday. Previously it was played on a Saturday. Since 1998 to the present, nominations have grown from 80 touch football teams and 85 netball teams to the current figures, which are the same as last year. Numbers have stabilised for the past three years. For many schools the event is a highlight of the annual school sporting calendar.

The organisers are very grateful to all the community volunteers who have assisted over the years, especially the former Boorowa Council—now Hilltops Council—Boorowa Community Bank branch, local business houses, other local sporting clubs and community organisations such as the Boorowa Rotary Club, which assists with the use of its staff, facilities and equipment. Over many years the students of both Boorowa Central School and St Joseph's Primary School have benefited greatly from the generosity and the success of the carnival. I particularly mention Julie Harton, Sharon McGrath, Ingrid Corcoran, Patti Boulding, Julie Poplin and the late Marie Martin, and the P&F school committees. Many hours go into planning to make these days a success.

The carnival is held at the Boorowa Showground. It has been assisted by a major investment by the New South Wales Government, including a \$1 million Clubs NSW grant back in 2016. As the carnival has grown over the years, it was clear that the facilities were in need of some love and attention so that they could continue to cope. A master plan was created by the former Boorowa Council. I commend the staff who were involved in

drawing up that plan—particularly Leanne Leihn and Anthony McMahon. This master plan was then used to secure funding from Clubs NSW and from the Stronger Country Communities Fund.

The previous member for Goulburn officially opened the new facilities in late 2018. The facilities included an accessible clubhouse with a canteen, a function centre, change rooms, showers, toilets, a viewing area, car park improvements and water storage tank installation. The continued success of the Boorowa Touch and Netball Carnival was dependent upon these upgrades. I am very proud to be part of a government that recognises the importance of sport in our regional communities. In my role as the member for Goulburn I will continue to ensure investment in our regional sporting facilities and infrastructure, especially those within my electorate.

SHOALHAVEN HOSPITAL SUBACUTE MENTAL HEALTH UNIT

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:36:17): Last week it was revealed that over the upcoming Christmas and New Year holiday period, Shoalhaven Hospital's subacute mental health unit will close down for a period of three weeks. Over that 21-day holiday period all of its patients—possibly up to 20—will be transferred to Shellharbour Hospital, whose doctors, nurses, staff and subacute mental health unit will be forced to cope with this additional demand. Unfortunately this decision, which was made by those opposite, is symptomatic of a broader problem affecting every community in New South Wales: the relentless cost cutting and under-resourcing of our State's public mental health system.

While I agree that as many patients as possible should spend the holidays at home with their families and friends, it is not always possible. Mental health does not take a holiday and neither should our State's mental health services. Currently, adult mental health inpatient services are offered at only three hospitals in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District—Shellharbour Hospital, Wollongong Hospital and Shoalhaven Hospital. Shoalhaven Hospital is the most southern hospital in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District with a mental health unit. Over this closure period, Shellharbour Hospital will officially be the most southern public hospital with mental health beds in the whole of our local health district. For anyone who is not familiar with the geography of our region, the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District stretches another 170 kilometres down the coast from Shellharbour.

If a patient from the southern region of our health district needs to access these services over the holiday period, they will have to be transported past Shoalhaven Hospital for another 52 kilometres—up to another hour's drive—to reach Shellharbour Hospital. My colleague the member for Keira put it best when he said, "People who are very vulnerable should not have to travel past an existing service to get the treatment they require and are entitled to." I am concerned that this decision will put vulnerable people through additional stress, at an already very stressful time, and move them even further away from their homes and support networks. It will also mean additional stress for the incredible staff at Shellharbour Hospital who, over the holiday period, will be dealing with their own workload and the workload of Shoalhaven Hospital's mental health unit.

At best this decision will not affect too many patients, but at worst it could mean as many as 20 additional patients at Shellharbour Hospital's unit. Therefore, it is difficult to predict what impact this will have on our local hospital and what the health outcomes will be for impacted patients. There is a very real risk that this decision will inconvenience patients and put additional stress on an already very busy unit. It will also have flow-on effects for transfer services between hospitals. It will likely lead to increased waiting times for local patient transfers as patients are transported up and down the coast.

The New South Wales Government continues to shirk its responsibility to maintain equal access to mental health services in our State. These sorts of temporary closures are happening in regional New South Wales all year round. Local services are being amalgamated and patients are being forced to travel further and further to access the help they need. A huge fear for a lot of people in my community is that while this is just a holiday closure today, it could lead to a trial closure or permanent closure in the future. You cannot cut corners on public health care and you cannot put a price on it either.

If the New South Wales Government stands by its decision to inconvenience the patients of Shoalhaven Hospital's subacute mental health unit and the staff at Shellharbour Hospital over the holiday period, I ask that the Government explain exactly how it will ensure that Shellharbour Hospital will be able to cater for this increased demand without compromising the health care of patients and the safety of staff. As I said, mental health does not take a holiday and neither should our State's mental health services. Think of the patients, think of the staff, and rethink this decision.

STRUGGLE STREET

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (20:41:04): If members have not seen the latest season of *Struggle Street* I urge them to tune in tonight. The miniseries is capturing the heartbreaking challenges residents in my electorate and across the Riverina are facing. It gives life to the too frequently reported break and enters, thefts,

motor vehicle fires and house fires. It also looks at housing, youth, and drug-related issues as well as health service issues that members might otherwise see as only numbers on paper. The show reveals the tears of real people. It shows the fear, anguish and pain of residents in identified antisocial hotspots who have endured hardship on top of hardship. While Wagga Wagga has truly come a long way in addressing these issues, SBS is effectively washing my electorate's dirty laundry in public for the world to see, and it is not flattering. But I do not believe this show will make the situation any worse. Instead, I believe identifying areas of need can pave a path forward for community champions to take action.

I acknowledge the many individuals, groups, organisations, not-for-profit organisations and government representatives already working to curb the statistics and patch gaps in support systems, but there is more to be done. Wagga Wagga City is, without doubt, a place of great opportunity, set to break growth records across the next two decades. This is something those interviewed in the SBS program pointed out. Clearly, however, we face significant challenges in the lead-up to our 100,000 population and 14,000 jobs target. It is time we faced up to those challenges. When I campaigned for election, my message was clear: We need responsible regional growth, safe and supported communities, and an independent voice. In the year since I was first elected we have begun to make progress. I have lobbied for increased police officers and this year was pleased to welcome six additional police officer positions at the Riverina Police District.

Following my advocacy, Wagga Wagga City Council launched its Crime Prevention Task Force. We have seen the re-opening of the Koorringal Community hub where I have attended its two quarterly Tenant Participation and Community Engagement forums. It joins the Ashmont Community and Tolland Community hubs, working to provide access to services and support across a range of sectors. In addition, New South Wales Stronger Communities cluster has introduced employment pathways programs to help residents find and keep jobs. Programs like Girls at the Centre and Clontarf are providing targeted support to students at Mount Austin High School to set the direction for their futures. I also note the additional social housing places in Wagga Wagga, particularly those supporting women and young people. But if Wagga Wagga is to grow to 100,000 before 2030 then it is time to take action and address more than the symptoms of a community on struggle street.

We need to change the future for the young people who are trapped in a cycle of unemployment and poverty. We need to change our expectations of education and our expectations of parents. We need to change our perceptions of housing and suburbs to reimagine our understanding of place, purpose and community. We need to halt the churn through housing and remove the trail of gutted and burnt-out homes. I know this will not happen overnight. It requires a whole-of-government and a whole-of-community approach. However, what makes me believe it is possible is the resilience and empowerment of the residents interviewed in the SBS series. Their refusal to be defined by circumstances gives me hope. As the member for Wagga Wagga, my next step will be to bring together key government and community agencies in a group to identify areas of need and opportunities for intervention.

I note in this regard that programs such as the community foyer program in Victoria have proven you can break homelessness and provide young people with safe, affordable accommodation and support services while laying down clear expectations about behaviour. I also note the model provided by Common Grounds in the Australian Capital Territory. I would like to see Wagga Wagga become a pilot site for fresh opportunities and initiatives like these that, if successful, could be adopted across the State. I call on the Government to make Wagga Wagga a priority for such intervention, providing the additional support necessary to ensure residents in my community are never again exposed as an example of privation and distress in Australia. I look forward to working with my community and members of this Government to make this a reality.

OATLEY PARK ADVENTURE INCLUSIVE PLAYSPACE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:46:12): I am happy to announce to the House that the new Oatley Park Adventure Inclusive Playspace was officially opened on Saturday 14 September—which is, in fact, my birthday. Georges River Mayor Kevin Greene and councillors joined me and many others at the official opening. The new park was designed after collaboration with the community. There has been a lot of anticipation around its opening from the community, from mums and dads and kids. Community feedback and ideas were collected at a special open day held at the park, where concept designs were displayed. Ideas were then collated and used by designers to prepare the final stage in association with the community and the council.

The park incorporates landscaping and nature-based play elements, which have been carefully designed to be sensitive to the park's beautiful bushland setting. We are very proud of this project. It delivers a first-class recreational asset that includes new park furniture and recreation infrastructure catering for all ages and abilities. I congratulate former planning Minister Anthony Roberts, who helped deliver the much-needed money to upgrade the park. By using the New South Wales Government's Everyone Can Play inclusive play space guidelines, the council has been able to achieve something really special for Oatley Park. Some 80 per cent of the playground and its play elements are accessible for children of all abilities.

The park includes separate play zones, with a toddler park play area, flying fox, active park zone and teen breakout area. The playground was constructed using natural-based materials. The park also includes new picnic and barbecue facilities. I assure members it is a fantastic upgrade to Oatley Park. The new park makes it possible for families to enjoy a great day out in a wonderful location. Kids can have an absolute field day making use of all the different equipment. This project was completed under the New South Wales Government's Open Space and Parklands program with the help of Georges River Council through its section 94 contributions. Kevin Greene, a former member of this place and the Mayor of Georges River, and I worked hand in hand to ensure—

Mr Greg Piper: Kevin Greene? I know Kevin Greene.

Mr MARK COURE: He is a good man. We worked hand in hand to ensure that Oatley Park had an inclusive adventure playground. Everyone in my local community has a story to tell about Oatley Park. I attended the school up the road, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Oatley, and on a Friday afternoon my two younger brothers and I would go to the park and play on the steamroller. There is still a steamroller there, would you believe? In fact, about 15 years ago the local council decided to take away the steamroller.

Mr Greg Piper: Shame!

Ms Liesl Tesch: Shame!

Mr MARK COURE: There was a public outcry. Peter Tuziak, an attendant in this House, knows Oatley Park. One would think council deciding to remove the steamroller was one of the reasons I was re-elected in 2015. There was a lot of opposition to its removal. The steamroller has been upgraded and reinstated, and now the next generation uses it. On a Friday afternoon my younger son, a 5½-year-old, plays on the steamroller after I pick him up from school. You get goosebumps. It is a great park. It is wonderful to have the steamroller updated and upgraded. The new playground is truly innovative in every way, shape and form. It is state of the art. I really enjoy viewing the new space. I look forward to taking my family to the new, upgraded Oatley Park as the weeks, months and years go by.

CENTRAL COAST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:50:28): It is with a heavy heart I announce tonight that the Central Coast now has one of the highest rates of domestic violence [DV] in New South Wales. With a rate of 76.1 personal apprehended violence orders [AVOs] per 100,000 people, it has overtaken Blacktown and compares to south-west Sydney's rate of 56.2 AVOs per 100,000 people. Statistics show that the Central Coast had the second-highest number of domestic violence AVOs in the past 12 months. The number of AVOs issued on the Central Coast have doubled in the past couple of years. The blight of DV is widespread on the coast, but the problem is worst at The Entrance and Umina Beach. Figures from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] show the beachside suburbs racking up the most DV incidents.

There were 374 incidents in The Entrance and 368 in Umina, both of which are home to the highest number of perpetrators. The other violent crimes categories in BOCSAR data reveal that Umina Beach recorded the most sexual and indecent assaults, with 178, ahead of Gosford, on 153. Police spend more time investigating DV than almost any other crime category in both wealthy and disadvantaged communities. However, with a doubling of AVOs on the Central Coast, we have definitely not seen an appropriate increase in police resources. I ask members tonight: What are we doing wrong? What else do we need to do? It is tough. How much money do we need to invest to change this situation?

I know that on the coast we are doing so much right to support women and men escaping domestic violence. Tonight I celebrate and welcome two great new services on the coast that see a gap that needs to be filled. I congratulate two more community champions. Natasha McDowell has established Peninsula Lighthouse to guide us through the storm, journeying with people suffering from the trauma of domestic abuse from surviving to thriving. Ange Nilsson has set up an organisation called The Outpost to permanently break the cycle of domestic violence through raising awareness of intergenerational DV and family violence, and raising funds to facilitate the multifaceted Fearless Warrior Project, an immersion project that is helping women to move to a new life within a 12-month period.

Tonight in Parliament I also offer my gratitude to so many other organisations across the coast that are delivering support to people escaping DV. To every single member of the Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Lakes local area commands, I say thank you. I thank every single staff member and volunteer of Coast Shelter, our world's best practice organisation supporting homeless people on the coast. I thank our women's health centres in Woy Woy, Wyoming and Wyong for the work they do. I also thank Central Coast Council, which ran an advertising campaign urging men to call out friends' abusive behaviour towards women across the Central Coast this year. "Enough already" is a fairly clear statement that we need to encourage to call out inappropriate behaviour

in our communities across New South Wales. I thank the Central Coast Community Legal Centre and the Central Coast Community Council.

I also thank individuals who are helping in this space. I will name a couple: Niki at St Vinnies, Jo from Baptist Care and Catherine from Mary Macs. They are doing amazing work to support people escaping domestic violence. I thank our Rotary and Lions clubs, our Soroptimists, Business & Professional Women and chambers of commerce, which fly the flag supporting survivors, raising funds and raising awareness. There are so many organisations and so many individuals on the coast who do such great work supporting women and families fleeing domestic violence. On the coast we still miss the wraparound Central Coast Advice that used to operate within the Gosford Police Station. I know the community in Nowra and three other local area commands across New South Wales are currently mourning the discontinuation of the crisis assistance service and the additional \$600,000 that was supporting women escaping DV.

Tonight I can only encourage Central Coast workers to connect and network, access all the information and professional development they can and continue the very important work they do so well towards a violence-free Central Coast. I thank Catholic Care, Rondeley, the Central Coast Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, Housing NSW, BaptistCare, Northern Settlement Service, Yerin Aboriginal Health Service, ACON, the RSPCA Safe Beds for Pets and the Central Coast Local Area Health District for helping pick up the pieces that are created by domestic violence. In closing, I send love to all the friends and families who are supporting their loved ones. I send love to Blair Dalton's family and friends. We lost Blair in 2017—an agonising reminder that we need to do more. Please let me know where I can push for additional funding to do more than we are doing at the moment.

Community Recognition Statements

CENTRAL COAST RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:55:53): I speak with great pleasure of the Cancer Council NSW Central Coast Relay for Life, which was held last weekend at Mingara. I thank the 680-plus people who took part in that fantastic walk. I congratulate the outstanding work of the Cancer Council NSW Central Coast, Sarah and the team. They did a wonderful job. I also congratulate my good friend Ros English, who is obviously my advocate with the Cancer Council. I had the pleasure of doing the poo push lap, which highlighted the need for people to be aware of colon cancer and to take the test. It gave me great pleasure to highlight the importance of making sure we do not miss that test. The rate of colon cancer in this country is second only to that of breast cancer. I again congratulate the Cancer Council NSW Central Coast and Mingara on providing a fantastic venue. This function goes from strength to strength every year. Keep up the great work Cancer Council NSW Central Coast.

CENTRAL COAST HOSPITAL AUXILIARIES

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:56:52): I commend the Central Coast's five hospital auxiliaries that consistently advocate and fundraise on behalf of our hospitals on the coast. Central Coast hospital auxiliaries have raised an innumerable amount of money during their many years of operation. As a collective, during the last financial year the Central Coast's five hospital auxiliaries raised over \$130,000, with the funds going to much-needed equipment acquisition. Central Coast Local Health District CEO Dr Andrew Montague has stated that the CCLHD has been able to purchase electrocardiogram machines, humidifiers, finger pulse oximeters and Doppler ultrasounds only because of this support.

Hospital auxiliaries raise money through a multitude of avenues, including through selling handmade products. These usually include knitted or sewed items, baked goods or other miscellaneous items. I specifically thank the remarkable members of the Gosford and Woy Woy hospital auxiliaries in my electorate. Their commitment to the delivery of state-of-the-art health care and improvement of our hospitals on the Central Coast is honourable and much appreciated. The toasted cheese-and-tomato sandwich they made me in 2017 was wonderful.

RENATA STIPANOVIC

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:57:57): I congratulate Renata Stipanovic of Sylvania on being recognised as one of Australia's finest early childhood educators. Renata has been named as the Southern Suburbs & Sutherland Shire regional winner in the 2019 Excellence in Family Day Care Awards and is now in the running to be named as a national finalist for the Family Day Care Educator of the Year Award. Founded in 1997, Renata's Family Day Care is a quality home-based childcare service registered with the Sutherland Shire Council Family Day Care Scheme. Renata offers children a high-quality environment designed to stimulate and empower them to play and learn within an intimate setting that enables all children and their families to feel valued and respected.

Her weekly program incorporates both the interests and the needs of all children in her care, offering a wide variety of resources to stimulate all areas of each child's development. The children in Renata's care participate in many engaging activities throughout the week, including creative arts, outdoor free play, story time and a range of incursions and excursions. I congratulate Renata on her outstanding achievement and commend her tireless commitment to enriching young lives.

LINDA BULLENT

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (20:58:56): I recognise Maitland inspiring mother of three Linda Bullett, who is fighting cancer and fundraising for a cure at the same time. Linda has been bravely doing battle with breast cancer for the past six years. In 2016 she received a second cancer diagnosis but remained resilient and ready to fight. She endured rounds of chemotherapy and had to learn to walk again. Sadly, recently Linda received news from her oncologist that the cancer treatment had to stop as it was doing more damage to her body than helping to treat the disease. Despite this, Linda is still out fundraising to find a cure. She aims to raise \$100,000 for the Hunter Breast Cancer Association and is over halfway there. I have been to one of her events and can attest to her enthusiasm and optimism. She is an inspiration to us all. I wish Linda every bit of luck with her very noble cause.

JESSICA ROUSE

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (20:59:55): I congratulate Jessica Rouse, who is a broadcaster with 981 2NM based in Muswellbrook. Jessica, along with her colleagues, has been filming a series of videos called *Face of the Farmer*. They highlight the story of farming couples and families and their plight in the current drought. In addition, communities have come together at a number of events coordinated by 981 2NM and assisted by the local Lions clubs and other organisations, which have done their very best to bring social events to places like Merriwa and McCullys Gap near Muswellbrook. I also congratulate Jessica on being given a weekly spot on the *Alan Jones Show* on 2GB.

DR SHARON PARKES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (21:01:07): I offer my best wishes to Dr Sharon Parkes, the recently retired principal of Warners Bay High School in my electorate of Charlestown. Dr Parkes has devoted 47 years of her life to educating thousands of our children. She served as a school principal for 24 years, of which the last 14 were at the helm of Warners Bay High School. One of the qualities that I admire most about Dr Parkes is her ability to build strong relationships and teams. I believe we can all learn from her example. Thankfully, the electorate of Charlestown is wonderfully diverse. This is reflected in the school that Dr Parkes has ably led, in which she has welcomed everyone. I am proud that the school is widely regarded as a high achiever across academic, sporting and cultural arenas. Despite retiring from her role as principal, Dr Parkes is hardly putting her feet up to take it easy. She is a life member of the New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council and is currently in Shanghai, where she will be a keynote speaker at the International Confederation of Principals Convention. I wish Dr Parkes a wonderful retirement and, on behalf of the people of my electorate, I thank her for her legacy.

TRIBUTE TO DOUG MCKINNON

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (21:02:09): I pay tribute to Doug McKinnon, a great man who was taken from us last month. Doug played 186 games for the North Sydney Bears, including 29 games in first grade. Following his retirement, Doug was living in Berowra where he met local builder, Bill Whiddon. They became good friends and together they decided there was a need for a local footy club. The Berowra Wallabies was born in 1967, with Bill as president and Doug as secretary. Doug was the heart and soul of the club, holding the position of secretary seven times and treasurer five times. His wife, Fay, sat on the committee and also put up her hand to take on the treasurer's duties. He was the first life member named by the club. He played in the A-grade squad as coach and captain right through until 1973. Following his retirement, he continued on as coach or manager for many teams within the club. He was a wonderful football player and a truly generous man and he will be sorely missed by his wife, Fay, daughters Julie and Sue, granddaughter Shell, and the entire Berowra community.

ILLAWARRA JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (21:03:06): Yesterday I had the pleasure of hosting a dedicated group of just over 20 Illawarra justices of the peace [JPs] on their visit to the New South Wales Parliament. JPs play an essential role in our local community and in the wider legal system in New South Wales. They are often unsung heroes, who volunteer their time to provide a service we all need. For that I am very grateful. At the same time, I was also able to celebrate the special achievements of Mr Edger du Bois and Mr Richard Errey from the electorate of Shellharbour. Both Edger and Richard have now served the local community as JPs for an incredible 50 years. I offer my sincere congratulations and gratitude to Mr Edger du Bois and Mr Richard Errey

on their 50 years of service as JPs. I thank every JP who made the trip to Parliament and for their ongoing valuable service to the Illawarra and the broader community.

OWEN LYONS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (21:04:15): I acknowledge the work undertaken by Narrandera artist Owen Lyons to help reinforce links with the local Indigenous community. Owen worked with the Narrandera Local Aboriginal Land Council and hosted a meet-and-greet event earlier this month where attendees created Koori art while sharing stories about the challenges that they have faced in their lives. Talking about problems while creating art and enjoying a barbecue provides the ideal relaxed environment for improving wellness and easing mental health pressures. Owen is a passionate advocate for mental health issues and has used his own life experiences and his talents as an artist to bring the subject into the open in the Narrandera community.

BLACKTOWN RELAY FOR LIFE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (21:05:05): It was great to attend the opening ceremony of the seventeenth annual Blacktown Relay for Life. On 19 and 20 October teams representing families, local businesses, schools, community groups and friends took turns to walk for 24 hours in support of all those impacted by cancer, celebrating those who survived and remembering those we have lost. One in two Australians—50 per cent of us—will be diagnosed with cancer by age 85, and 55,000 Australians die from cancer every year. There are over 200 relays across Australia, all of which raise funds for vital research to end cancer, support for those suffering from it, and awareness and prevention education for us all. Things as simple as getting regular tests with your GP and being sun smart can drastically lower your risk of cancer. I encourage all Australians to participate in the relay and the other important work that the Cancer Council does. Thank you to all those involved with Cancer Council NSW and the Blacktown Relay for Life, particularly chairperson Michael Richards. Congratulations on a successful weekend of remembrance and awareness.

INSPECTOR DAVID SILVER

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (21:06:05): I formally recognise the outstanding career of Ambulance Service Inspector David Silver, who in August officially signed off for the last time. Inspector Silver joined the Ambulance Service of NSW in 1975 and witnessed many significant events in the State's history, including the 1977 Granville train disaster. He worked at Ryde, Armidale, Barraba and Baradine before moving to Narromine in 2004, eventually becoming duty operations manager for the western region. He saw many changes throughout his 44 years with the Ambulance Service, including the mandating of two-person crews, wheels added to stretchers and the introduction of defibrillators. The highlight of the job, he says, was having the chance to help so many people and hear their life stories. It was a pretty special final shift for Inspector Silver at the Narromine Ambulance Station. He was seen off with a guard of honour—a fitting farewell for a man who helped so many across our great State. To David, thank you for all your work with the Ambulance Service of NSW and enjoy your retirement.

PORT STEPHENS EXAMINER BUSINESS AWARDS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (21:07:05): I pay tribute to my local newspaper, the *Port Stephens Examiner*, for hosting yet another successful annual business awards last Wednesday at the stunning Shoal Bay Country Club. Port Stephens is a community full of successful small businesses—in fact, we are home to nearly 5,000 small businesses employing thousands of local people and contributing around \$5 billion to our economy. I acknowledge the many finalists who were recognised at the annual business awards and I congratulate the 40 winners on the night. In particular, I congratulate Nurses Now in Raymond Terrace on winning Port Stephens Overall Business of the Year and Two Bobs Bakery in Nelson Bay on winning Port Stephens New Business of the Year. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend this year's awards night as Parliament was sitting, but I have been informed that there were two very special businesses in Port Stephens that each took home two awards on the night. I also congratulate Totally Workwear Port Stephens and Century 21 Curtis and Blair in Medowie on their well-earned recognition.

TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR MONIQUE DARE-WARD

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (21:08:05): It is with great sadness that I acknowledge former councillor of Kiama Municipal Council Monique Dare-Ward, who has passed away after a long battle with cancer. Monique served as a councillor from September 2008 to September 2012. She was an active member of council, serving on the Health and Sustainability Committee, Road Safety Committee and Youth Advisory Committee. She was passionate about each and every one of the causes she believed in. Ms Dare-Ward was also council's delegate on the Illawarra Landcare Coordinating Committee and the Friends of the Kiama Library. After Monique's term as councillor she worked with Blue Haven Care as a highly valued support worker. Our thoughts and prayers go to Monique's

family at this sad and difficult time. On behalf of my grateful community, I say that we think of her dedication to serving others. I know that her dedication as a councillor will live on in the memories of locals who remember her term and her commitment to our local community with great fondness. Vale, Monique Dare-Ward.

TRIBUTE TO RUSSELL KING

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (21:09:05): I pay tribute to Russell Francis King and acknowledge his contribution to WAYS. WAYS Youth & Family has provided outstanding services to support youth in the eastern suburbs of Sydney since 1979. WAYS flourished under the leadership of CEO Russell Francis King, who started as a volunteer at WAYS in 1987 and was the CEO of WAYS Youth Services since 1989. During its 40 years of serving the local community and under Russell's leadership, WAYS has excelled in meaningfully engaging and meeting the needs of young people and their families. WAYS includes a registered training organisation, WAYS Youth Training, an accredited alternative high school for students in years 9 to 12, after-school care for those aged nine to 12 and the WAYS Wellness Centre.

Russell's outstanding contribution was recognised in 2017, when he was awarded the Premier's Community Services Award in recognition of his many years of passionate, dedicated and outstanding work for the youth and families of our local community. Last Saturday, Russell sadly passed away but he will not be forgotten by the many who loved him and benefited from his vision, dedication, ability and compassion.

ST GEORGE BUSINESS CHAMBER

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (21:10:05): I acknowledge the great work of the St George Business Chamber in launching its new Buy Local initiative. This new campaign aims to promote, support and benefit small businesses and communities within the local area, covering around 16,000 business that fall within the Georges River Council area. The initiative will assist small businesses to grow, create more local jobs and give back to the community. Small businesses employ almost 50 per cent of the New South Wales workforce. As a former small business owner myself, it is great to see the St George Business Chamber pioneer this initiative, which will see our small business owners supported and given a genuine chance of success. I thank Alan, Carlos and Tony and the rest of the executive of the St George Business Chamber for their efforts in giving a voice to local small business, and I look forward to seeing the success of this fantastic initiative in the future.

UMINA CHEMIST WAREHOUSE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:11:05): Twenty years in small business is a true sign of longevity. Hence, I congratulate Michael and Gianna Cunico from Umina's Chemist Warehouse as they celebrate 20 years of business on the peninsula. It is a testament to their dedication to community and the continued delivery of outstanding service to peninsula residents. Michael and his wife, Gianna, continue to support locals through connecting with their customers and ensuring they are given the best care and service. Michael and Gianna are avid volunteers, with their continued support of local charities and schools as well as giving their time in coaching roles with sporting teams on the peninsula. Thank you and congratulations on 20 years of keeping us healthy and looking after our wellbeing. Keep up the excellent work.

DAVISTOWN PUTT PUTT REGATTA & WOODEN BOAT FESTIVAL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (21:11:50): Sunday marked the twentieth anniversary of the Davistown Putt Putt Regatta & Wooden Boat Festival. I have to say that Davistown was alive with energy. Thousands of people from all over the country attended the regatta. I had a chance to catch up with many competitors and, obviously, the highlight for me was presenting the awards at the end of the event. I congratulate the organisers and all the very generous sponsors from across the Central Coast, including Star104, Central Coast Floormaster, Edge Real Residential Estate, the fantastic staff at Kincumber Mitre 10, Andersons Boatshed, Central Coast Council and Central Coast Marina. It was a fantastic day with an incredible atmosphere. Last year's festival was cancelled due to bad weather, but that did not stop people from coming out in huge numbers for the regatta. I thank the organisers for another fantastic event. It is great to see the regatta going from strength to strength every year.

CHILDREN'S WEEK PARLIAMENT

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (21:12:50): At the beginning of this week I had the great pleasure of participating in the Children's Week Parliament. As a member of Parliament on the MPs Panel on Monday, I was pleased to hear and respond to questions from students. One of the young participants was Ally Smith, a student from Whitebridge High School, representing my electorate of Charlestown. Given the limited time on Monday to raise issues in detail, Ally subsequently emailed me to provide more information on an issue that she is very passionate about. Ally told me about an HSC student at her school who needs regular blood transfusions as he battles cancer. She wants the mobile Red Cross van to visit her school and other schools

in the area so that students can give blood. Ally told me that this is not currently possible because the minimum age at which people can donate blood is 18. She told me that she wants to fight for the blood donor age to be lowered to 16 so that she can help her friend and others like him. Ally is a young person who is filled with drive and compassion, and I admire her greatly.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN EASTWOOD

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (21:14:00): I acknowledge and pay tribute to Mr John Eastwood, co-founder of YADA, Young Adults Disabled Association from Liverpool, who sadly passed away after a long illness. John was a remarkable man and he met a young woman with a disability, Jennifer McAlees, while driving a local community bus. John and Jennifer started talking about the needs of young local people with disabilities and together they formed the YADA community group in the Liverpool and Fairfield area. YADA started 20 years ago with one bus. Now it has two buses that transport young people with disabilities twice a week to various locations. Getting YADA off the ground took a great deal of perseverance from both John and Jennifer.

A lot of hard work went into setting it up, such as completing the paperwork, organising the fundraising events and many raffles along with support from government agencies to ensure it was financial viable. They began with two members and now they have over 60 members, with the fabulous help of Buffy McDonald as well. They run programs twice a week, supporting young adults who are learning new skills while reducing their isolation. John will be incredibly missed by his family and our local community, particularly those within Yada. I thank John for his contribution.

SMARTIES PRESCHOOL AND LONG DAY CARE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (21:15:16): Smarties Preschool and Long Day Care in Greystanes recently held their 2019 art exhibition. The theme was "The colours of nature" and most of the children's art was not only of natural scenes, such as sunsets, the beach and the forest, but all of the art was created with natural spices and edible items. There were no artificial paints, coloured pencils or crayons were used. It was a fantastic show of the children's creativity and of sustainability in action. The exhibition encouraged the children to explore art, to innovate in how they created art and to think about how they interact with the nature around them. Congratulations to Smarties director Anna Sugunarajan and all early childhood education staff, parents and especially the children for such a wonderful exhibition. I loved it.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (21:15:47): I acknowledge the outstanding effort of five justices of the peace who were recently honoured for 50 years' service to the New South Wales community. Over the last half a century Cheryl Morrison, Nicolas Stamatakos, Ronald Hegarty, William Sadler and Thomas Liver have played an important part in our legal system by helping hundreds of people at key moments in their lives. They provide their services on a voluntary basis, witnessing affidavits and statutory declarations as well as certifying original documents so that members of the community may buy a property, access superannuation or apply for a passport.

I was incredibly pleased to attend the justice of the peace 50 years of service ceremony held here in Parliament House earlier this week, which honoured these five wonderful individuals celebrating their golden jubilee of service. Cheryl, Nicolas, Ronald, William and Thomas' commitment to provide this invaluable service embodies the spirit of volunteering that has always been at the heart of our shire. I congratulate and thank all five recipients for their dedication to our community and extend my best wishes for the future.

PORT STEPHENS-HUNTER POLICE DISTRICT AWARDS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (21:16:45): I acknowledge the 50 sworn and unsworn officers who were recognised at the recent Port Stephens-Hunter Police District Awards held in Raymond Terrace. The awards were an important opportunity to recognise local serving police officers and their staff for their commitment to serving and protecting our community. I make special mention of Chief Inspector Tony Townsend, the boss at the Raymond Terrace police station, who was recognised for his 35 years of services with a NSW Police Medal-Fifth Clasp. I also recognise Senior Constable Mitch Parker who received the Commissioner's Commendation for "outstanding courage and dedication to duty" for his rescue of a Dungog man during the 2015 super storm. It was noted that he did so without regard for his own safety.

The awards serve as an important reminder that police officers never know what they may face on any given day, around any corner. It was great to see many of the award recipients' families attending the award ceremony, giving them an opportunity to witness the esteem and respect in which their loved ones are held. I congratulate all of the award recipients and thank them for their service.

KATHY MASSEY

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (21:17:47): I congratulate Kathy Massey, head of the Hunter Valley Brumby Association. I recently attended her property in Booral in the electorate of Upper Hunter to celebrate with her and the team of volunteers their 10-year anniversary looking after brumbies. Last year they started up what they call the Brumby 250 where, over a period of 250 days, they take a brumby from the wild, break it in and get it to the point where it can be ridden as a functioning stock horse. I congratulate Kathy and her band of volunteers. They are a wonderful group of people who care very much about brumbies, horses and our animals in general. Congratulations to them all.

YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:18:45): The Young Women's Christian Association of Australia, or YWCA Australia, has achieved a great deal over its 140-year history. YWCA Australia has always assisted, supported and advocated on behalf of disadvantaged members of the community. The organisation coordinates a number of not-for-profit programs and initiatives to assist struggling or vulnerable young women and empowers women of all ages to fulfil their potential. The Youth Peer Education Program is a child protection education program that exemplifies the effective work the YWCA Australia undertakes. The program provides education to students on what safe and respectful relationships look like, rights and responsibilities and education on how to discern and assess risk and respond adequately in unsafe situations. Since the program's establishment in 2016 the YWCA Australia has delivered face-to-face programs in 473 schools to 71,000 school students. I thank YWCA Australia for its educational advocacy work and acknowledge the organisation's tremendous 140-year history.

BEROWRA NETBALL CLUB

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (21:19:54): I congratulate the Berowra Netball Club on another amazing year. They have smashed it out of the court yet again. Eight teams made the grand finals, which is a phenomenal achievement for the club. Both under-12 teams came away with wins in their grand final, along with the cadet 4 and 5 teams. Despite fighting hard the cadet 2 and 6 teams lost by only a few goals. The senior teams in A4 and B4 both won with the same score, 44 to 26. I thank the dedicated coaches and umpires who make Berowra Netball Club the amazing community that it is.

I congratulate Hollie Cameron from the cadet 1 team who was awarded Ku-ring-gai Netball Association Junior Representative Player of the Year. This is an outstanding achievement. I congratulate and thank president Mick Flarey and the entire hardworking Berowra Netball Club committee on a very successful 2019 season. I know they are already planning for another big season in 2020.

WENTWORTHVILLE COMMUNITY GARDEN

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (21:21:00): The Wentworthville Community Garden was founded by Holroyd City Council in 2008 to bring people from all walks of life and cultures together. For over a decade it has brought the local community together to garden, grow affordable fresh food, relax, meet neighbours and participate in other activities that encourage harmony, cooperation and a sense of belonging. The garden has won awards from the Sydney Royal Easter Show and from Keep Australia Beautiful for the project's sustainability.

The annual open day was held on 19 October 2019 to raise money to support the garden's operations. There were fresh, locally grown veggies from the garden, jams and pickles, plants and seedlings for sale, a sausage sizzle, curry stall, morning tea as well as crafts and fun for families. It was a great opportunity to showcase the garden's contribution to the western Sydney community. I congratulate secretary Robyn Main and the gardening team. I encourage everyone to check out the garden at 73 Fullagar Road, right here in our community, to see what an award-winning garden looks like.

TEMORA MEDICAL CENTRE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (21:22:00): Well done and congratulations to Temora Medical Centre, which was recently awarded Murrumbidgee Primary Health Care's Innovation Award for the Great Quack Quest campaign. The creative campaign was developed to attract general practitioners to move to the town of Temora—my home town. It has its own website, Facebook page and musical YouTube video featuring residents dancing across the town. Dr Rachel Christmas was the inspiration behind the positive campaign that continues to attract plenty of comments and conversations. The good news is that Temora hopes to attract a new trainee GP to the town next year.

SERGEANT DAVE COYLE AND CONSTABLE RYAN PARKES

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (21:22:49): Small communities value their local police officers, especially when they live, work and play in the community they protect. It was sad to see Sergeant Dave

Coyle leave Tea Gardens earlier this year after 10 years protecting the area. On behalf of Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest I thank Dave for his dedication and close connection to the community. I wish him and his family well in Broken Hill. On a happier note I welcome Constable Ryan Parkes, his wife, Ash, and seven-week-old son Miles, who have joined us from Broken Hill. I do not know if Dave sent them to us but either way we are very grateful. I know that the community of Karuah is grateful to have a local police officer once again protecting their community and living in their community. On their behalf I wish Constable Ryan Parkes and his family well.

WESTERN NSW LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT NURSING EDUCATION TEAM

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (21:23:49): I congratulate the Western NSW Local Health District's Nursing Education Team on their presentation at the NSW Health Nursing and Midwifery Showcase late last month. The showcase highlights the cutting-edge projects and research that nurses and midwives are leading across the State, and the Western NSW Local Health District team presented the cultural package. The cultural package project was formed after the nursing educator team was consulted on issues regarding communication, team work and cultural awareness for new employees, especially those who were trained overseas.

The package consists of five documents: *The Cultural Handbook*, *Aussie Slang Guide*, *Phonetic Guide for Medical and Nursing Teams*, *Nursing and Medical Terminology* and the *Didja Know Cultural Information and Communication Guide* from the Western NSW Local Health District Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Directorate. Developing this package is a credit to the team, especially having it shared with health professionals across the State. Congratulations to everyone involved, with special mentions to Susan Mathew, Kathryn Ainsworth, Deb McCarthy and Renee Guihot.

BRISBANE WATER SECONDARY COLLEGE WOY WOY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:24:52): Cheers and congratulations to Brisbane Water Secondary College Woy Woy campus for establishing a formal wear thrift shop for their students. Originally the thrift shop was introduced as a way to enable year 12 students to have access to formal wear for their end of year formal celebration through staff donations but the thrift shop has now grown into a community initiative. I am so thankful for our loving and giving community and local businesses who put their all into giving students equal opportunities. After receiving over 1,000 donations, the formal wear thrift shop has now been extended to give year 10 business studies an opportunity to dress up for their course requirements. It is so important to always feel confident and this formal wear thrift shop is promoting exactly that. This homegrown project is set to grow. I could not be more proud of the school and the community for investing in our youth to build their confidence, promote their mental wellbeing and ensure they have equal opportunities.

HARRY STUTCHBURY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (21:25:45): The challenge to leaders is to create more leaders and not more followers. It is in that vein that I wish to pay tribute to Harry Stutchbury, the outgoing President of the NSW Young Liberal Movement. Harry has served two outstanding years as president and in that time has seen membership grow by 16 per cent. He has held two regional conventions and developed a pipeline of activists that fanned out across the State and saw the Coalition receive two resounding election victories in New South Wales and at the Federal election.

Harry is incredibly talented. He is also incredibly passionate about encouraging more young people to speak up for their values, particularly the values he shares of freedom, altruism, enterprise and initiative. I know the member for Oatley and the member for Holsworthy, both also former Young Liberals, who are present in the Chamber will join with me in congratulating Harry on his outstanding tenure and the work he has done. I have no doubt he will be joining us here in this Parliament or in another Parliament one day. He is a great talent, an investment in the future and someone who has made an outstanding contribution to the NSW Young Liberals.

POLE DEPOT PARK

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (21:26:50): I welcome the opening of the new amenities block at Pole Depot Park in Penshurst. Pole Depot is a popular park in the local area, frequented by many young families, and provides a great playground area for local kids who may not have a backyard. Pole Depot Park has been in dire need of an amenities block. This was recognised by the Penshurst Nepalese community, who have been strong advocates for the construction of a public amenities block for many years. The block was opened in July by council, as well as by me as the local member and Laxman from the Nepalese Penshurst community, who do great work for our local area. The amenities block has been positively received by park users. I am pleased that it is now in place to service the park for many years to come. I thank all those involved, including the Penshurst Nepalese community.

BELINDA MASON

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:28:02): I commend the incredible work of Belinda Mason, a photographer and advocate for those who have been marginalised in our communities. Her recent work *Outing Disability* is a photo series depicting the lives and relationships of those who live with varying disabilities and are also members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Through portrait and voice 26 people share their hopes, dreams, struggles and triumphs. They tell their stories of coming out, exploring identity, discovering love and finding pride. Belinda should be congratulated for the intersectionality of her work, which includes a written guide for those organisations in the disability space on how they can ensure inclusivity in their services for LGBTQIA+ individuals. I also send a shout-out to Wolfgang and everyone at the Re:Publik Cafe and the Coastal Twist community for celebrating this in our community.

VIRIDI WASTE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (21:28:53): Today I recognise a Holsworthy company named Viridi Waste. Viridi Waste has put in several years of research to come up with a solution to treat asbestos. The company began when Mr Richard Azar and Mr Ameen Dannaoui learnt that the land opposite their children's school was contaminated with asbestos. This shock motivated them to find a way to treat the contaminated material. Currently when asbestos is discarded it is not treated and is simply buried with normal landfill. With the progress made by Viridi Waste, soon all asbestos may be able to be treated and deemed as non-contaminated material before going into landfill. What a difference this would make to New South Wales and indeed globally. Once again I congratulate Mr Richard Azar, Mr Ameen Dannaoui and the employees of Viridi Waste on their significant achievement. I wish them the best of luck in their endeavours.

KOOTINGAL RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation)—I recognise the Kootingal-Moonbi Rural Fire Service (RFS) unit on making a remarkable piece of history on the weekend. This crew of passionate volunteers became the first RFS unit in history to win the Australasian Firefighter Championships which were held in Tamworth. The team from Kootingal-Moonbi beat their near neighbours from the Tamworth and West Tamworth Fire and Rescue NSW brigades to claim some significant bragging rights.

Kootingal-Moonbi was in first place at Regional Firefighter Championships scoring 140 points with a massive margin to the second placed Bega Fire and Rescue team with 108 points. The volunteer Kootingal-Moonbi unit only has about 15 to 20 active members, however they were able to enter two sides in the championships. The RFS crew has had a huge year, winning three New South Wales firefighter titles this year as well as travelling to New Zealand and interstate to compete. Congratulations to the team of passionate volunteers at Kootingal-Moonbi RFS, they give so much to their communities and we are all proud of their success.

ST STYLIANOS GYMEA

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I congratulate the Greek Orthodox parish of St Stylianos Sutherland on the consecration on 19 October of the Church of St Stylianos and the two Chapels dedicated to Sts Peter and Paul and St Gregory Palamas. This "baptism" of the church was attended by numerous clergy from Australia and overseas, including His Eminence Archbishop Makarios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia; His Eminence Metropolitan Seraphim of Sevastia; and parish priest Father Constantine Varipatis; as well as over a thousand parishioners. The parish was dedicated to Saint Stylianos in 1998. The Church today has thousands of parishioners. As well as being an important part of Christian witness in the Sutherland Shire, the parish of St Stylianos is actively involved in a number of charity projects. I congratulate Father Varipatis, the founding and continuing parish priest, on his leadership of the church and thank him for his service to our local community.

WAVERLEY OLD BOYS RUGBY UNION CLUB

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I congratulate the Waverley Old Boys Rugby Union Club for a fantastic 2019 season. I had the pleasure of attending their annual awards night which celebrated the amazing contributions being made both on and off the field. Some highlights include 3rd Grade taking out the Minor Premiership, 4th grade's sensational 6 game winning streak which took them from 6th place to Premiers and the club placing 4th overall in the Division 1 Club Championship - the first time they have achieved this in 25 years!!!!

I also recognise the 2019 Club Person of the Year, Scott Sarson. Scott coached 3rd Grade to a Minor Premiership, along with assisting in 1st grade, came out of retirement and strapped on the boots in all 5 grades whenever they were short on players, has been the welcoming committee at the airport for many of our new

international players, helping them navigate accommodation and work opportunities. Finally, Scott has been instrumental in launching the club's new venture Oz Rugby Experience, which promotes Bondi & Rugby hand in hand. Well done to Scott, the club President, Secretary and Executive and to all that contributed to a fantastic 2019 season!

MOVING MOUNTAINS FOR ASH

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—On Friday, 18 October, a team of amazing locals, Luke Alexander, Daniel Byatt, Ben Hamilton, Kelsey Moss and Duncan Sandie set off today from McDonald Jones Stadium to walk to Central Coast Stadium. The group walked 90km, nonstop for 24 hours, from Newcastle to Central Coast to raise money for the medical care of Ashley Treseder, a friend who was paralysed from the chest down after a freak accident in January this year which has left him in a wheelchair. Newcastle Jets CEO, Lawrie McKinna, and some players joined in for a section of the walk as well.

Ashley played football for Wallsend FC and a few other great football clubs in Newcastle before the injury. The walk will coincided with the Newcastle Jets playing the Central Coast Mariners. Ash welcomed the walkers to the stadium, and then he and his friends made their way into the ground where they watched their beloved Jets draw 1-1 with the Mariners in the first F3 Derby of the season. Congratulation to Luke, Daniel, Ben, Kelsey and Duncan on raising more than \$90,000 for the ongoing medical care of Ash.

UNITING EDINGLASSIE EMU PLAINS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—It was my pleasure to recently attend Uniting Edinglassie Emu Plains along with staff, residents and volunteers to celebrate the launch of their new construction. Originally opened in 1980, Edinglassie has continued to adapt to meet the needs of the elderly within the community. Once complete the new facility will offer a 100 bed residential care aged home that promotes a supportive and empowering setting that allows residents to live in a more home like environment. A special part of the event was the presentation of stones to the construction contractor. These stones were provided to staff, residents and their families when the old facility closed and they were asked to write their visions, hope and dreams for the future of Edinglassie on them. These stones will now form part of the new building foundation. I wish all associated with Uniting Edinglassie Emu Plains all the best for the future.

HAPPINESS AND WELLBEING DAY

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I rise to recognise Happiness and Wellbeing Day, a community event held on 11 October at Miller Square in Woodward Crescent at Miller in the electorate of Liverpool. It was an event celebrating Mental Health Awareness Month. The event included a creative arts competition, a Zumba demonstration and children's activities. There were also a financial workshop, various information stalls and a healthy eating workshop. The event commenced with an Acknowledgement of the Country by Uncle Malcolm. The Day suggested five ways to wellbeing: Connect; Live; Keep Learning; Be Active and Take Notice. This was a good event that was MC'd by Paul Blyton. I'd like to thank the Organising Committee responsible for it occurring.

WAGGA WAGGA'S RELAY FOR LIFE

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Cancer affects us all. Whether it impacts us personally, or we know someone who has been impacted by the disease, there is no escaping its reach. But thanks to the efforts of NSW Cancer Council, its volunteers and other community support groups, that doesn't have to be the end of the story. About 750 participants helped to raise close to \$125,000 at Wagga Wagga's Relay For Life 2019 on Saturday, October 19. Breaking previous years' records, this funding will go towards helping Cancer Council NSW to prevent cancer, support those diagnosed and research causes, treatments and cures.

Pre-relay fundraising events like Walk the Plank, head shaves, morning teas, high teas and stalls, added to thousands of dollars' worth of in-kind donations, business contributions and other volunteer gifts of time, skill and effort. I wish to congratulate each and every cancer council member and volunteer, every business, organisation and individual who played a part in this year's event, with a special mention to cancer survivor and Relay committee chair and Global Hero of Hope, Alan Pottie, and Kerry Geale who gave the inspirational address at the beautiful candlelight ceremony. Celebrate. Remember. Fightback.

BALLINA FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—The 10th annual food and wine festival was held in Ballina this weekend. It is the longest running festival of its type and a testament to the strength of the Rotary Club of Ballina-on-Richmond. I am incredibly proud to have supported the Ballina Food and Wine Festival since I was elected in 2015 and to be an Honorary Member of the Ballina on Richmond Rotary Club. I commend Colin Lee, the Chairman of the festival committee and all the committee members, Rotary Club members and sponsors for

putting on a fantastic event. The event showcased many local food and beverage producers and continues to be a well-received community event. This event has gone from strength to strength over the years – being formally recognised by Ballina Shire Council as the "Signature Event" for Ballina. The festival was awarded Community Event of the Year at the Australia Day awards and continues to grow.

KU-RING-GAI PUBLIC SCHOOLS PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai)—One of my favourite events of the year is hosting the annual Ku-ring-gai Public Speaking Competition here in the 'bear pit' of NSW Parliament. In September, ten Year 6 students represented their school by delivering a prepared speech on "has our lucky country run out of luck?" followed by an impromptu speech on "a friend in need is a friend indeed" sparking some observations on R U OK? Day. Ultimately, Angus Lloyd from West Pymble Public was declared the winner, just edging in second place was Ishi Gupta from Waitara Public and third place went to Victoria Digges from Wahroonga Public.

The quality of speeches from all contestants were undoubtedly the highest yet, making the adjudication pleasingly difficult for our judges, Ben Koch, Nicole Woods and Margaret Wick. I would also like to thank Mrs Aileen Woof who supported our contestants behind the scenes. Margaret and Aileen have been involved with the competition supporting public speaking amongst our young people since its inception in 2001. Again, congratulations to all of our Ku-ring-gai students for a wonderful contest.

AALIYAH VEHIKITE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to congratulate St Clair resident, Aaliyah Vehikite who won this July's Emmy Gee kid's shout award. Aaliyah is a very athletic and fun young girl who excels at all the sports she puts her mind to. Participating in a large variety of sports including squad swimming, club soccer, school soccer programs, athletics, Oztag and even recently competed at Wagga Wagga for representative touch football. Aaliyah presents a fantastic attitude and shows great sportsmanship towards all her fellow athletes. Some of her many great achievements are found particularly when representing her school, Mamre Anglican School, where she was awarded CSSA age champion and highest point scorer at her school's regional athletics competition. Congratulations Aaliyah on all your wonderful achievements, I wish you all the best in your sports future.

WYONG HIGH SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong)—Congratulations to Wyong High School on their 75th Anniversary. The Celebration Dinner was held on the 18th of October at Mingara Recreation Club and the Open Day for the community was held at Wyong High School on the 19th of October. In 1940 the Principal Mr Allen of Wyong Public School gave the push towards the creation of a secondary school in Wyong. This is where it all began as Gosford High School was the districts only high school. Mr Allen passed away in 1943 but his work was recognised as Wyong Central School on its official beginning in 1944 and was officially opened in 1947.

The title of the Wyong Central School changed its name to Wyong High School in 1952 and from 1990 the school was designated as a technology High School. Wyong High School has had many famous students including Prof Andrew McMinn, Mark Skaife, David Kilby, Les Murray, Steve Bisley, Joshua Horner and Lady Michelle Renouf. Congratulations to Principal Rodney Hill, Teachers, staff, parents and Students on this celebration. Wish you all the best for many years to come.

OLD DOG CLASSIC SURF COMPETITION

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Today I congratulate the organisers and participants of the 2019 Old Dog Classic Surf Competition which raised over \$7000 for the Hunter Medical Research Institute. Held at Dixon Park Beach in September, the event honours Wayne Hicks who passed away from illness in May last year. A month later the first surf competition was held, raising \$2000 for cancer research. This year's event saw the fundraising more than triple, which was a phenomenal achievement and a testament to the enthusiasm of the participants and dedication of the organisers. The generosity of more than 50 local businesses and people saw more than 60 auction items and raffle prizes donated.

Congratulations to the Stockton Salty Dogs who won on the day, the Stockton Northside Boardriders Team 1 for taking out second place, and the Wizards on the Water who came in third. I particularly acknowledge Cameron Hicks and Jessica Corrigan for their immense efforts in running the day, and Bree Phillips and Hannah Carrol for their work in pursuing prize donations. Well done to all involved, and best wishes for another successful event next year.

WARRAGAMBA DAMFEST

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Last Sunday it was my great pleasure to attend the annual 14th Damfest community event held at the Warragamba Recreation Reserve around Warragamba Dam. Damfest is a local community event organised by the Warragamba, Silverdale Neighbourhood Centre. The hard working committee, led by Sandra Harlor, provides the opportunity for the community, and many visitors from Sydney, to celebrate the Warragamba Dam and the role it plays in providing Sydney with its water supply. Local community organisations, businesses and Government instrumentalities had the opportunity to showcase their services and products. The classic car display and competition was a highlight of the day.

Many thousands came to the event and the local RFS and SES volunteers made sure the day ran smoothly. The current drought situation shows just how important it to be aware of the need to conserve water. This was certainly the message this year at Damfest. Next year will see the 15th anniversary of Damfest and the 60th Anniversary of the completion of the Warragamba Dam. Preparations are now well underway for that significant event.

2019 PARRAMATTA EELS KEN THORNETT MEDAL

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education)—I was honoured to attend the 2019 Parramatta Eels Ken Thornett Medal and Hall of Fame Gala Dinner. The awards evening recognises players from the Blue and Gold's NRL, NYC and NSW Cup sides, as well as the Club Person of the year, representative honours, and debuting and departing players. I would like to congratulate Greg Leleisiua, Andrew Davey, Bailey Biondi-Odo, Vea Tapaatoutai, Craig Sultana, Nathan Brown, Clint Gutherson, Shaun Lane, Maika Sivo whose efforts were recognised on the night and also applaud Mitch Moses for taking out the Ken Thornett Medal. I would also like to thank the board and management of the Parramatta Eels National Rugby League Club for inviting me to attend this memorial occasion.

THE BATTLE OF LEYTE GULF

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—The Battle of Leyte Gulf was 75 years ago this October. It was the most decisive Allied operation to free the Philippines from Japanese Imperial rule, and the follow through on U.S. General Douglas MacArthur's promise, "I shall return." It was the biggest naval battle in history, involving hundreds of ships including a Royal Australian Navy Squadron, and nearly 200,000 participants over 100,000 square miles. The victory left the Japanese military forces severely depleted and helped turn the tide for the Allies in the Pacific. It was fantastic to stand with our local Filipino community on this important anniversary for both our countries.

It was an honour to be joined by the Consul General of the Philippines, Izzedin Tago. Thank you to the Visayan Association of Australia for organizing the commemorations and to President, Jhun Salazar for his moving commemorative address. Thanks also to the Alliance of Philippine Community Organizations President Cora Paras, Philippine Community Council of NSW President Alric Bulseco, and Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria's Multicultural Community Manager Moises Millena for their remarks. It is important we remember our history, and honour those who fought for our freedom. Lest we forget.

GREEK WELFARE CENTRE WALKATHON

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Sunday October 20th marked the 43rd Annual Walkathon for the Greek Welfare Centre, hosted by St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Parish in Marrickville. The Greek Welfare Centre has provided support to the Greek community since 1975 and have assisted thousands of Greek Australian migrants and families. The Centre provides services and programs including multicultural social and community services, aged care and family and children services, as well as invaluable advice to residents needing help navigating Australia's complex welfare, social and support systems. Since 1976, the Walkathon has encouraged everyone in the community to get out and get active for their community, no matter their age or ability. It's a fantastic opportunity to get healthy and to connect with others in the local community.

Congratulations to all the organisations who collectively helped raised over \$27,000 dollars for the Greek Welfare Centre's community services, everyone who turned out and walked. Your donations will help provide cultural and linguistically diverse services, community welfare programs and health services supporting many CALD communities across Sydney. And thank you, as always, to the St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Parish Community for co-ordinating and hosting this important community event.

BACK TO BALMAIN

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I recognise an organisation that has been at the heart of our community for over 30 years, Back to Balmain. The idea for this community group originated during celebrations at a Bicentennial Dinner at Balmain Leagues Club in 1988 attended by former club members. They hatched the

idea for an annual picnic to give school friends, sporting mates and neighbours a chance to reconnect regularly back in Balmain where they first met. 31 years later on the last Sunday in October, Back to Balmain still meets in Elkington Park.

This year there will be displays from the Balmain Association, Balmain Hospital, heritage photos organised by Councillor John Stamolis and performances by Honeybrook Dancers and Birchgrove and Rozelle Public Schools. I want to acknowledge the work of a number of people including George Stone, AO, Allan Lonnon, Geoff Large, Reverend Peter Carter, Beryl Gibbons, Maureen McKeon, Kevin O'Keefe, Cec Witton, Kevin Farley, Howard Horwood, Ray and Shirley Arthur, Nette Griggs, Amy Large, Brad May, and Janice Swanson. I want to especially acknowledge Kath Hacking and the current Secretary Michele Hacking. I'll be going Back to Balmain this weekend and I look forward to seeing you all!

ANNANGROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—On Monday, October 21st I was delighted to visit the students and staff of Annangrove Public School and to open their new, natural play-space. This wonderful project to enrich the physical activity and play-development of our children would not be possible without the continued funding of the NSW Government and the Community Building Partnerships program, who have already provided \$50,000 towards the thriving of our children. This upgrade both enhances the existing facilities and provides a new, natural play-space - utilising timber and rope to blend with beautiful landscape and to encourage a love of the outdoors. Naturally, shade sails and appropriate safety flooring are an important feature of this instalment – allowing for safe risk-taking without hindering the child's sense of adventure.

I'd like to congratulate Annette Lewis, the Funding Coordinator of the school, for her excellent application of the grant, and the Annangrove Public P&C for diligence with which they actively seek to create a dynamic learning environment. Congratulations to the school's Principal, Mr Paddy Rich and the wonderful teachers and staff who are extremely innovative and proactive, working tirelessly to provide the students of Annangrove P.S. with a high quality of education in a lovely bushland environment.

ST GEORGE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION PRESENTATION DINNER

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of attending the St George Basketball Association's Presentation Dinner, meeting some of the fantastic players in the St George representative teams. The Association has been active for over 40 years, and services two local Council areas. The Association has played a significant role in our community in providing young people the opportunity to play basketball, as well as develop their character and sportsmanship.

The Association is entirely volunteer run, and provides opportunities for younger children wanting to have a go at basketball, as well as development and advanced classes for more professional players. It was great to attend the Presentation Dinner and hear about the Association's successes during the past season. I would like to thank the dedicated volunteers of the club, including board members such as Ray Barbi, President, as well as coaches, referees, parents and friends, and of course the players. Best of luck for the next basketball season.

ENGADINE RFS OPEN DAY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—Engadine RFS held their open day on 15th September with the theme, "Get Your Fire Plan Ready". Visitors were shown live exhibitions of a car crash rescue and smoke filled room as well as other bush fire information. There were also displays from the Police, SES, RFS Communications, SES Communication technology and other local organisations. One of the most popular stops was the obligatory Engadine RFS sausage sizzle. The open days are held across NSW to inform and educate the public on how to survive a bush fire. I congratulate Engadine RFS on their 2019 open day.

24 HOUR FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—Campbelltown – and the wider Macarthur – is famous for its generosity and spirit. When someone is in need of a helping hand, there is always a plethora of locals willing to step up and help out. The annual 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer walkathon is one of the greatest examples of that generosity and spirit. On Saturday, thousands once again gathered at Campbelltown Sports Grounds athletics track to raise awareness and funds for cancer services and support in Macarthur. The track this year was a sea of blue with participants decked out in the blue 24 Hour Fight shirts.

I have attended the event on many occasions but each year I am blown away with the amount of people who participate. The event is quite unique in that all the money raised stays in the region and goes towards local cancer services and support. In 14 years, the event has raised an enormous \$4.3 million. It is an incredible achievement and one that has had a profound impact on many families throughout the Macarthur region. Congratulations once again to everyone involved in the 2019 event.

SYLVANIA HIGH SCHOOL CAPTAINS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the newly elected School Captains of Sylvania High School on their appointment. To be democratically elected by your peers demonstrates these individuals' competencies in the key areas of effective leadership, communication, organisation and innovation. I encourage them to make the most of such a fantastic opportunity to develop life skills and qualities that shape community and professional leaders.

I congratulate School Captains Eric Papadopoulos and Mary Koutsonicolis and Vice Captains Christian Jaja and Crystal Hill on their successful appointment as captains for 2020, and extend my best wishes for their final year of high school. I also take this opportunity to commend the outgoing captains of Sylvania High School for their service. I acknowledge 2019 School Captains Zachary Psarros and Isabella Kyriazis and Vice Captains Luke Goschnik and Shelby Wax, and wish them all the best for their upcoming exams and whatever the future may hold. I extend my best wishes to this group of fantastic student leaders as they continue to embody Sylvania High School's core values of scholarship, honour and service.

SERVICE TO SPORT MEDAL AND AWARDS 2019

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—It was a great pleasure to attend the Service to Sport Medal and Awards Night on Monday, 21st October 2019 at Bankstown Sports Club, recognising the generosity and commitment of the many hard working and dedicated volunteers and players who support our local grassroots sporting clubs and make local sporting competitions possible. Bankstown Sports Club supports 48 clubs across three local government areas and I take this opportunity to recognise all those involved in local sports and to extend my congratulations to the following award recipients on their well-deserved achievement:

YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Nathan Loveday

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Cath Hughes

CLUB OF THE YEAR

Baulkham Hills Baseball Club

SERVICE TO SPORT MEDAL

Harry Chahoud

Keith Rozairo

Brian Bowyer

JUNIOR CLUB SPIRIT AWARD

Cameron Sparks

GOAL AWARD - SOCIAL SUPERSTAR

Bankstown Sports Stars FC

Bankstown Sports Touch Association

Bankstown Sports Athletics Club

Baulkham Hills Netball Club

GOAL AWARD - COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

Birrong FC

Strathfield FC

I acknowledge and commend Bankstown Sports Club Chairman Mr John Murray OAM and the entire board for hosting this wonderful annual event and I thank them for their kind invitation and warm hospitality on the night.

JOHN ROBINSON

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Mr Speaker Today I would like to recognise and congratulate John Robinson for his ongoing contribution to the community of Griffith. John has been an integral part of the development of Griffith Pioneer Park Museum for the past 30 plus years. Rural towns have a rich history and being able to showcase this history by recreating the pioneer days using original buildings, furniture and machinery creates pride and ownership in the community. The museum embraces the endeavours of our farmers and townsfolk in building the great town we live in today.

Pioneer Park is a wonderful asset as it displays the history and progress of Griffith area. It is through the dedication and hard work by John and volunteers over many years who are giving the generations to come the opportunity to see how people lived and worked in the past. I recognize the value places like Pioneer Park have in attracting tourists to Griffith. John Robinson's knowledge and willingness to share his knowledge with locals and tourists allows Griffith to stand out as a desired destination.

SHELL COVE PUBLIC SCHOOL PSSA FINALISTS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I bring to the attention of the House, the boys' and girls' NSW PSSA Knockout teams from Shell Cove Public School. Last month, both of these teams competed in and took out the NSW PSSA Knockout South Coast finals, which meant they qualified for the state-wide Finals. The boys' team won their match against South Wagga Public School 2-0 in their quarter final. However, while they fought hard, they lost the match to King Park Public School in the semi-final.

The girls' team also won their quarter final against South Wagga Public School, and went on to win their semi-final against Marton Public School. This meant they competed in the Final on the same day but unfortunately, whilst the girls gave it their all they came in second to Harbord Public School, losing 2-1. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of these great students from Shell Cove Public School. It's an incredible achievement to compete in the Semi Finals and Finals of the NSW PSSA Knockout Competition. You should all be very proud of what you've achieved. Congratulations everyone.

WALLEND BEEN LONG LUNCH

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Mr Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Wallendbeen branch of the CWA which recently organised a long lunch community get together and fund raiser. The small town of Wallendbeen, in the Cootamundra electorate, is surrounded by rich agricultural land and is renowned for its dry wheat production. More than 140 former and current residents sat at tastefully decorated tables outside the Wallendbeen Hotel on a perfect Sunday afternoon, shared stories, reconnected with old friends and made new friends. Gatherings such as these help to raise the spirits of our small communities and thank you to the amazing CWA volunteers who work so hard to make life better for families across rural and regional Australia.

TAREE SHOWGIRL GABBY WYSE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Mr Speaker I rise to congratulate the 2019 Taree Showgirl Gabby Wyse. Sashed at 144th Taree Show on Saturday 12 October, the 20-year-old told me she was honoured and proud to be Taree Showgirl. Gabby who works at the Manning Florist has been kept busy the last week speaking with many community groups, but as the dust settles, she has said it's time to knuckle down and get to work. Planning has already begun for the showgirl zone one final, to be held in Taree next February. Gabby has already spoken with local suppliers about providing produce for the event's formal dinner, with local Beef and Pork to be featured.

Alongside 2018 Showgirl Courtney Robertson and Showgirl entrants Amylia Eddie and Tammy Clifton, Gabby has linked up with Agricultural Societies Council of NSW Next Generation, a group of young people wanting to build the future of agriculture shows. As Showgirl Gabby wants to champion mental health in the agriculture industry. Gabby understands the strain drought has on the mental health of farmers and communities is drastic, and that it takes a lot for someone on the land to say that they need help.

MICHELLA GHAZI

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I would like to recognise Michella Ghazi, a resident of Casula for her achievements in aerobic gymnastics. Michella Ghazi, from All Starz Gymnastics and Dance, is 11 years old and has only been competing in aerobic gymnastics for 2 years. However, she has excelled in her field. Ms Ghazi placed first at this year's NSW Junior Championships – a wonderful achievement. Michella also placed second in the aerodance individual category at the 2019 NSW Senior State Championships. Now, Michella is a nominee for a Junior Sports Star Individual award. This list of achievements is impressive for someone so young, and attests to Michella's resilience and passion. Once again, I would like to congratulate Michella Ghazi for her endurance and hard work, which has translated into accolades. It is always great to see someone so young pursuing their passion. I wish Michella Ghazi the best of luck for her future endeavours in gymnastics.

EPPING LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—In my electorate we are privileged to have some fantastic local businesses. I am a strong believer that local business is the lifeblood of any community and it is our responsibility as a Government to make sure that local businesses get ahead. The Northern District Local Business Awards is conducted over an eleven-week period where members of the public have the opportunity to vote for their favourite local business in a variety of categories in their local area. Three local businesses in the Epping electorate were recognised in this year's Local Business Awards.

Epping's Midson Road Child Care Centre took first for the best Early Childhood Centre; Roma Vino in North Epping was judged the best business in the Hotel/Bottle Shop/Bar category; and Tracy Yap Reality in Epping won in the Real Estate Agency category. Other Epping finalists in this year's awards included: Kidz Prints Preschool, Chicken on Oxford, Level 1 Fitness-Epping Club, The Lash Collective Hair + Skin, BCS Strata

Management, Stop Drip Plumbing, Il Posto, Epping Veterinary Clinic, Serenity Smiles Dental, Active Spine, Purity Carpet Cleaning, and Crackers Clearout. Congratulations to the winners and finalists in this year's awards – keep up the great work.

COUNCIL TO CONDUCT TRAFFIC STUDY AT NEW STATION PRECINCTS

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I welcome the State Government's \$1.5 million contribution to assist The Hills Shire Council to conduct traffic studies at Showground, Bella Vista, Norwest and Castle Hill station precincts. The study will investigate the impact of Sydney Metro North West on local and regional traffic flows, and how the station precincts can be better utilised to ensure the Metro generates lasting economic, social and environmental benefits for local residents for years to come. I am pleased the State Government is working collaboratively with Council to ensure there are necessary provisions to accommodate for balanced urban growth through efficient and safe infrastructure. The study will inform the overall plan on behalf of these growing precincts and ensure residents can capitalise on the new public transport route, and are provided with the best opportunity to access these important sites.

DAVID HUNTER

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—I would like to pay tribute to David Hunter of Pennant Hills. David, who has cerebral palsy, lacked confidence and never thought he would ever be able to speak in front of a large group of people. In August 2017 he joined Waitara Windbags Toastmasters Club and has been transformed from shy and retiring to a keynote speaker. Over the last two years David has worked hard and has found a voice he didn't know he had. He is passionate about helping others with a disability and late last year was the keynote speaker at the International Day of Persons with Disabilities Forum. Waitara Windbags celebrates their 2nd anniversary this month and I congratulate President Joanne Keevers, Vice Presidents Michelle Kitto, Isolde Kamerman and Siddhartha Malhotra, along with Treasurer Lin Li, Secretary Alice Yu and David who holds the position of SAA for helping to give many in our community a voice they didn't know they had.

IRAQI AUSTRALASIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On Sunday 15th September 2019 I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the official launch of the Iraqi Australasian Medical Association of Australia and New Zealand, known as I.A.M.A, with Medical Specialists, General Practitioners and Medical Researchers at Lantana Hall, Bonnyrigg. The primary aims of I.A.M.A is to work towards the promotion of employment, networking, exchanging of professional experience, promoting health in the wider community and to advocate for and support Iraqi medical practitioners in both Australia and New Zealand.

Further to these goals, the I.A.M.A seeks to establish a medical directory for patients to access doctors from Arabic, Armenian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Kurdish and Turkmeni backgrounds in Australia and New Zealand. The association strongly believes in improving communication care and understanding of the medical management of people so as to avoid miscommunication. On behalf of the Fairfield Electorate, I would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation and congratulations to the board of I.A.M.A for the establishment of such a worthy association which will be of tremendous benefit to our local community.

CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Football NSW's Champion of Champions tournament is one of the most prestigious competitions in the footballing calendar. Champions from each association battle it out for supremacy. Last weekend three of the football teams represented in the finals were from the Davidson Electorate – one from the Belrose Terry Hills Raiders and two Lindfield FC teams. The relevant results were as follows:

In the U15 Girls -
Belrose Terry Hills Raiders 2 def. Huskisson Vincentia FC 0
In the U13 Boys -
Lindfield FC 5 def. Auburn FC 1
In the U18 Men -
Glenmore Park FC 4 def. Lindfield FC 2

I especially congratulate both local teams who were crowned Champion of Champions and acknowledge all the background work of the two clubs, led by the two club presidents, Clive Solari of Lindfield FC and Mark French from Belrose Terry Hills Raiders.

MOSMAN PUBLIC SCHOOL – KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL AWARDS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—North Shore kids are passionate about having a cleaner, healthier environment. Last week's prestigious Keep Australia Beautiful NSW 2019 Sustainable Cities Awards, made that abundantly clear, as Mosman Public School took away the Return and Earn Litter Prevention Award for Schools. Having purchased specialty recycling bins to collect bottles and cans, Mosman Public School is using their local Taronga Zoo Return and Earn point to teach students about recycling. With all funds raised going to environmental charity 'Take 3 For the Sea', an organisation which works to reduce litter around oceans, waterways, and beaches, these students deserve extra commendations for their two-in-one approach to litter prevention.

This is a great example of how Return and Earn has been embraced by people in NSW to not only help clean-up our environment, but also to help others. I congratulate the Year 5 and 6 students in the school's Sustainability Club, who are driving this amazing recycling initiative, and commend the parents and teachers in the school's Sustainability Committee, who are empowering their kids to make a difference. Finally, I particularly thank Principal Steve Connelly for supporting this innovative way to teach students about the environment.

CAMDEN COMMUNITY JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I would like to congratulate Margaret Poulton and Riley Warren for volunteering and serving the Camden Community as a Justice of the Peace for over 50 years. I thank all the JPs who provide this valuable service to communities across NSW and note that people over 65 who have served as a JP for at least 10 years will be eligible to hold the title "JP (retired)" for life.

THE WINSOME HOTEL AND LISMORE SOUP KITCHEN

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—On Wednesday October 9th, 2019, the Lismore Soup Kitchen at the Winsome Hotel, celebrated its 10th anniversary. The celebration was I am told marked by heartfelt speeches, a cake and a superb performance from the Healing Voices Choir. The Winsome, known as a Pub with no Beer, is a charitable organisation operated by volunteers to provide accommodation for men, daily nutritious meals, health care and other essential services for local people. It is a place where people are made welcome. The Winsome is largely supported by the generosity of its supporters and volunteers.

Five years ago the Winsome 500 was established as the Hotel and soup kitchen's fundraising effort. The Winsome 500 gives the opportunity for people to donate monthly to support the amazing work that the Winsome does every day. I can inform the Chamber that my office is a supporter. I congratulate and thank the LSK President Mieke Bell, Vice President Margaret Lord, Business Manager Ridley Bell, Centre Manager Paul Murphy, Volunteer Coordinator Sharon Dwyer, other staff members and volunteers, for their extraordinary contribution to our community.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:30 until
Thursday 24 October 2019 at 9:30.**