



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 25 February 2020

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 25 February 2020

The Speaker (The Hon. Jonathan Richard O'Dea) took the chair at 12:00.

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

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 at this sitting to permit the consideration of the motion of condolence for the victims of the bushfires to take precedence of all business until 1.15 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

Motions

BUSHFIRES

Debate resumed from 6 February 2020.

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

Motion agreed to.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect. [During the giving of notices of motions]

Notices

PRESENTATION

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

Later,

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will accept the notice of motion given by the member for Canterbury, but I ask her to redraft it as a motion, rather than as a series of statements.

Later,

The SPEAKER: I will accept the notice of motion given by the member for Swansea. However, I again counsel members against making speeches or statements rather than giving notice of a motion. Both examples I have noted on this occasion have been given by Opposition members. The member for Gosford will cease interjecting.

Later,

Ms Melanie Gibbons: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that notice of a motion given by the member for Summer Hill is in order, but I will hear the point of order.

Ms Melanie Gibbons: The National Party has been maligned. I would think that is unparliamentary.

The SPEAKER: I will seek the advice of the Clerk, but I draw a distinction between notice of a motion to that effect and an accusation being made in the House. I will consider the matter and come back to the member for Holsworthy on advice from the Clerk.

*Bills***WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2019****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 12 November 2019.**

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:21:46): I lead for the Opposition in the second reading debate on the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Review) Bill 2019. As the Minister outlined in his second reading speech, the bill seeks to make small changes to improve the work health and safety framework in New South Wales. The Opposition does not oppose the legislation as it represents a series of small improvements to the current system—a system that is deeply flawed and compromises the safety of workers across New South Wales. We will seek to make significant amendments, as the legislation falls far short of what is needed—that is, legislation to prosecute industrial manslaughter and a change in approach by employers in order to embed a culture of workplace safety across New South Wales. The bill falls short of community expectations and the expectations that were raised by the Government every time it told the families of someone killed at work that those responsible will be held to account.

What is most disappointing about the bill is that the Government has squibbed on an opportunity to do much more and to fulfil a promise the Minister himself made to the Cassaniti family, who lost their son in a tragic and avoidable workplace accident last April. The Minister seemed to imply in his second reading speech that the bill would create a framework for industrial manslaughter. The bill does not do that. Without industrial manslaughter, the bill contains small-scale improvements. The bill links the Crimes Act where it deals with manslaughter to the Work Health and Safety Act by point of reference only. Employers can be charged with manslaughter under the Crimes Act but that does not happen in this State, and it will not happen under this bill. Furthermore, the way in which the Crimes Act is written limits the capacity to charge a broad range of culprits, for example, if a body corporate and not an individual is responsible for a death or if it is the decision of a number of people to squib on safety—and that has been embedded throughout the organisation—that has caused someone's death.

It is unacceptable that New South Wales has the highest number of workplace fatalities in Australia. Under this Government the average number of workplace deaths per year stands at 56. That number is shocking and is higher than when the Government took office. It is clear that the current laws are failing and that a major overhaul of safety standards as well as increased enforcement of those standards are needed. This legislation can be seen as the Government's response to the 2018 Safe Work Australia review known as the Boland review and its attempt to pre-empt COAG by adopting a number of recommendations from that review. The legislation is also an attempt to get ahead of the upper House inquiry that is underway and which is hearing from people who have lost family members at work and who are calling for far stronger action than is proposed in this bill.

This bill shows desperation. The Government singularly does nothing but it is desperate to be seen to be doing something. This bill is the Government's way of doing as little as possible in the context of a nationwide move to crack down on workplace deaths. The Boland review represents a framework for best practice for work health and safety laws and makes a series of recommendations. Those recommendations include to review the model workplace health and safety regulations and model codes, to make regulations to deal with psychological health and to continuously assess new industries, hazards and working arrangements. In relation to duties of care, the review makes recommendations to clarify that a person can be both a worker and a person conducting a business or undertaking for the purpose of the Work Health and Safety Act and to develop a new model code on the principles that apply to duties.

In relation to consultation, representation and participation, the review recommends providing practical examples of how to consult with workers, providing new arrangements for health and safety representatives and work groups in small businesses, ensuring the work group has negotiated with proposed workers, guaranteeing the workplace entry of union officials when providing assistance to a health and safety representative and ensuring that there are inspectors to deal with safety issues when cancelling a provisional improvement notice, or PIN. It also recommends that the health and safety representative provide a choice of training provider. Other recommendations are to provide examples of health and safety committee constitutions, agendas and minutes and to update the guidance on issue resolution processes and participants. Further recommendations are to resolve any outstanding disputes after 48 hours, to clarify court powers and to remove the 24-hour notice period for entry permit holders.

In relation to compliance and enforcement, the Boland review recommends aligning the process for ensuring the service of notices under the model Work Health and Safety Act to provide clarity and consistency, providing the ability for inspectors to require production of documents and answers to questions for 30 days after

the day they or another inspector enters the workplace, clarifying that workplace health and safety regulators can obtain information relevant to investigations of potential breaches of the model laws outside their jurisdiction, enabling cross-border information sharing between regulators and reviewing incident notification provisions. In relation to national compliance and enforcement, it recommends the review of the National Compliance and Enforcement Policy. Regarding prosecutions and legal proceedings, the Boland report recommends increasing penalty levels and enhancing category 1 offences. That is what this bill sets out to do but it fails to deal in particular with recommendation 23b relating to industrial manslaughter. Recommendation 23b: Industrial manslaughter states:

Amend the model WHS [Work Health and Safety] Act to provide a new offence of industrial manslaughter. The offence should provide for gross negligence causing death and include the following:

- The offence can be committed by a PCBU [person conducting a business or undertaking] and an officer as defined under section 4 of the model WHS Act.
- The conduct engaged in on behalf of a body corporate is taken to be conduct engaged in by the body corporate.
- A body corporate's conduct includes the conduct of the body corporate when viewed as a whole by aggregating the conduct of its employees, agents or officers.
- The offence covers the death of the individual to whom a duty is owed.

Safe Work Australia should work with legal experts to draft the offence and include considerations of recommendations to increase penalty levels and develop sentencing guidelines. If this legislation is enacted before that is done, that will ensure that we cannot fully cover the offence of industrial manslaughter. The Boland review also recommends improving workplace health and safety regulator accountability for investigation progress. It recommends taking a consistent approach to sentencing and a prohibition on insurance for workplace health and safety fines—another aspect that is, thankfully, included in the bill before us today. In terms of the model workplace health and safety regulations, the review recommends the clarification of risk management processes in the model Act, improved recording of amusement device infringements and operator training, adding a safe work method statement template to workplace health and safety regulations, and the development of intuitive interactive tools to support the completion of the fit-for-purpose safe work method statements.

The review also recommends putting photographic identity on white cards, which is very important in New South Wales, which has the highest levels of workplace deaths and injuries as well as the highest level of our population working in construction, where some issues with white cards have been identified. The review also recommends considering references to standards in the model regulations and improving compliance with standards, which are not mandatory unless specified. It recommends reviewing major hazard facility regulations and reviewing crane licence classes. It recommends improving the quality of asbestos registers and identifying competent persons in relation to asbestos.

In relation to the very lengthy list of recommendations for improving workplace health and safety across Australia, the bill before us today adopts only a small number of the recommendations—namely, to enhance the most serious offence, the category 1 offence, to capture grossly negligent conduct and strengthen the deterrent power of the Act and to prevent people from using insurance or indemnity arrangements to avoid responsibility for paying workplace health and safety fines to reinforce the need for compliance. That is really important in New South Wales and will prompt employers to look more closely at workplace health and safety rather than just insuring against their own negligence.

The bill before us will increase penalties for offences to reflect increases in the consumer price index. It will also ensure effective review mechanisms for decisions not to prosecute and timely updates for families on the progress of investigations. It will allow inspectors to exercise some of their powers upon entry without requiring re-entry. It will streamline cross-jurisdictional cooperation and make the serving of notices easier. It will also clarify that a person conducting a business or undertaking can both have a duty to workers and be owed a duty by another person conducting a business or undertaking up a contractual chain, the choice of training provider for health and safety representatives, the ability of courts to make orders in relation to coercive and discriminatory conduct and the duty holder for high-risk work plant and dangerous goods not in use at a workplace.

This bill is an attempt to adopt some of the recommendations of the Boland review, which is very positive. But it does not go far enough and there is much that is missing, the most important aspect of which is the recommendation to amend the model Act to provide for a new offence of industrial manslaughter. On this measure, the Government seems to be completely missing in action. Its attempt, by referencing the manslaughter provisions of the Crimes Act, does not deal specifically with deaths caused at work. I am aware of no workplace safety-related charge of manslaughter laid under the Crimes Act in New South Wales. The inclusion of gross negligence does not vastly improve the situation, as it appears to set a very high bar when exposure to death or

injury by negligence should be sufficient. In short, the creation of an industrial manslaughter provision is still needed.

The bill also does not fully capture psychological health. Last year we saw how problematic that can be. We see it time and time again with issues around bullying, suicide and other actions that relate purely to psychological health at work. My attention was drawn to the death of the community nurse last year in Balmain. She was dealing with a patient and was visiting this patient at home. The nurse was provided with no protective equipment whatsoever and that patient killed her. The employer is not being prosecuted because her employer is not deemed responsible for her death. Instead, the person who killed her is deemed responsible, although the nurse was placed on her own in a highly dangerous situation that was readily identifiable and readily avoidable. That example is not captured in this bill.

Another example to which I have referred briefly is that of Patrizia Cassaniti. Patrizia lost her son Christopher on 1 April last year when scaffolding collapsed at his worksite. Mrs Cassaniti has provided a great deal of evidence to the ongoing upper House inquiry, and its recommendations should have been considered before the bill came to this Chamber. Patrizia has been a strong advocate for industrial manslaughter laws. Her evidence to the upper House should have been considered when this bill was drafted but it certainly will be through amendments. She stated:

The day Christopher died is a day that I will never forget. It will haunt me for the rest of my life. The knock-on effects of such tragedies are detrimental. I know my life and the lives of my family will never be the same. It not only destroyed us, but all his friends and co-workers who are still traumatised today. Some quit their jobs and some are still unable to go back to work at full capacity. The costs involved for mental health, rehabilitation and trauma outweigh the costs required for prevention of these incidents in the first place.

The penalties currently in place to hold directors and those responsible accountable are appalling and do not bring justice to the victims. My penalty is a life sentence, yet the entities who are responsible for my son's death will walk away with a slap on the wrist and a fine that will not exceed \$1 million. If the persons plead guilty they instantly get a 25 per cent discount, bringing down the penalty to \$750,000, which insurance pays in most cases. But wait, here comes the sting: Where is my discount? Do I get half a son back? No. The people responsible get a discount, but not us as victims. The biggest issue here is that the penalties in place are a joke and not taken seriously enough. Therefore, why should a builder even care?

My poor baby died a horrible and frightening death. He was alive for 20 minutes and died of suffocation and bled to death internally from his horrific injuries. He had only just turned 18 four days prior. He was in his prime and had just picked up his first car on the Friday before. He had bought himself a boat and was ready to conquer the world with an infectious and beautiful happy smile. He had plans. He was very proud of himself for what he had achieved so far. He had a great life ahead of him, but it was all cut too short. My husband, Rob, my two other sons, Adriano and Michael, and I have been served a life sentence. Our lives will never be the same.

The day Christopher died it seemed our world had ended and our nightmare had just begun. Grief struck and it did not come alone, it brings shock, deep sorrow and despair. It brings pain that we have never known before, so it is really unfair and it is a living hell. Grief cannot be watered down with wine or softened with a pill, it is here to stay and be part of us with the strongest will. Grief is harsh, it is raw and it will cut you to the bone. Grief can tear you down on any day, significant or not, and it can exhaust you with its presence and take all that we have got. My family will never live without grief, it is with us until our end. Grief is a victim's unwanted shadow.

...

As a parent who has lost a beloved son I have experienced the pain that one feels when company directors, and/or senior management who make decisions about safety seem to place more emphasis on saving a dollar and cutting corners than ensuring the safety of young contractors under their control. Directors and CEOs in New South Wales should be held personally accountable to make sure that they take an active role ensuring that a safe environment exists in their workplace. In Queensland and other States industrial manslaughter legislation actually holds these directors personally accountable for the workers under their control. The legislation in Queensland has resulted in CEOs and directors, boards, et cetera, placing more emphasis on safety, increasing training, ensuring work defects are rectified as soon as possible that could cause harm to their workforce.

Patrizia also observed:

Straight after Christopher's death, SafeWork NSW commenced Operation Scaf Safe targeting unsafe scaffolds by visiting more than 700 construction sites [between April and] October, with shocking results. They issued 832 notices, including \$109,000 on-the-spot fines for falls risks. Whilst the inspectors had seen improvements in scaffold safety recently, the level of risk is still unacceptable; 44 per cent of scaffolds had missing parts, whilst on 36 per cent of the sites it appeared unlicensed workers had actually altered or removed those scaffolding components. With my on-site talks and exposes that I do, I always ask the workers to actually stop and think and take responsibility for their actions, stop being complacent because the words and the thoughts, "I've done this before, it's not going to happen to me" and "she'll be right mate" is not going to keep them from dying or getting injured. I remind them that if something happens it is disastrous, not only for their families, their workmates and friends, but also injuries and deaths lead to mental health issues. It is a never-ending story. Safety needs to be a priority for every worker at every workplace and must not be compromised by budgets. Patrizia Cassaniti also had a number of meetings with the Minister. The Minister gave her very strong assurances that he would do something about industrial manslaughter. She referred to that in her submission to the upper House inquiry. She said she had had a few meetings with Mr Anderson and, in reference to industrial manslaughter, she said, "One minute it is on; one minute it is off." She went on to say:

He has done a few good things, and I think the custodial sentence is a little bit greater than one year. But let's face it: They hardly ever go to jail anyway—not that we want that; but if it is, like with my son's case, an act of gross negligence, the chain of responsibility failed. Mr Anderson came and showed us the amendment. I thought it was okay, but it was not enough. It will not

act as a deterrent for tier 1 builders and big factories. Three million dollars is their pay cheque for the week or the year, whatever it may be. It is nothing. It is not a deterrent.

When she asked about industrial manslaughter, the Minister at first said he had never heard about it and then, "Maybe we should look at it." He repeatedly said, "We want to do something", but then went to the media saying, "We're not going to have a provision for industrial manslaughter." That is really disappointing. The Minister also told her that the Government wants to go over and above the recommendations of the Boland review but instead New South Wales is implementing only a small proportion of them. I am not sure why the Minister has decided not to implement the full recommendations of the Boland review. That it is deeply disappointing for everybody who goes to work every day in New South Wales.

Queensland has implemented industrial manslaughter laws and prosecutions are ongoing. This week the Queensland Coroner brought down his findings about the accident at Dreamworld, which was one of the important events that led to the Queensland Government implementing the industrial manslaughter legislation, even though the deaths were of people using the rides rather than of employees. Two men and two women were killed on the Thunder River Rapids Ride at Dreamworld when the ride malfunctioned and threw two people out and trapped two inside. It stunned the entire nation and the Queensland Government took action.

The Coroner's detailed report released yesterday was absolutely damning about the complete lack of investment in safety, even though those roads clearly are quite dangerous. Inspections were not being done; no-one really cared what was going on there until people died. As a result, Queensland now has industrial manslaughter laws and people are being prosecuted. Currently the Queensland Government is in the process of extending those industrial manslaughter laws to the mining industry, which has a separate workplace health and safety regime.

Labor will support industrial manslaughter laws and will introduce amendments to deal with industrial safety issues far more adequately than does the bill before the House. Labor will introduce an industrial manslaughter offence and far higher penalties, including jail time. Over the past few years the Berejiklian Government has been absolutely missing in action on workplace health and safety. The number of complaints I get about SafeWork NSW and its poor operations is incredible. I have been told a number of times that when SafeWork finally gets an inspector on site and he makes a recommendation to stop work and issues a prohibition order, by the time the inspector gets back to the office, the employer has been on the phone to the higher-ups at SafeWork and they have been given seven days notice to improve the situation. This is when people are faced with deadly, unsafe workplaces. That is the culture in New South Wales at the moment. It is not acceptable.

We must change the culture in workplaces and we must change the culture in SafeWork NSW. We can do that only by fully implementing the recommendations of the Boland review. Labor will follow the example of Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland and Victoria by implementing an offence of industrial manslaughter. We will hold rogue companies to account for workplace deaths and re-establish an industrial court in New South Wales to enforce workplace safety laws. Labor has made a commitment to the Cassaniti family to implement Christopher's Law, for which they have campaigned since Christopher's death in April last year.

It is absolutely clear that our laws are failing and that a major overhaul of safety standards is needed as well as greatly improved enforcement of those standards. I am pleased that both the Leader of the Opposition, Jodi McKay, and the industrial relations spokesperson, the Hon. Adam Searle, are committed to that. Labor wants a specific offence of industrial manslaughter; We are not happy leave it to the Work Health and Safety Act. Labor wants to confer rights and responsibilities that currently exist in workplace health and safety laws back on the Industrial Relations Commission. We want to ensure that workers and their representatives can enforce workplace safety laws. We want to stop the current charade of union officials facing endless questions about right of entry when they complain about safety issues. When dealing with potentially deadly situations, the only thing SafeWork NSW seems to be interested in is whether the union officials should have been there in the first place.

We want to ensure also that the highest safety standards apply to all successful tenderers for government contracts. Time and again workplace health and safety standards are breached on government construction projects. The entire nine-kilometre NorthConnex tunnel is full of highly dangerous mould, which has been hugely problematic for workers. The Electrical Trades Union has done a great job in highlighting those problems. Everyone working in that tunnel is at risk. Anyone who suffers asthma or other respiratory distress is in a potentially dangerous situation—one that should never have arisen. In response, the contractor sent in only four sanitation officers to clean a nine-kilometre tunnel. That is probably one of the worst examples I have seen. However, time and again, safety issues have arisen on the Government's construction sites.

Christopher's Law would ensure that all safety officers appointed to large-scale construction sites are independent—not employees of the builder—and have no incentive to turn a blind eye to an unsafe situation. If safety officers are independent, they will not worry about future employment with that builder or any other

builder. Safety inspectors have told me that the situation is deeply problematic. In fact, on the site where Christopher Cassaniti worked, multiple safety officers had resigned, one after the other, complaining about safety issues. Safety officers must be utterly independent. Third-party valuers and estimators must be brought in to check all bids on large-scale construction projects to eliminate poor construction practices due to cost cutting and time constraints. We must ensure that the white card cannot be obtained online and is available only after undertaking an approved TAFE or equivalent course.

Apprentices must be required to wear different coloured safety hardhats so that they can be easily recognised and removed from inappropriate or unsafe situations. We must require all supervisory personnel to complete a comprehensive health and safety representative course or a Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety so that they are more aware of the consequences of unsafe work practices. I am very pleased that the Government is finally doing something about workplace health and safety in this State, but it is not going far enough at all. We need an offence of industrial manslaughter and we need to fully implement a culture in our workplaces across this State in which workplace safety is taken seriously, so that if employers have made deliberate decisions to compromise the safety of their employees they will be held accountable and could potentially be sent to jail. We do not want people going to jail; we want people taking their safety responsibility seriously. Unfortunately, this bill does not go far enough in pursuing that end.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (12:49:57): I support the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Review) Bill 2019. At the front of our thoughts is the sudden and tragic passing of the driver and the pilot on the XPT service that derailed near Wallan station in Victoria on Thursday last week. I extend my condolences to their families and to all who knew them as friends or work colleagues. It is a tragic reminder of the importance of workplace safety. Government shares a responsibility with businesses and employees in protecting workers and other persons from harm to their health, safety and welfare. I thank Minister Anderson for introducing this bill, which will increase protections for workers in New South Wales without increasing regulatory burden on small businesses.

The Government recognises the valuable role that small businesses play in the New South Wales economy and as employers of workers in this State. The majority of businesses in New South Wales take their obligations to ensure the health and safety of their workers seriously and comply with the duties imposed by the Work Health and Safety Act. The bill does not seek to change the nature of the duties imposed by the Act on businesses and duty holders. Businesses that already comply with their duties will not be held to a higher standard; they will continue to be required to ensure the safety of workers and others who may be affected so far as is reasonably practicable. Instead, the bill targets the minority of businesses that are not currently complying with their obligations under the Act. It gives those businesses and duty holders stronger incentives to comply with the Act by significantly increasing its deterrent power.

When this bill becomes law, work health and safety duty holders who expose workers or others to a risk of death, serious injury or illness through gross negligence in the workplace will face prosecution for the category 1 offence—the most serious offence in the Work Health and Safety Act. Exposing workers to such a risk is already prohibited by the Act. To avoid prosecution for such an offence, businesses need do no more than comply with their existing obligations. But businesses that are not complying will now face prosecution for an offence that reflects the seriousness with which the community regards putting workers at risk.

The bill will increase the penalties for offences under the Act by reference to increases in the consumer price index. This will ensure that work health and safety duty holders face penalties for breaches of those duties which maintain their real deterrent value over time. This will not affect those duty holders who are already fulfilling those duties. Again, the bill targets the minority who fail to comply with their duties by giving them stronger incentives to comply. The bill will also amend the Work Health and Safety Act to add a note that makes it clear that work-related deaths can also be prosecuted as manslaughter under the Crimes Act. That is already the case, but the note will make it clear to those duty holders who need to hear the message that the consequences of breaching their duties can be extremely serious and include a jail term of up to 25 years.

For those small businesses that are complying with the law there is much to welcome in this bill. I hope that it will help to ensure that small businesses that are investing in their workers' health and safety are not competing with businesses that are cutting corners and exposing their workers to danger. The bill will also give small businesses greater clarity as to some of their obligations. For example, it will make clear that a person can be both a worker who is owed duties by persons conducting a business or undertaking, and a person conducting a business or undertaking who owes duties to workers themselves.

Small businesses often operate on multi-business worksites. This clarification will give businesses a firm basis on which to engage with each other to fulfil their shared obligations to ensure the safety of all workers on the site. Amendments to streamline the investigative process will also be of benefit to business. When inspectors need to enter a worksite it can be disruptive for business and even require part or whole of the operations to be

temporarily halted. Inspectors will no longer need to re-enter a workplace to ask follow-up questions or obtain follow-up documents within 30 days of their last entry.

More flexible investigations—for example, not requiring an inspector to attend a worksite in person when the information they need can be provided by email—will have benefits for both regulators and businesses. Efficient and effective investigations benefit workplaces by ensuring that any lessons that need to be learnt from an incident can be applied as quickly as possible to avoid future incidents. The legislative reforms in this bill will promote worker safety without unduly burdening small businesses. Some of our most vital small businesses are our many farms. The Government is committed to supporting the farmers of New South Wales to ensure that they meet their work health and safety duties.

I will highlight two SafeWork NSW initiatives targeted at improving work health and safety on farms in particular. The first is the Quad Bike Safety Improvement Program, which focuses on reducing the unacceptably high number of fatalities and serious injuries caused by quad bikes. The program was renewed in 2019 and expanded to enable eligible businesses to access rebates for drones. SafeWork NSW is encouraging the use of drones on farms as an innovative harm prevention solution. The use of drones on farms can improve safety by reducing quad bike usage as well as increasing farming efficiency. To date the Government has paid out more than \$3.39 million in rebates to farmers through the Quad Bike Safety Improvement Program, with farmers investing over \$33.4 million in improving safety on their farms. In addition, over 1,470 participants have attended safety training financed through the program.

Secondly, *The A-Z of Farm Safety* guide was launched to help farmers improve health and safety across their operations. The guide was designed for farmers, by farmers, to assist in identifying the main elements of risk on a farm and what workers and duty holders can do to improve safety. In addition to the work SafeWork NSW does with farmers, it also offers a range of programs and initiatives to support small businesses that align with the New South Wales Government's Small Business Strategy. Two key SafeWork NSW initiatives aimed at helping small businesses are the Easy to Do Work Health and Safety toolkit and the small business safety rebate. Since its initial release in late 2018, the toolkit, which makes safety easier for small businesses, has proven popular, with over 50,000 hits on the website. More than 28,000 small businesses across New South Wales have received the toolkit either in hard copy or soft copy format.

The small business safety rebate program offers between \$500 and \$1,000 cash back on the purchase of eligible safety items. Between July and December 2019, 206 small businesses received the rebate, valued at \$93,797. In the 2018-19 financial year, SafeWork NSW supported over 428 small businesses through the rebate, valued at \$202,175. SafeWork NSW also uses a range of channels to make it easier for small businesses to seek assistance on work health and safety in the way that suits them most. These channels include phone and email contact, workplace advisory visits, mentor programs and regular workshops and events. [*Extension of time*]

I also appreciate those amendments aimed at streamlining cross-jurisdictional cooperation, which should help reduce the time of investigations. Schedule 1 [19] to the bill amends section 271 of the Work Health and Safety Act to clarify that:

... information, including personal or health information, can be shared with work health and safety regulators in other Australian jurisdictions if it is relevant to a workplace incident being investigated in that jurisdiction.

In my electorate, cross-border and cross-jurisdictional matters are a constant source of delay and frustration, with so many people working in one State but residing in another. Indeed, some businesses operate on both sides of the border, such as our hospital service, with more than 2,000 employees and multiple workplaces. Sharing of information relevant to understanding a workplace incident is a valuable part of improving the investigation processes. When a person dies in a workplace incident the family is thrown into a maze of issues, such as interactions with officials, counselling and important decision-making, at a time of profound grief and loss. This can make decision-making traumatic, exhausting and confusing. In 2018, following the deaths of Lyndon Quinlivan and Ben Pascall in Albury in a workplace incident, the widow of Mr Quinlivan met with me to consider suggestions that could help support people who find themselves in her position.

Assistance might involve greater coordination of services and information that, in Ms Quinlivan's words, "Might save countless hours of unnecessary scouring the internet for support." It is vital that we listen to those who have been through these traumatic events. I acknowledge the Minister's support in meeting with Albury residents Jacci Quinlivan, partner of Lyndon, and with Debra Pascall, mother of Ben, to listen to their stories, their experiences and their advocacy for government support services. By increasing the deterrent power of the Act, the Government supports SafeWork NSW's efforts to embed a health and safety culture in businesses of all sizes across this State. The majority of businesses do not need a further deterrent; they already take health and safety seriously. This bill will ensure that New South Wales workers are protected from exposure to risks that breach our existing laws. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:02:13): I am delighted to contribute to debate on the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Review) Bill 2019. The object of the bill is to amend the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the regulations under the Act to, firstly, implement proposals based on recommendations made by the 2018 *Review of the Model Work Health and Safety Laws* and, secondly, make minor amendments to the Act recommended by the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011: Statutory Review Report* in relation to the application of the Act to dangerous goods and high-risk plant. I acknowledge my colleagues who have contributed to the debate, particularly my shadow ministerial colleague, the member for Granville. I acknowledge the support of the Hon. Adam Searle, shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, and, of course, Labor leader Jodi McKay, who has been a passionate advocate for workplace relations and the safety of those at work.

Ultimately it is everyone's goal to ensure that people get home from work in the same condition as when they left for work. I believe that is everyone's objective. However, while the Labor Opposition welcomes the bill we feel, as my shadow ministerial colleague has said, that it does not go far enough, particularly in relation to the provisions for manslaughter. The member for Albury made some commentary about manslaughter provisions. With all respect and regard, I will correct some of it. Stakeholders have noted that referencing the manslaughter provisions of the Crimes Act does not deal specifically with deaths caused at work. Actually, there has not been a workplace safety-related charge of manslaughter under the Crimes Act. There is a wide view that the inclusion of the words "gross negligence" to section 31 (1) (c) does not equal "industrial manslaughter" either. According to stakeholders, "gross negligence" appears to set a very high hurdle when "exposure to death or injury by negligence" should be sufficient. I also note that former Queensland Government Minister Hon. John English and Trevor Little have made some good contributions to this conversation, specifically about section 31. They state:

- 1) The change in wording still places the onus on the prosecution to prove that a person, high up the corporate ladder, engaged in conduct that was gross negligence or was reckless to an individual. As we know, it is not about the individual but primarily about systems. The higher you go up the food chain, the more difficult that will be to prove.
- 2) The lack of definition about what constitutes gross negligence is also problematic.
- 3) The term "reckless to an individual" almost implies that the prosecution would need to prove that any corporate entity knew that a particular act or non-act would or could result in a threat to an individual.
- 4) The penalty for these offences is still only 5 years imprisonment.

Their comments about the bill as a whole are that an industrial manslaughter offence is uniquely appropriate for the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to create an offence under the Crimes Act 1900 that involves numerous people with little knowledge of the elements surrounding workplace death and workplace relations. Getting into the bill further, schedule 1 [3] inserts a note into part 2 of the Act. Schedule 1 [3] states, in part:

Part 2 provides for the health and safety duties owed by a person conducting a business or undertaking to the person's workers and offences for contravening those duties.

Schedule 1 [13] states:

Schedule 1[13] amends section 171 of the Act to provide that after an inspector has entered a workplace, the inspector or another inspector can exercise the investigative powers in section 171 for up to 30 days without having to re-enter the workplace.

The powers in section 171 include powers to require a person to tell an inspector who has custody of documents, to require production of documents and to require a person to answer questions. We know that the seriousness of workplace safety must be paramount for each member in this place. I will share some statistical data with members. So far this year 21 people have died in the workplace. Last year 162 workers died at the workplace, compared with 144 in 2018. Thirty-seven of those 144 worked in the agricultural, forestry or fishing industries. From 2003 to 2018 a total of 3,751 deaths have occurred in the workplace in this State, 31 per cent of which were from vehicle collisions.

Transport workers are at the most risk and are commonly the largest group for every statistic for workplace injuries and deaths. The transport industry is very close to my heart. As members may recall, when I left the Australian Army I was a truck driver; that was my source of income at the time. I carted fuel around and carted coal up and down to Port Kembla out of Appin and other mines around New South Wales. I offer my condolences to all the families, loved ones and friends of the workers who tragically have lost their lives in the workplace. Labor will move amendments to the bill to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to ensure accountability for those in the workplace. More responsibility must be taken.

I say again, to date there has not been a single effective workplace-related charge of manslaughter under the Crimes Act, which shows that there is something wrong. The fact that 3,751 people have died at work in 15 years, but there has not been a single charge speaks volumes to the holes in the Act. There are not appropriate frameworks or measures in place to ensure accountability. I again note the comments on this matter by my colleague the shadow Minister, and member for Granville. In this place those opposite often say they are the friend

of the worker. I know that that comment is somewhat tongue in cheek and is a point that the conservatives of politics like to make. [*Extension of time*]

We know that those opposite say it because we are a proud Labor Party that always has and always will be from the worker and for the worker. That comment is a swipe at us for their own petulant reasons; I will leave that to them. Now they have an opportunity to support the amendments that the Labor Opposition will move. If they are the true friend of the worker then good; I look forward to their support for our amendments. Ultimately, if we are fair dinkum about wanting to do anything and everything to protect workers, these foreshadowed amendments were designed to do precisely that—to put in place provisions to deliver a safety network for all workers throughout every industry. The Government will have its chance to be the true friend of the worker. I will not go into that any further. I urge all members opposite to give due consideration to the amendments when they are moved. I again thank my colleagues Labor leader Jodi McKay and the shadow Minister for continuing to put the safety of workers in the workplace at the forefront of what we do and the proud labour movement.

Debate interrupted.

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

Members

MEMBER FOR SWANSEA

MEMBER FOR WYONG

The SPEAKER: I wish the members for Swansea and Wyong all the best for their recent birthdays. I hope they enjoyed some wonderful celebrations.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome Jonty Redman to the Speaker's Gallery, who is interning with my office for the next few months. There are a number of interns around Parliament House. A warm welcome is extended to Allyn and Dave Love from the United States of America, who are currently visiting capital cities of Australia. They are guests of Minister Roberts. I also welcome Graeme Cord and Gail Stebbings from the Cambewarra Residents and Ratepayers Association, guests of the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services and the member for Kiama. I welcome George Souris, former member for Upper Hunter, John Wilson and David Groves to the gallery, who are on the Board of the Australian Rugby Foundation.

I acknowledge Greg Walker, Kathryn Conroy and Luke Bowden of Evolution Mining, guests of the member for Cootamundra. I also acknowledge Tony Mittiga and Vincenzo Daniele from Consulate Regione Calabria. I acknowledge Sam Sposato, President of the Calabria Club in Melbourne, Father Gaytone Nicolaci and Father Geovani Tucci, representing the sanctuary of San Francisco, guests of the member for Cabramatta. I acknowledge Inta Scully and Julieanna Kocer, guests of the member for Wollongong. I acknowledge Jordan Sosnowski, guest of the member for Ballina, and Tim Kelley, guest of the member for Dubbo. Finally, I acknowledge Ashfield Boys High School teachers and students, guests of the member for Summer Hill. I welcome all to the Chamber.

Announcements

TRIBUTE TO HANNAH CLARKE

The SPEAKER: Members will have been deeply saddened by the tragic event in Brisbane last week of the death of Hannah Clarke and her three young children: Aaliyah, Laianah and Trey. We pay tribute to all women, men and children killed by domestic and family violence in Australia, including the one woman killed each week, on average, at the hands of a current or former intimate partner.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

MODERNISATION OF THE PARLIAMENT

The SPEAKER: I will update members on three matters relating to the Legislative Assembly and the broader Parliament. When I became Speaker, I identified three areas for reform in this place. The first was modernising the operations of the Parliament; the second was addressing members' rights and support, including lifting standards among parliamentarians to better meet community expectations; and the third was how Parliament can better engage with the public.

On the modernisation front, after 164 years of paper-based tallying, the Whips will now tally divisions on an app using a tablet. The results will be seamlessly incorporated into *Hansard* and the *Votes and Proceedings*. The *Votes and Proceedings* system has also been updated. We now have a running record for the Legislative Assembly on the parliamentary website, so anyone can follow what is happening in the Legislative Assembly Chamber pretty much live. The live feed updated by the Clerks in the Chamber gives a snapshot of proceedings as they happen. Anyone can easily find out what has been debated, what the House is currently considering and the results of any divisions. Work also continues on the e-petitions project, which will enable members of the public to create and sign a petition online through the Legislative Assembly's website.

Over the break there has also been a technological upgrade relating to the microphones at the lecterns, which means that the microphones on either side of the table can be turned off by the Speaker, rather than just turning off everything. Members who disregard calls to order from the Speaker and fail to resume their seat will no longer be heard at the table, including through the microphones. The Legislative Assembly has also undertaken a review of its staff structure and it is now revising those arrangements. Further information will be forthcoming shortly in terms of that refined and clarified structure.

Over the summer break, the ceilings project delivered upgrades along the level 7 executive corridor and in 2020 the ceilings project will continue in the public cafe, Strangers Bar lounge and on level 10. The Hospital Road pedestrian turnstiles, and modifications to the traffic box and security blockers are now fully operational. To enhance the wellbeing and performance of members, my office has also been working to develop a new professional development program. Last year we hosted a professional development roundtable at Parliament House, which was attended by various members of Parliament and external leaders in the field. Building on the feedback of that successful event, the President and I will be inviting members to a briefing on the 2020-21 Professional Development Program for members of Parliament next month.

To better engage with the public, we continue to improve the customer experience of visitors to our Parliament House. The new *People's House* video is now playing on the screens in the Legislative Assembly foyer alongside the previous video. We resume the second week of trialling having a dedicated meet-and-greet person stationed in the foyer of Parliament House, as some members may have seen already. Last, but not least, thanks to the Former Members Association, the Speaker's garden now features a red rose specially cultivated for the New South Wales Parliament. I look forward to delivering two of the new red roses to the Premier and Leader of the Opposition in due course. I look forward to informing the House about further progress in future.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I inform the House that the Treasurer will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney.

Question Time

SYDNEY METRO CITY AND SOUTHWEST

Ms JODI MCKAY (Strathfield) (14:23:53): My question is directed to the Premier. When exactly did the Premier first become aware her Sydney Metro project had blown out by \$3 billion?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24:09): As the Minister for Transport so articulately explained in recent days, the final price tag for that project is not known because a number of contracts related to that project are not yet known. I stress that I remember very vividly having to stand up in this place on a number of occasions after I had been asked why the Northwest rail line had blown out by billions of dollars. Fortunately, that project came in around \$1.2 billion or \$1.3 billion under budget; similarly, the Southwest rail line. We appreciate that all major projects are complex, but that is no reason not to do them; that is no reason not to listen to the market.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will make it very clear the way I will put members on calls to order from now on. When a Minister is seriously answering a question—

Mr Michael Daley: They are not. That is your problem.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. When a Minister is answering a question seriously or speaking seriously to a question I expect the Minister to be heard in silence. If a Minister is attacking Opposition members then I give a little bit more leeway. Opposition members will show some respect when the Premier, in particular, is responding seriously to a question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I was saying before I was interrupted, obviously in delivering major complex projects the Government always provides an opportunity to improve relationships with the market sector and also we make sure that we listen to the market on when is the best time to deliver a project and what the project will cost. I appreciate that it is absolutely vital that every step of the way we keep the community advised of what we know at any given point in time. In fact, I thought it was appropriate to hear comments from the business community, and I do not necessarily agree with them, but a number of people said governments should not give up-front costs because we do not know the cost—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was when exactly did the Premier first become aware of the billion-dollar blowout in her Sydney Metro project. It left no room—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has made her point.

Ms Jodi McKay: It is a very clear question: When exactly—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has made her point. It is a question about time, and the Premier is answering the question.

Ms Jodi McKay: In other words, did the Premier know when she went to the election?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What the Opposition leader is alleging about any knowledge of this prior to going to the people is absolutely not the case.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has just answered the question fairly directly.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In any event, what those opposite demonstrate time and time again, which is very disappointing, is that they lack the experience—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What is very disappointing is that those opposite not only do not support any of our infrastructure projects, but also they do not support the future of New South Wales.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Because if they did, they would get behind the Government's nearly \$1 billion infrastructure pipeline.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is project after project. Every time we announce a project the first ones to say not to build it are those opposite—whether it is a country road, a rail line in the city, a school or a sporting stadium. In fact, the first ones to get corporate boxes for the Parramatta stadium, which opened last year, were those opposite. I stress that was another project that came in under budget. We are the party for the workers; we are the party for the future of New South Wales. We build; they wreck.

TAFE NSW

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (14:29:41): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on TAFE reform?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:31:14): As I outlined last week and this week, we are a government that is passionate about education in all its forms. We announced three key plans that our Government is absolutely committed to: decluttering the curriculum, raising standards in the classroom by supporting our great teachers, and ensuring—I am sure some of the young people in the gallery today will be open to this—that we have greater opportunities—

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Mr Speaker, can I ask you to stop the clock every time there is an interruption so that I can speak?

The SPEAKER: I will keep your request in mind. Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Keira to order for the third time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Irrespective of what a young person chooses to do, whether it is to adopt a trade, to go to university or to go to TAFE, we want to make sure they have the opportunity to get the best jobs available.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time. I remind members to turn off their mobile phones. I call the member for Kogarah to order for the second time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I do not know about those opposite but to me this is a very important issue.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When I went to university, if it were not for the Higher Education Contribution Scheme I would not have been able to afford to get a degree.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I have made it pretty clear that when the Premier or anyone else is speaking seriously to a question I expect silence. The Premier is speaking seriously to an important issue. If members persist—and I say this to the Leader of the Opposition—they will be removed from the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What is important to me is to make sure that advanced manufacturing jobs that are currently emerging are able to be gained in New South Wales. Recently we heard the devastating news that Holden will not be producing any more vehicles, and we have heard about retail outlets reducing their floor space. We need to ensure that those emerging industries—whether it is 3D printing, robotics or other forms of advanced manufacturing—have a place in New South Wales. I commend TAFE for the outstanding work it does, because many TAFE courses are the best in the world. But we need to make sure that not only do we build on the success of the current courses—which not only are popular but also are getting jobs—but also that we have those courses available which are going to fill those jobs which have not even been created. I place on record how proud I am and I commend the Deputy Premier, when he had this responsibility, for ensuring 100,000 free apprenticeships in New South Wales. That is a policy that will continue.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Another important aspect is to support all the scholarships available through the TAFE system. When we build the aerotropolis we know that we will have 20-odd companies that specialise in advanced manufacturing. We need the courses to train people to fill those jobs.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When the Government looks at the Connected Learning Centres in the bush, it wants to make sure that courses are available in advanced genomics and in all those areas that are making sure agribusiness is front and centre. The Government will make sure that all those opportunities for future jobs are available. I want to make sure that not only are our motivations completely pure, but who in Australia are better placed to lead this review for the Government than Mr David Gonski and Professor Shergold? I am proud of the fact that New South Wales was the first State to sign up to Gonski. The results of that education investment are being borne all through the State, whether it is in the city or in the bush. [*Extension of time*]

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When it comes to TAFE, I want students to hold their heads up high and know that TAFE and university are as good as each other.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: And that TAFE and university can be talked about in the same sentence.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If members opposite have any constructive views on this issue, they should—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In relation to the contribution the Government makes to TAFE, it is all about ensuring that we keep what is great about that organisation. I am incredibly proud that Minister Lee was a former TAFE teacher, as was his father. He is a second-generation TAFE teacher that will be leading this work.

When we look at the best models around the world we see they have many elements of what the TAFE system has currently. They also have an eye to the future. That is what I want to have in New South Wales.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I want us to keep not only all the things that are great about the organisation but also make sure that we have courses available and industry input that will allow people to get jobs which currently do not exist. The Government wants to make sure that people have access to jobs when they are mid career or at the end of their career because the Government knows that disruption is the norm. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition wants to make sure that TAFE is equipped to deal with those challenges because it is the party of the workers.

TAFE NSW

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (14:38:10): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier rule out privatising TAFE?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:38:20): I thank the shadow Minister for his question because I think it is an appropriate question to ask. It gives me the chance to talk further on the question I received previously. I make the commitment to everybody concerned that the Government will always control the courses available.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: About two years ago I visited the Mount Druitt TAFE. The Mount Druitt TAFE is special because the Government identified it as a TAFE with a lot of road construction in the vicinity, yet the industry and businesses were telling us they did not have enough workers with the skills to drive their equipment. The Government invited industry to prepare and deliver the course and as a result we got young people trained to use that equipment, which they are now doing in building projects like WestConnex and projects around the airport.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: I tried really hard to keep the question very clear and simple. Will the Premier privatise TAFE?

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What is the Opposition asking?

The SPEAKER: It is not appropriate to ask the question in reverse. I will take it as a rhetorical question. The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is not clear. Do those opposite regard it as a problem if industry is involved in TAFE?

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Speaker, can you stop the clock please?

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I remind members they should not expect to get the call simply by standing.

Mr Jihad Dib: When the Opposition was putting this question together it kept it as simple and unambiguous as possible.

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

Mr Jihad Dib: My point of order is that the Premier keeps asking me what am I asking. The question is simple: Will the Premier rule out privatising TAFE? In other words, will she say she is not going to privatise TAFE?

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat.

Mr Jihad Dib: It is yes or no. It is pretty simple.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Again, I say that I do not quite understand the question.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: This is not an opportunity for the member for Lakemba to reply. He will resume his seat. The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I make this commitment: The New South Wales Government currently invests billions of dollars in TAFE every year and that will continue. If the question is whether we are open to industry making a contribution on top of that, the answer is yes.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The State contribution to TAFE will always continue. But if industry also wants to be involved in new courses, the Government will be open to that. If the Opposition has a problem with that, it should say so up-front. I am also cognisant of the fact that if we are serious about supporting workers and young people, we have to let Mr Gonski and Professor Shergold do their work. The Government has to ensure that every single dollar we invest in TAFE—

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lakemba will state his point of order quickly.

Mr Jihad Dib: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I was asked to provide more clarification about the question. What do we mean by asking: Will the Premier privatise TAFE? Will the Premier be selling it off? Is it about industry?

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

Mr Jihad Dib: No, it is about privatisation. Yes or no.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If the question is whether we are selling off TAFE, the answer is an absolute no. This is about increasing our opportunities. I tried to give the Opposition an opportunity to say it supports business being involved in TAFE; it does not. That is its problem. The Opposition does not support industry. That is why jobs were lost under the Opposition, because it does not care about jobs. This is why nothing got built, because the Opposition is living in the dark ages. We are the party of the workers. We are the party for jobs. We are the party for apprentices. The Opposition is in the dark ages.

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:44:22): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier and Minister Responsible for Disaster Recovery, Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the bushfire recovery effort?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:44:45): I thank the member for Clarence for that important question relating to the next step in the recovery. Leading on from the previous topic of TAFE, if there was ever a need for an army of apprentices to rebuild this State, it is now. With 2,500 homes lost, 10,000 properties impacted and another 41,000 properties with assessments done, there is no question that the journey of recovery and rebuilding our regional communities is one that will take a mighty effort and that will bring communities and all levels of government together, in partnership with the New South Wales Government and Laing O'Rourke. What is exciting is that there are opportunities for small local businesses and subcontractors. As of today, about 1,000 subcontractors have registered through NSW Procurement to be part of the clean-up. It is very important that we engage local businesses and subbies. It is their community; they know the landholders.

After the announcement concerning Laing O'Rourke a couple of weeks ago, it was great to see subcontractors start the clean-up. A week and a half ago I had the privilege to be in the north of the State in the electorate of Myall Lakes at a place called Rainbow Flat, the first official site the Government cleared. In Rainbow Flat about 40 homes were lost. At a particular block of land we turned up to, the owner, Peter, had a tough story. Peter is a 72-year-old pensioner who had no insurance on his house. On the Friday before the fires he had an agreement to sell his property. Unfortunately, that did not occur. Now Peter has to look at his options for what to do next. His message was clear: He was very happy to see the Government meeting the cost of cleaning up blocks of land and his home, which was just rubble on a bit of dirt. For him, part of the healing and the journey of recovery was seeing that debris removed.

Yes, it is tough for an individual to see all their personal belongings bulldozed off their land and put on the back of a truck. But it is part of the healing and part of the journey so you can hope and dream about a future. The reality for many in our community is that things will never be the same. Peter—who, as I said, is a pensioner—made picture frames on the side in his garage. He lost all his tools and his home, which was uninsured. His future is going to be tough but he was still pleased with the role the Government had played. He thought it would be years before he saw the site cleared. His neighbours who were insured and whose properties were saved were concerned about the uninsured homes and whether the debris would remain as a hazard in the future. They were

also pleased to see the State and Federal governments come together, committing hundreds of millions of dollars to support the clean-up effort—a mighty effort on the ground.

I encourage landholders across the State to register with Service NSW. I give a shout-out to Service NSW personnel—the people in the offices on the phone who are doing a wonderful job connecting community, industry, our partner Laing O'Rourke and the Government to ensure that no-one falls through the cracks. It is going to be a tough journey. We have an ambitious target—to have the majority of the work completed by June 30—but we are also sensitive during this time that this journey is a tough one. We are allowing landholders to decide when the clean-up should begin and what the scope of works will look like, and they will sign off on the completed works.

I also had the privilege to visit Mogo with the member for Bega last week when the South Coast clean-up journey began. The Government is prioritising areas where hazards, such as asbestos and debris, may become a problem from a safety perspective. But at the same time, we will be running the clean-up in parallel. It is not north versus south; Lithgow is not missing out. It is everything in parallel, with 1,000 subcontractors on the ground delivering the clean-up program. I hope that clearly shows the people of this State the Government is not only passionate about dealing with the fires and the crisis, but also passionate and vigilant about ensuring that the recovery is a great recovery to deliver some level of normality on the ground.

In my job as the Minister responsible for recovery I travel to all regions and meet many wonderful communities. But I also hear some harrowing stories. Today I share a story from Brooke Ladmore about her father, Bob Broomham. She thought this would be a good story for me to share. She describes the black lumps that were her father's cattle who perished in the fire. Over 120 of his cattle were wiped out, along with all infrastructure. Other injured cattle had to be shot. Since the fires her father has been driving over three hours every day to feed the remaining cattle. He is 70 years of age but he is not giving up. She wrote:

I just thought this should be shared to give people hope that life will go on, it will be hard but it will make us all more resilient, I don't really know how he carries on. He was also one of the people who found his neighbour and good mate (Colin Burns) of 50 years burned alive in his car, an image he'll never forget.

They were stuck and isolated and they took shelter with some neighbours in a recently erected fire shed where they were stranded for days; we still didn't know if they were even alive at this point.

Dad was approaching his last dose of insulin, so had to do something! He had parked one of his tractors in the dam with a motorbike and two chainsaws (this is all he had left of his lifetime of working 7 days a week).

With a few of his neighbours they cut their way in to Bodalla just past Nerrigundah; it would normally be a 45 minute drive but took them almost 3 days!

That is just one of the stories that I and many other members, such as Andrew Constance, Shelley Hancock and other members who have been impacted by fire, are hearing on the ground. They are real stories, harrowing stories. The memorial service on Sunday acknowledged the deaths of 25 of our fellow citizens and three people from the United States who lost their lives protecting their property, protecting community, protecting life. But the story could have been worse: Hundreds more could have been killed, as there were so many close calls. [*Extension of time*]

This recovery journey is an important journey. It is a journey of healing and bringing community together. We can focus on the billions of dollars that have been committed. I am proud as a government, with the leadership of the Premier and the support of the Treasurer, that from New South Wales alone in excess of \$2 billion is going to recovery to try to get people to some level of normality. The Federal Government has also made a \$2 billion-plus investment to ensure support for all our industries and communities. I am not going to pretend that this is an easy journey. I said in this place before that this is not an issue or a topic to play politics with.

It is an issue and a topic where we come together as a Parliament—not as Government and Opposition or crossbench—because it is important to lead the recovery and the healing together and get the recovery done as soon as possible. In some parts of the State this will take years; in others, only months. Regardless, when you lose your home and you lose your memories, you lose a part of your life. But there is an opportunity through this clean-up to start a new chapter—a chapter of hope—and a new life for many of our communities in regional and rural New South Wales.

POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:51:46): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. I note the answer he just gave. Given that, does he support his Government's plan to spend \$1.5 billion relocating the Powerhouse Museum instead of using those funds to help rural and regional New South Wales?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:52:08): I thank the Leader of the Opposition. It is a fair question—a question about priorities, looking at what has happened in this State. We have been battered by the worst drought in living

memory. Again, I am very proud that the Government allocated in excess of \$3 billion for drought support and water infrastructure to ensure that we learn from this drought to protect and somehow build some resilience in our regional communities to tackle the droughts of the future. Speaking of drought, just because it has rained at Warragamba Dam and on the coast, the drought is not over. Some 99.4 per cent of the State is in drought—37 per cent in severe drought. Communities such as Bathurst, which received 5 millimetres of rain in the rain events in the past couple of weeks, is going to stage 5 water restrictions by June, and to stage 6 after that if it does not rain. That means a community of about 40,000 people surviving by using buckets.

Because of our fiscal responsibility, running surpluses, recycling assets, growing the economy and seeing the lowest unemployment in the country, the Government has been able to respond to crisis. The bushfires crisis is no different—\$2 billion plus and the opportunity to do more. This is not about the city versus the bush. I am proud of a government that has seen record investment in regional and rural New South Wales. The Grafton Bridge, which was promised by those opposite on three occasions, has been officially opened. On Friday I was in Batemans Bay with the member for Bega where the \$274 million Batemans Bay recovery—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

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

Ms Jodi McKay: I refer to Standing Order 129. My question related specifically to whether the Deputy Premier supports the \$1.5 billion move of the Powerhouse Museum at the expense of rural and regional New South Wales. The Powerhouse Museum move—does he support it?

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier is being relevant, although at some stage in his answer I expect him to use the words "Powerhouse Museum".

Mr JOHN BARILARO: What I am articulating is this: Regional and rural New South Wales is the powerhouse of our economy—the mining sector, the timber industry, our renewables. But the question is about the Powerhouse, and I am more than happy to answer that. From lessons learned, we know one thing that is important from government. Remember Julia Gillard and "There will be no carbon tax under the Government I lead"? We know that election promises are important. The Powerhouse was an election promise by this Government, like many other infrastructure projects. If I thought that regional and rural New South Wales was missing out because we did not have the ability to support our regions, then of course I would have concerns.

The reality is that election commitments are important. They build trust with the community and, as the Government, we need to make sure of that. But what we also have in front of us—and what those opposite do not talk about—is the \$4.2 billion that we received from selling Snowy Hydro to the Federal Government. The Government reserved \$4.2 billion, with every single cent going to regional and rural New South Wales. That is so important. We have already dished out \$215 million in relation to water security; we have announced dams for the future. Regional and rural New South Wales is not missing out. It is not about us versus them; it is about a government that has been able to put forward a plan that has taken nine years.

There has been record investment in infrastructure. Regional and rural New South Wales is not missing out. I recall that in this House and during the election campaign every time I spoke about the Regional Growth Fund and \$1.9 billion going to regional and rural communities, those opposite would scream out, "Pork-barrelling!" When we said \$4.2 billion from Snowy Hydro was going to the regions, they would scream out, "Pork-barrelling!" Actually—even worse—they called me "Pork Barilaro". I wear that as a badge of honour—it means we are getting our fair share. The truth is I am part of a government that is focused on delivering infrastructure that is important to growing the economy, creating jobs and enabling infrastructure off the back of a recycling program. Those opposite would scream that we are selling our furniture to pay the bills. The difference is when Labor sold assets it was to pay the wage bill.

Under this Government, it is to recycle those funds for infrastructure, like \$10 billion for new and upgraded hospitals and \$6 billion for new and upgraded schools, road, rail, special activation precincts and water security for the bush. At the end of the day, we are a government that has put politics aside, has put policy forward and has been able to run surpluses for times like today to deal with crises like drought and fire. Most importantly, New South Wales is still the engine room of the nation. The unemployment figures came out last week. In New South Wales the rate is 4.2 per cent—the lowest in the country. Not only are the regions the engine room of New South Wales, but also New South Wales is the powerhouse of the Australian economy. While I am part of a government that is focused on delivering infrastructure for the city and the bush that is a good news story for this State.

STATE ECONOMY AND JOBS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (14:57:10): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on the latest jobs figures and how New South Wales is well positioned to deal with the challenges of the future?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:57:30): I thank the member for Miranda for her question, and particularly for her interest in the New South Wales economy. She understands that there are few things more important, economically speaking, than having a job, being able to provide for your family and being able to contribute to your community. Over the past few months the New South Wales economy has been hit with a perfect storm of natural disasters. As the Deputy Premier has spoken about, we have seen the drought in regional New South Wales, which continues to provide significant challenges to those communities in the bush. Bushfires have ravaged our State on an unprecedented scale. Now there is the coronavirus outbreak, which many fear will have significant global consequences and consequences here in our State.

With other States along the eastern seaboard, we are particularly exposed due to the dependence of our tourism and education sectors on the Chinese market, but there will be other impacts that play out as well. There is no doubt that the combination of these events will have implications. We have met with the vice-chancellors of our universities, and just last Friday I met with Federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg to discuss the impacts on both New South Wales and the national economy. But what sets us apart here in our State compared with other States is the strong position we are in both fiscally and economically to deal with whatever comes our way. As the Deputy Premier just pointed out, that is precisely why we run surpluses—so we can respond to times like this.

During times like this the previous decisions of this Government—those great decisions to cut taxes and invest in growth—enable the New South Wales economy to continue to prosper. Talking about infrastructure investment, there will be \$97 billion over the next four years to drive economic growth right across our State, particularly in our regions. Whilst some of those events may be out of our control, how we respond is certainly within our control. With the notable exception of the Leader of the Opposition, it has been great to see all members of Parliament—Labor and Liberal—come together in a bipartisan spirit right across the State to work towards overcoming the challenges that come our way. I saw that Labor tried to spin the jobs figures that were released last week. Try spinning the lowest unemployment rate in the nation—4.5 per cent. It is pretty hard. In fact, this is the no-spin zone. Let us do a bit of a tour around the country. Our closest competitors in Victoria—a Labor State—are at 5.4 per cent. Labor Western Australia is at 5.8 per cent. I remind the House that we are at 4.5 per cent. Labor in Queensland is at 6.3 per cent, and that is after employing half the State in the public service.

That result is not testament to this Government. It is testament to the hardworking people right across our State. I notice young Lachlan Elliott is in the public gallery. He is the son of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Talk about hardworking, he just got dux of Oakhill College—my alma mater—with a score of 99.8. He is going to the University of Sydney—the best university. He must have a very, very smart mother. Well done to Lachlan. He knows, like everyone else, that the unemployment rate here in New South Wales has been below the average for 74 consecutive months—for the member for Keira, that is a bit over six years.

This means an additional 10,600 new full-time jobs in New South Wales in January. It means a youth unemployment rate that is below the national rate. It means a female participation rate that is one of the highest on record. We are the engine room of the nation's economy because we are the national employment engine room. The reality for those right across the country is that if you want a job, New South Wales is the place to be. I am particularly proud of the fact that, in the midst of fires and drought, we have created more jobs in regional New South Wales than every other region across the country combined. Why is that? It is largely off the back of our public investment in infrastructure in those communities. [*Extension of time*]

In a bipartisan way, I want to acknowledge the Labor Party for the work that it has done in supporting and creating new jobs in New South Wales. Well, it has created three jobs.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It has created jobs for David Campbell, Sue West and Meredith Burgmann, who have been employed to do the State Parliamentary Labor Party leadership election review—a very, very important job.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: They are the first jobs it has created since the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Treasurer was going okay but we would like to hear about youth job figures in regional areas, for instance. We do not need to hear about what is happening within the Labor Party.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will resume her seat. As I usually do during question time, I am happy to use a little discretion when the Minister has been highly relevant for the vast majority of the time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Those opposite have changed their rules to extend the period of time that the leader can be rolled—they do not like this—from six months to 12 months.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I have just ruled on the matter.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: The Treasurer is not talking about jobs.

The SPEAKER: I understand that.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I am. There are three jobs.

The SPEAKER: I am giving him some leeway. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The extension ensures that enough time is given to the potential leader to build momentum in New South Wales. It is the Kogarah clause, as we like to call it. Why would you want momentum?

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I have just ruled on the matter. I will listen further to the Treasurer.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Look at the last election. We went from dodgy donations to TAFE numbers in the debate and to Asians with PhDs.

Ms Yasmin Catley: This has nothing to do with jobs.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will resume her seat. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Yasmin Catley: But the Treasurer is allowed to just continue.

The SPEAKER: I have asked the Treasurer to stop and he has ceded. I am happy to hear the point of order. I have just ruled on the matter that the member for Swansea raised, which was relevance. Does the member have a different point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: No, because it is completely irrelevant.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on the matter. The Treasurer will continue.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Remove her from the Chamber, Mr Speaker; I am trying to speak. That momentum took him all the way to the backbench. Those opposite have to realise that the less the public see of them, the better chance they have.

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: The budget is a mess and the economy is on fire. Surely the Treasurer has better things to do than read that. For God's sake do your job and rein him in.

The SPEAKER: I gave the member for Kogarah the call. I call the member for Kogarah to order for the third time because he abused that privilege.

REGIONAL SENIORS TRAVEL CARD

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (15:05:16): My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Last week the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services said that people with a disability in New South Wales must not be used to balance the Federal budget. Why then is the Government short-changing senior disability pensioners and senior carers by excluding them from the \$250 regional seniors travel card?

The SPEAKER: Whenever the Minister is ready; there is no rush. He may wait for silence if he wishes.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (15:06:11): I thank the member for Lismore for her question. Over the past three weeks we have opened our regional seniors travel card and in that time 170,000 people have signed up for it. That shows many people in regional New South Wales have applied successfully for the card. I understand that because of the popularity of this program other groups have asked to be included and also be given—

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: When the \$250 card was announced other groups asked whether they could be included. I have had discussions with my department about looking at the programs and schemes that are already in place to see whether they are servicing the people they reach out to. While we have a \$250 regional seniors travel card, I have asked the department to look at the other programs that operate to provide support to other people in regional communities, which includes many other groups. The \$250 card will be used by people in regional communities to connect them with their families and friends. The \$250 card can be used for NSW TrainLink coaches, trains, fuel for cars and taxicabs in regional communities.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Because you are regional.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: The Minister is not answering the question, which is about why carers and people with disability are not able to access the regional seniors travel card.

The SPEAKER: I will hear further from the Minister.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We look at other programs. This program is not just about supporting communities where people have to travel long distances; it is about putting back into our regional economies. Some 170,000 eligible people have already signed up, which will put \$42 million back into our communities.

Ms Liesl Tesch: People with disabilities live in regional communities, Minister.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I will not be lectured by Labor.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I am baffled by Labor. During the election campaign those opposite never supported the card. They said that they were not backing this card, and now in this Chamber they complain about a program they did not support.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: What we said during the election campaign was that it was a tool to buy votes. That is exactly what it did—and you even stuffed that up.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The member for Newcastle says, "I want the card expanded to my region." The member for Campbelltown says, "I want it for my region."

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I tell you what, Newcastle is very different from a community like Narromine. It is very different from a community like Nevertire.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Ms Lynda Voltz: I refer to Standing Order 129. The question was quite specific: There are seniors who are on disability carer pensions who do not get the regional seniors travel card. We ask the Minister to explain why he is not giving it to the seniors to whom it was promised?

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I am glad Labor had the energy to ask the question. Even the member for Campbelltown has said he wants it in Campbelltown. There is a big difference between Campbelltown and places like Cowra. Campbelltown has public transport. People living in regional and rural communities do not have the same level of access to transport options.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: What is the member's point of order? If it is a different point of order, I will take it. If it under Standing Order 129, the member will resume her seat.

Ms Kate Washington: It is under Standing Order 129—

The SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat.

[Interruption]

I direct the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Port Stephens from the Chamber under Standing Order 249. The member may return to the Chamber tomorrow.

[The member for Port Stephens left the Chamber at 15:12 accompanied by the Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr PAUL TOOLE: It shows me that Labor cannot represent the regions because its members do not know where the regions are.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order: The Minister is flouting your ruling. I ask that you bring him back to answering the question.

The SPEAKER: The Minister's time has expired.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:11:25): I address my question to the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and Acting Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's commitment to skills training?

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (15:11:48): I thank the member for Heathcote for his informed question. His commitment to TAFE is second to none. I understand that he is a former TAFE teacher. Well done. As former TAFE teachers, we know the importance of TAFE and that is why we are committed to it. The member for Heathcote is a strong advocate for TAFE colleges in his electorate. This Government is committed to meeting critical skills shortages.

The SPEAKER: There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will remain silent.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I also acknowledge the Premier for her strong commitment to and wonderful support of TAFE, which is delivering the critical skills of the future. These are critical skills that industry wants that will provide young and not-so-young people with the jobs of the future. This Government is committed to providing opportunities for our young people to skill themselves for the jobs of the future. We are committed to a world-class TAFE and vocational training system that delivers the workforce that industry needs to take up the jobs that are created by our strong economy. We are committed to making our TAFE and vocational education and training system the gold standard of VET not only in Australia but also around the world.

As part of this commitment, the Premier has announced a review of the system to be led by Mr David Gonski, AC, and Professor Peter Shergold, AC. Let me be clear: This review is not about the privatisation of TAFE NSW. I am committed to TAFE as a comprehensive public provider of training and skills. TAFE has a long and proud history, but industries are changing and so are their requirements. TAFE needs to cater for future industries, future jobs and future skills—things like aerospace, robotics, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and advanced manufacturing. These are the jobs of the future. The Gonski and Shergold review is a great opportunity to ensure TAFE delivers the skills that industry wants and that will provide future jobs.

School students need to be informed. Not everybody needs to go to university. VET courses lead to great jobs and rewarding careers. Industry is telling us it wants to partner with TAFE, to assist in resolving critical skills shortages and to be part of the design, delivery and assessment of the courses. It is telling us not everybody needs a degree. This is a great opportunity to partner with industry in the design and the delivery of courses. It also provides an opportunity to address funding inequity between vocational and tertiary education. We know that one of the barriers to students taking up TAFE courses is upfront fees, unlike university where fee payments are deferred through the Higher Education Contribution Scheme-Higher Education Loan Program [HECS-HELP] system. I am pleased that the review announced by the Premier will examine the benefits of introducing a HECS-HELP style loan scheme for TAFE. Why should TAFE students be disadvantaged? I am also pleased that the review will focus on better integration of secondary, vocational and tertiary learning opportunities.

As a government, we want to overcome the bias against vocational education and get students to think of TAFE in the same way they think of university. TAFE and VET should be seen as equal and alternate pathways to a great job and a rewarding career. In fact, seven out of the 10 fastest-growing jobs in New South Wales have a vocational training pathway. Many of those jobs will be in technology, robotics and advanced manufacturing on the back of our major developments like the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. The recommendations made by Mr Gonski and Professor Shergold will build on the strong record of this Government in the TAFE and VET sector, particularly in our regions. We want everybody to have world-class vocational education.

Last Friday I was with the member for Oxley in Nambucca Heads where we inspected the new connected learning centre site, which represents an ability to deliver training into our regions that has not been possible until now. On the Thursday I was with the member for Tamworth in Gunnedah where we discussed our \$3 million TAFE upgrade investment and the valuable skills training the community needs. I thank the member for hosting our fantastic visit. The New South Wales Government has opened 14 connected learning centres, which has seen increased course enrolment. *[Extension of time]*

We have invested already in 14 connected learning centres. We will invest another \$61.7 million in an additional eight of those throughout our regions. Our regions are important. We are investing in TAFE facilities because we do not want any divide between our city and our regions. We are also investing another \$71 million in an additional 100,000 fee-free TAFE and VET courses over the next four years.

Mr Clayton Barr: They are shopfronts.

Dr GEOFF LEE: You may call them shopfronts, but if you have ever seen one you would understand they offer education to regions that would not otherwise be possible. You should be appalled. Our investment brings the total number of free TAFE and VET courses to almost 700,000 over the next four years—far more than Labor could ever offer or has ever offered. This Government has prioritised the delivery of the highest quality education for everybody over the next four years, whether in the city or the regions. We are committed to creating a dynamic, qualified and skilled workforce to take up the jobs that a strong economy will generate.

We are determined to deliver a stronger and better TAFE that ensures everybody has the skills they need to benefit from our strong economy. We are proud of our investment in TAFE, we are proud of our teachers and we are proud of our students. The Premier has reiterated her commitment to TAFE and to looking at industries of the future to determine the critical skills that we need to deliver so our young people have the option to enter a VET pathway. It is important that the Government caters for future industries, future jobs and keeps young people at the heart of its decision-making. I thank all TAFE teachers and students for their dedication.

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge and welcome the year 11 legal studies students from St Joseph's College, Lochinvar.

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:19:17): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. Given that the Dunns Road fire destroyed close to half the Snowy Valleys Council area, significantly impacting communities and the local economy, leaving burnt trees unsafe and the remains of homes and properties to gather dust, will the Deputy Premier provide a timeline for the clean-up works across my electorate, including plans to support impacted agriculture, horticulture and softwoods industries?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (15:19:54): I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question. Both during and after the bushfire crisis he has been at the forefront as a strong voice for his community. The excavators have moved in and he is now part of the journey of recovery and rebuilding. The community and residents in his electorate have experienced significant impacts. Tourism and industry were impacted also, including Batlow orchards, Batlow Apples and the timber industry—with companies such as Visy in Tumut—all of which are important. It is also important that we start to think about what the rebuild looks like. People ask me about this massive task—2,500 homes and 10,000 properties in New South Wales. In the local government area of Snowy Valleys 193 houses, 35 facilities and 611 outbuildings were destroyed, and a further 49 houses, 15 facilities and 187 outbuildings were damaged. Clearly the impact was severe and, as with the 2,500 homes and 10,000 properties impacted across the State, we are undertaking a massive task.

As I have said previously, someone will be first and someone will be last. Mapping out a plan for how we will work is the priority—area by area, region by region and community by community. The priority is to clear blocks of land to give people hope that they have a future ahead of them. Until such time as we clear those blocks of land it will be difficult for people to think about what that future looks like. That has been our priority. We have been clearing roads, removing debris, removing trees, fixing infrastructure and now we are focusing on both businesses and residents—those insured, not insured—making sure that we continue.

There are some serious impacts on industries, such as the timber industry. Timber is at the heart of regional and rural New South Wales. The industry employs thousands of people from the mills to the contractors. We have seen the investment in infrastructure. In the south of the State an average of 25 per cent of pine plantations has been impacted. The 22-year rotation means that at some future point the industry will arrive at a cliff edge where we will not have a resource. However, it also brings an opportunity to replant. The industry has welcomed the announcement that we are focused on replanting and rebuilding the estate. In the meantime we will look at accessing the black wood—the timber that has been burnt—and minimise taking the green timber so we can soften that future cliff edge. Industry has been at the heart of it.

Companies like Visy have been working with the Government to find a way forward. Some level of industry support will be needed. Forestry Corporation is looking at what it can do to support the industry—accessing and delivering resources and, at the same time, looking at the infrastructure that needs to be rebuilt in those State forests. For instance, in the north of the State 51 per cent of the harvestable hardwoods has been lost.

That has an impact on our industry. There is a serious impact on industry, including on orchards and tourism. Talbingo has felt the brunt of the fires and lost some infrastructure. It is a beautiful area and a significant part of our mountains, which we are very proud of, as is Tumut—a town at the heart of industry in the region and the Snowy Valleys. They are all important. That is why I am focused on working on community and industry in parallel. It is not about what goes first or last; it is about finding ways forward.

We worked with the local community to address needs in the Snowy Valleys, such as getting petrol to parts of the community that had no access or providing accommodation for backpackers arriving for the season. I acknowledge Dick Adams, a local coordinator, and Mick Willing and Marg Prendergast. We are working with local government and the local member, Dr Joe McGirr, to ensure that we get on with the job of addressing the urgent issues of today. There will be a need for a macro approach across some of our regions, like the Snowy Valleys. When you impact not only the community but also the fundamentals, the principles, the pillars of the local economy—especially when you are impacting a number of industries that have a flow-on effect to small businesses, subcontractors and the region's employment—it is important that we have a macro approach. However, I have to be serious and honest. In some areas, we will be able to clean up properties in the next weeks and months ahead. Rebuilding economies and industries may take longer.

If you think about some of the orchards that were lost, even if you started to replant today the truth of an apple orchard is that it is five to seven years before you see a return—that will have an impact over the next five to seven years. It is the same with the forestry industry. When you talk about pine plantations, there is roughly a 22-year rotation. So there are issues we have to face immediately. There are medium-term issues we will be addressing and there are long-term issues.

For some of these areas and some of these industries, it may take months if not years to recover. But one thing I can guarantee is that we as a Government, along with our Federal colleagues, will be working with local government, the community and good members like Dr Joe McGirr, MP. We are focused on making sure that we do not forget people in this recovery, including industry, jobs and the economy. More importantly, we will do it in a timely manner. There will be more to be said about the time lines. I am happy to work with the local member and I thank him for the question.

STORM SEASON

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:24:58): My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Would the Minister please update the House on the impact of the recent storms in our State?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:25:12): I thank the member for East Hills for her question, which gives me an opportunity to update the House on the terrible devastation we have had over the course of the past two weeks as a result of the storms. We have been focused on the devastation of the bushfires since August last year. The storm season normally hits this State around late March or April. The fact that it is early this year suggests that our emergency services have been serving this country above and beyond the call of duty.

The member for East Hills and I visited parts of her electorate only two weeks ago when we saw firsthand the impact of the flooding after the devastating storm around the Georges River, particularly at Picnic Point and notably around East Hills. During that visit the member for East Hills and I met with the Gurney family, who have been living on the Georges River for quite some time, probably about 20-odd years. They acknowledged that when you live in a beautiful place like the Georges River and in a country like Australia you have to accept that flooding is an unfortunate reality. We walked through their home and saw the devastation to their lower floor. We saw the impact of the flood with the water lines still fresh on the plasterboard. What we saw at Picnic Point is what I have seen over the past six months and that is resilience: Resilience following the black summer, which is drawing to a conclusion; resilience during the storms; and resilience as the storm season sets in along the eastern coast of New South Wales.

The welcome rain has enabled us to celebrate the conclusion of a number of fires, particularly all those that had been uncontained. But as the front associated with the storm season moves through, we have to be conscious of the devastation that it causes. Just under 70 local government areas across the State have been impacted severely by the storm season and 30 of those areas had been hit by the unprecedented bushfires. As a result of the fires, as members of this House—especially regional members—would know, the soil changes, causing even more significant risk of flooding. We cannot take for granted those livelihoods that have been destroyed and we want to ensure that this Government's message is clear: We will always do whatever it takes to get communities back on their feet. I commend the Deputy Premier for his comments in the Chamber today.

Communities are hurting because of the triple whammy of drought, fire and these latest floods. Initial assessments undertaken in the past few weeks suggest that 1,487 homes have been damaged as a result of these floods, with 84 being rendered uninhabitable. Our disaster assistance package has been extended to a further 15 local government areas, with 71 local government areas now enjoying the support they require as a result of a natural disaster being declared. A range of practical assistance measures have been triggered by the natural disaster declarations, including help and assistance for eligible people when their homes and belongings have been damaged, support for affected local councils to help with the costs of cleaning up and concessional interest rates for small businesses, primary producers and non-profit organisations that have done such a magnificent job in supporting our communities. We also provide freight subsidies and grants to not-for-profit organisations.

Members of the House might be interested to know that the following local government areas have now received assistance: Armidale, Bathurst, Bellingen, Dungog, Goulburn, Kempsey, Kyogle, Liverpool Plains, Lithgow, Nambucca, Parkes, Richmond Valley, Snowy Mountains, Snowy-Monaro and, of course, the Upper Lachlan. During the storms 11 evacuation centres were set up across the State and 230 people have been provided with emergency housing assistance since 1 February. Some 55 people have received help with emergency accommodation from the first day alone, and outreach centres were opened at Umina, Shelly Beach and Davistown. Affected people can apply for Disaster Relief Grants and make applications through a number of charities including Anglicare, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. We have undertaken 13 home visits over the past fortnight to carry out relief and grant applications. I am also advised that Central Coast Council is planning a community meeting for Mangrove Mountain tomorrow. [*Extension of time*]

The Central Coast was the worst hit during the recent storms, with 1,200 homes damaged and 69 rendered uninhabitable in that region alone. I pay tribute to the member for Terrigal and the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast who took us on a tour last week. We dropped into the Gosford SES and Wyong SES units to thank the volunteers and presented them with new inflatable rescue boats to add to their existing inventory. Gosford SES alone—

[*An Opposition member interjected.*]

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I would have thought the member for Gosford might want to hear this statistic. The Gosford SES alone completed an impressive 1,457 tasks, including 17 flood rescues. I congratulate deputy zone commander Peter Green on his leadership as well as the unit commanders Matt Le Clerq and Steve Tobin. On the Central Coast we have seen a significant level of support from the Disaster Welfare Assistance Point, which I visited last week, which has helped more than 340 Central Coast locals. During that extreme weather event, the SES received 15,860 requests for assistance. The majority of these were in the Sydney metropolitan area, but it is approaching record numbers of requests.

Some 379 flood rescue activations were received across the State and the majority of those requests were completed within 48 hours of receipt. Last year the member for Seven Hills and I had the opportunity to inspect the new SES life-saving vehicles. It was reassuring to see that the SES had been putting the Government's record \$56.4 million replacement program to good use. I congratulate all of those who have worked over the course of the last storm season. Unfortunately I will be standing here again at some stage to thank them yet again.

Documents

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 142 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of:

Report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Review of NSW Police Force Standard Operating Procedure for strip searches in custody*, dated January 2020, received 13 February 2020.

Interim Report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Operation Tepito - An investigation into the formulation and use of the NSW Police Force Suspect Targeting Management Plan on children and young people*, dated January 2020, received 13 February 2020.

I order that the reports be printed.

INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 16 of the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012, I announce receipt of the reports of the Inspector of Custodial Services entitled:

Inspection of the Residential Facilities and the Compulsory Drug Treatment Correctional Centre, received 13 February 2020.

Programs, Employment and Education Inspection, received 13 February 2020.

Women on Remand, received 13 February 2020.

Inspection of Five Minimum Security Correctional Centres in Non-Metropolitan New South Wales, received 13 February 2020.

I order that the reports be printed.

ELECTORAL ACT

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 99 of the Electoral Act 2017, I announce receipt of the *Further Report of the Children's Guardian Investigation into child protection declarations made by elected members of the NSW Legislative Assembly*, received 19 February 2020. I order that the report be printed.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Ms FELICITY WILSON: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee dated 25 February 2020 entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 10/57*. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 9/57*, dated 19 November 2019.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

The SPEAKER: I announce that the following petition signed by more than 10,000 persons has been lodged for presentation:

Woronora Dam Catchment Area

Petition calling on the Government to stop further threats to the Woronora Dam Catchment Area water supply and to rescind development consents that permit mining in the area, received from **Mr Lee Evans**.

The SPEAKER: I set down debate on the petition as an order of the day for a future day.

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

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**.

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**.

Low-cost Housing and Homelessness

Petition requesting increased funding for low-cost housing and homelessness services, 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**.

Beekeeping Industry

Petition calling on the Government to support amateur beekeepers by abandoning hive registration fees and allocating more resources to assist amateur and commercial apiarists to maintain a disease-free and sustainable hive network, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Bus Services—lodged 21 November 2019 (Mr Ron Hoenig)

The Hon. Adam Marshall—Commercial Fishing Industry—lodged 27 September 2019 (Mr Philip Donato)

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3), general business notice of motion (bills) No. 1 [Dairy and Fresh Food Price Advocate Bill 2019], general business order of the day (bills) No. 1 [Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019] and No. 4 [Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Protections for Disclosure of Information) Bill 2019] and general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 736 to 885 have lapsed.

Bills

EVIDENCE AMENDMENT (TENDENCY AND COINCIDENCE) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Mark Speakman, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (15:37:17): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am very pleased to introduce the Evidence Amendment (Tendency and Coincidence) Bill 2020. The bill represents another significant reform by the New South Wales Government in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Commonwealth royal commission was an extensive, five-year inquiry, which documented the experiences of people affected by child sexual abuse in an institutional context and revealed the extent of the horrific abuse that affected far too many children and young people across the State and the nation. To give some context of the size of this important inquiry, the royal commission received over 42,000 calls, over 25,000 letters, held over 8,000 private sessions, 57 formal public hearings, and heard evidence from over 1,200 witnesses.

The final report of the royal commission made 409 recommendations for change, of which 85 were criminal justice recommendations. The Government has already introduced significant criminal justice reforms in response to the royal commission. Those reforms include legislating a maximum life sentence for an offence of persistent child sexual abuse, introducing new offences for failure to report and failure to protect against child abuse, requiring courts to not take into account an offender's good character when sentencing for historical offences where their reputation facilitated the offending, requiring courts sentencing for historical child sexual assault offences to apply current stricter sentencing standards and to reflect present understanding about the lifelong trauma sexual abuse can cause, introducing a new offence of grooming an adult to access a child, and strengthening the current grooming offence to include providing a child with gifts or money.

But today's bill proposes arguably the most significant criminal justice reform in response to the royal commission. I recognise the strength and courage of survivors who have advocated for meaningful, systemic changes in response to the royal commission. What happened to the survivors can never be undone. But their advocacy has achieved a safer future for children, and a better and more responsive criminal justice system. Their advocacy has led to the reforms proposed today. The bill will amend a number of provisions in part 3.6 of the Evidence Act 1995, which sets out when tendency evidence and coincidence evidence may be admissible in civil and criminal proceedings.

Tendency evidence is evidence of the character, reputation or conduct of a person, or a tendency that a person has or had, adduced to prove that a person has or had a tendency—whether because of the person's character or otherwise—to act in a particular way, or to have a particular state of mind. An example of tendency evidence

is evidence that an accused person has a tendency to be sexually attracted to young boys and to act on that attraction. Coincidence evidence is evidence that two or more events occurred, which is adduced to prove that a person did a particular act or had a particular state of mind on the basis that having regard to any similarities in the events or the circumstances in which they occurred, or any similarities in both the events and the circumstances in which they occurred, it is improbable that the events occurred coincidentally. An example of coincidence evidence is multiple complainants alleging that an accused person abused them when they were children.

The bill will facilitate greater admissibility of these types of evidence with a particular focus on greater admissibility of tendency evidence in criminal proceedings for child sexual offences. The bill represents the New South Wales Government's response to recommendations 44 to 51 of the criminal justice report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Those recommendations were directed at ensuring that more tendency and coincidence evidence is admissible in child sexual abuse prosecutions. Before detailing the content of the bill, I will briefly outline the significance that tendency and coincidence evidence can have in child sexual abuse prosecutions and explain how the important work of the royal commission led to this reform.

Evidence law governs whether and how information can be considered by the trier of fact, often a jury, in legal proceedings. In Australia, six jurisdictions have adopted the Uniform Evidence Law [UEL]: New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth. In New South Wales the UEL is adopted in the Evidence Act 1995. Under the UEL, evidence that is relevant is admissible, subject to exclusionary rules that operate to exclude some types of evidence and discretions under the UEL that may be exercised to exclude evidence. Under the UEL, as set out in part 3.6 of the Evidence Act 1995, tendency and coincidence evidence is not admissible unless reasonable notice is given and the evidence satisfies the tests set out in the Act.

The current test for the admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence sets a high legislative bar that must be met before evidence can be considered by the trier of fact, particularly where the evidence is adduced by the prosecution about the defendant. Aside from a notice requirement, this involves a test with two limbs that must be satisfied before the evidence may be admitted: first, that the evidence have significant probative value; and, second, where the evidence is adduced by the prosecution against a defendant, the probative value of the evidence substantially outweighs any prejudicial effect it may have on the defendant.

The test is significant not only because it can determine whether the trier of fact is presented with relevant evidence about the defendant's alleged conduct, but also because, where the defendant is charged with offences against more than one victim, admissibility of such evidence can have implications for whether a joint trial is held. Tendency and coincidence evidence about a defendant often play a particularly important role in child sexual abuse prosecutions, especially in circumstances where a defendant is alleged to have abused more than one child. The royal commission noted that child sexual offences are "generally committed in private and with no eyewitnesses [and] no medical or scientific evidence capable of confirming the abuse". The royal commission also noted:

Where the only evidence of child sexual abuse is the complainant's evidence, it can be difficult for the jury to be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the alleged offence occurred. The jury is effectively considering a "word against word" case.

In these cases, evidence of other allegations—or convictions—of child sexual abuse perpetrated by the accused person can be valuable evidence to assist the trier of fact to determine whether it is more likely that the alleged offence or offences occurred, as the allegation is supported by evidence from other complainants or witnesses who say that the accused also sexually abused them. This evidence can also provide crucial support for the complainant's credibility or reliability. Further, as acknowledged by the decision of the majority of the High Court in *Hughes v The Queen* (2017) 344 ALR 187:

In the trial of child sexual offences, it is common for the complainant's account to be challenged on the basis that it has been fabricated or that anodyne conduct has been misinterpreted. Logic and human experience suggest proof that the accused is a person who is sexually interested in children and who has a tendency to act on that interest is likely to be influential to the determination of whether the reasonable possibility that the complainant has misconstrued innocent conduct or fabricated his or her account has been excluded.

The royal commission considered that "if a complainant accuses a particular person of sexually abusing them as a child, this accusation is more likely to be true if the accused has sexually abused other children." It explained that, for example, in child sexual offence proceedings, "if the jury accepts the other allegations or convictions, the jury might be satisfied that they prove that the accused has a tendency or propensity to act in a particular way—for example, to be sexually attracted to young boys and to act on that attraction. The jury may then reason that this makes it more likely that the accused acted on this tendency", and committed the offence that is the subject of the trial. The royal commission also explained:

If the jury accepts the other allegations or convictions, and they are sufficiently similar to the particular complaint that is the subject of the trial, the jury can then reason that it is improbable that the similar allegations are a coincidence or that the complainants are all lying or mistaken. This makes it more probable that the accused also committed the particular offences that are the subject of the trial.

Where this kind of evidence is excluded, the trier of fact may be denied relevant evidence that would assist them to properly consider the facts in issue in the case and the complainant's evidence, which, as noted by the High Court majority in *Hughes*, is likely to be challenged. Given its importance and relevance to child sexual abuse prosecutions, the royal commission closely considered the test for admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence. Firstly, the royal commission found that the risk of unfair prejudice to the accused arising from tendency and coincidence evidence has been overstated and that, in fact, this risk is minimal. Secondly, the existing test for admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence unnecessarily precludes evidence from being admitted in criminal proceedings. Thirdly, the application of the rules to exclude tendency and coincidence evidence unnecessarily prevents joint trials being held.

The interpretation and application of the first limb for child sexual offences was a particular subject of concern for the royal commission as it had operated to exclude relevant evidence that, in some cases, should be admitted in order to assist the trier of fact to properly and fully consider the issues and evidence in the case. The difficulties associated with the operation of the first limb for tendency evidence in child sexual offence matters stem, in part, from a perceived requirement of what has been expressed as a "striking similarity" between the tendency evidence and the alleged conduct of the accused person for the evidence to have "significant probative value". Recently, the jurisprudence has shifted away from requiring a "striking similarity", but has retained a general requirement in cases involving multiple complainants for "some feature of the other sexual misconduct, being the conduct sought to be relied upon as tendency evidence, and the alleged offending which serves to link the two together." The royal commission was critical of decisions that followed that thinking as to whether evidence meets the first limb of the test for admissibility. The royal commission stated:

Where the tendency or coincidence evidence is not required to establish the identity of the accused—typically because the complainants have each named the accused as their abuser—it is not clear why any particular level of similarity between incidents of proven or alleged child sexual abuse is required in order for the tendency or coincidence evidence to have significant probative value. It is even less clear why any distinctiveness in the offending would be required.

The royal commission's dominant conclusion was that tendency evidence sought to be adduced in multiple complainant cases should be seen to have significant probative value even with no particular similarities between the tendency evidence and the alleged conduct as "the two most important similarities are already present—sexual offending against a child". Ultimately, the royal commission considered that unnecessarily excluding tendency and coincidence evidence has led to unwarranted acquittals in prosecutions for child sexual abuse offences. As a result of these findings, the royal commission was "satisfied that the current law needs to change". Its recommendation 44 was:

In order to ensure justice for complainants and the community, the laws governing the admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence in prosecutions for child sexual abuse offences should be reformed to facilitate greater admissibility and cross-admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence and joint trials.

The royal commission also detailed specific reforms that it recommended all Australian governments enact and suggested draft legislation to amend the UEL to implement its recommendations in UEL jurisdictions. See recommendations 45 to 51. The royal commission said that its recommendations would "allow tendency and coincidence evidence to be admitted in more child sexual abuse prosecutions" and "more joint trials to be held where multiple complainants make allegations of child sexual abuse against the same accused". The New South Wales Government responded to the royal commission's final report in June 2018. The Government accepted recommendation 44 in principle and noted that the more detailed recommendations were subject to further consideration.

A substantive response to those recommendations was not provided at that time as the recommendations sought to change uniform legislation, which the Government considered should remain consistent across the six participating Australian UEL jurisdictions, if possible. Further, legal stakeholders in New South Wales expressed strong concerns about the royal commission's specific recommendations in relation to tendency and coincidence evidence and were critical of the proposed legislative reform. These concerns required close consideration, particularly insofar as they related to the potential risk of unfair prejudice to an accused arising from reforms to facilitate the greater admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence in criminal proceedings.

I took the view that UEL jurisdictions should come together to consider carefully the test for the admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence and develop an agreed reform proposal to address the royal commission's findings, and achieve its objectives, while maintaining uniformity in our evidence laws. This work was already underway when the royal commission's final report was released. In December 2017 the Council of Attorneys-General agreed to refer the test for the admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence in the UEL

to a New South Wales led working group with representatives from all UEL jurisdictions and observers from non-UEL jurisdictions. That working group, in consultation with legal and academic stakeholders from New South Wales and other UEL jurisdictions, developed an approach to reform that was agreed by the UEL members of the Council of Attorneys-General in June 2019. At the request of the Council of Attorneys-General, a model bill to implement the reform was prepared by the Australasian Parliamentary Counsel's Committee. The model bill was agreed by all UEL members of the Council of Attorneys-General in November 2019.

I am pleased to say that, after leading this successful national reform process, I am the first Minister to introduce a bill to implement the agreed changes to our Evidence Act. I anticipate that comparable bills will be introduced in Victoria, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth. This coordinated response will ensure that evidence law in these jurisdictions remains uniform, as agreed, and that the objectives of the royal commission in relation to its tendency and coincidence evidence recommendations are achieved in all participating jurisdictions.

Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 (NSW) will also be required to enact two additional supplementary reforms agreed by the Council of Attorneys-General. The first reform would introduce a presumption in favour of joint trials in circumstances where a defendant has been accused of multiple offences, in respect of which the prosecution is seeking to lead tendency or coincidence evidence. The second reform would clarify that a jury should not be directed as to the standard of proof required for tendency and coincidence evidence, which would implement royal commission recommendation 48. I anticipate that these reforms will be progressed in the next Justice Legislation Amendment Bill, which I anticipate will be introduced to Parliament in the middle of this year.

I turn now to the substance of the bill. The most significant changes are to the tests for admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence. As I mentioned earlier, the tests set a high bar which tendency and coincidence evidence adduced by the prosecution about the defendant must meet if it is to be admissible in criminal proceedings. Currently, in addition to the notice requirements, tendency and coincidence evidence is only admissible where a court considers that it will have significant probative value. This means that the evidence must make more likely, to a significant extent, the facts that make up the elements of the offence charged. This test is often referred to as the "first limb" of the test of admissibility for tendency and coincidence evidence.

Additionally, tendency or coincidence evidence adduced by the prosecution about the defendant in criminal proceedings cannot be used against the defendant unless the probative value of the evidence substantially outweighs any prejudicial effect it may have on the defendant. This test is often referred to as the "second limb" of the test of admissibility for tendency and coincidence evidence. This two-limb test is intended to avoid the risk of admitting evidence that the jury will use to reason impermissibly that the defendant is guilty of a charge or charges just because they have acted in a particular way in the past.

Broadly speaking, the bill will not change the first limb of the test, but it introduces a new provision that will interact with the first limb of the test for tendency evidence in child sexual abuse proceedings. It will amend the second limb of the test for all tendency and coincidence evidence adduced by the prosecution in criminal proceedings. The purpose of both of these changes is to facilitate greater admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence. As to the first limb of the test, UEL jurisdictions agreed that the requirement that the evidence will have "significant probative value" in New South Wales, contained in section 97 (1) (b) of the Evidence Act 1995, which applies in civil and criminal proceedings, is appropriate and should be retained as is. However, given the issues identified with the interpretation and application of this first limb, which I have already outlined, the Council of Attorneys-General determined that a new provision should be inserted to guide courts in the determination of significant probative value in proceedings that involve child sexual offences.

Item 1 [2] introduces new section 97A, which will alter the operation of the first limb in relation to tendency evidence in child sexual abuse prosecutions in order to facilitate greater admissibility of tendency evidence in those proceedings. Proposed section 97A will apply only in a criminal proceeding in which the commission by the defendant of an act that constitutes, or may constitute, a child sexual offence is a fact in issue. It will provide that, in those proceedings, tendency evidence about the defendant's sexual interest in a child or children or about the defendant acting on a sexual interest in a child or children is presumed to have significant probative value.

This targeted provision does not change the first limb of the test. Instead, it addresses the application of the test in child sexual abuse prosecutions by providing that, first, tendency evidence about the sexual interest the defendant has or had in children, even where the defendant has not acted on the interest or, secondly, tendency evidence about the defendant acting on a sexual interest the defendant has or had in children is presumed to meet the threshold of significant probative value under section 97 (1) (b).

The presumption applies whether or not the sexual interest or act to which the tendency evidence relates was directed at a complainant in the criminal proceeding, towards any other child or to children generally. It also applies to any evidence adduced to prove that a person has or had a tendency to act in a particular way, or to have a particular state of mind, namely, to have a sexual interest in a child or children, or to act upon such an interest, regardless of the particular way that tendency is expressed. The introduction of a presumption that such evidence will have significant probative value aligns with the royal commission's views that "tendency and coincidence evidence will often be highly relevant in relation to child sexual abuse offences", "the probative value of tendency and coincidence evidence generally has been understated ...", and "a test of 'significant probative value' should not often exclude such evidence".

In recognition of the feedback from legal stakeholders regarding a concern that the greater admission of tendency evidence in child sexual assault prosecutions could give rise to a risk of unfair prejudice to an accused person, and the importance of maintaining judicial discretion, the presumption provided for in the proposed section 97A is rebuttable. Under proposed subsection 97A (4), the court may determine that the tendency evidence does not have significant probative value if it is satisfied that there are sufficient grounds to do so. The bill does not specify what may constitute "sufficient grounds", but such grounds should be considered in light of the objective of this reform to facilitate greater admissibility of tendency evidence and, specifically, the intent of the proposed section 97A to facilitate greater admission of tendency evidence in child sexual offences.

The proposed subsection 97A (5) sets out seven matters that the court cannot take into account when determining whether there are sufficient grounds to determine that the tendency evidence does not have significant probative value, unless the court considers that there are exceptional circumstances in relation to those matters to warrant taking them into account. These matters include that the circumstances in which the tendency sexual interest or act occurred are different from the circumstances in which the alleged sexual interest or act occurred, the period of time between the occurrence of the tendency sexual interest or act and the occurrence of the alleged sexual interest or act, and the level of generality of the tendency to which the tendency evidence relates.

The matters set out in the proposed subsection 97A (5) are not to be taken into account by the court unless exceptional circumstances exist, as they are the sorts of myths and misconceptions that have historically prevented evidence about a defendant's tendency to have a sexual interest in a specific child, or in children generally, or a tendency to act upon such an interest, from being seen to have significant probative value in criminal proceedings for child sexual offences, and have therefore excluded such evidence and prevented it from being considered by the trier of fact. The matters are drawn from the findings of the royal commission and address issues in recent case law.

Explicitly listing these matters in the proposed targeted provision is intended to support the operation of the rebuttable presumption by ensuring that courts do not determine that the presumption is rebutted on the basis of the sorts of myths or misconceptions about the probative value of tendency evidence that have been perpetuated in case law, but were dispelled by the royal commission. It is also intended that including the matters will raise judicial awareness about the compelling findings of the royal commission.

Judicial discretion is maintained, as the court is able to consider the matters enumerated at proposed section 97A (5) (a) to (g) where the court considers there are exceptional circumstances in relation to those matters to warrant taking them into account. This recognises that, in rare circumstances, one or a combination of the matters may be so exceptional as to warrant the court considering it in determining whether it is satisfied that there are sufficient grounds to rebut the presumption at proposed subsection 97A (2).

The threshold of exceptional circumstances in relation to the consideration of these matters was chosen intentionally in order to set a high bar. Further, it is intended that the exceptional circumstances must relate to those specific matters, either individually or combination, rather than relating to any other aspects of a particular matter. Matters outside those specifically enumerated in the proposed subsection 97A (5) should not be taken into account in order to determine whether the exceptional circumstances threshold has been met. Subsection 97A (5) is not intended to limit otherwise what the court may consider in determining whether there are sufficient grounds to rebut the presumption under the proposed subsection 97A (4). The provision also does not prevent the court from concluding that the tendency evidence may have a higher degree of probative value where there is, for example, a feature of the evidence that serves to link it to the alleged offending or the alleged conduct of the accused is particularly distinctive.

The passage of this targeted provision should send a strong message that Parliament expects that this type of tendency evidence generally will have significant probative value in child sexual abuse prosecutions, irrespective of its particular features. This recognises the close connection between a tendency to have a sexual interest in a child or children and/or a tendency to act upon such an interest, and criminal proceedings in which the commission by the defendant of an act that constitutes, or may constitute, a child sexual offence is a fact in issue. The nature of such tendency evidence means that the link is significant, whether or not there are any unique

similarities between the tendency evidence and the alleged conduct of the accused person in the proceedings—the link being sexual offending against a child or children.

As the first limb of the test for admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence is unchanged, all tendency and coincidence evidence will still need to meet that bar. To be admissible, evidence adduced by the prosecution about a defendant in criminal proceedings then needs to overcome the second limb of the test for admissibility, which is provided for in section 101 of the Evidence Act 1995. It applies only in criminal proceedings and currently provides that tendency or coincidence evidence adduced by the prosecution about the defendant cannot be used unless the probative value of the evidence substantially outweighs any prejudicial effect it may have on the defendant.

Item 1 [4] to the bill amends section 101 in relation to both tendency and coincidence evidence in all criminal prosecutions to provide that tendency or coincidence evidence will not be admissible unless the probative value of the evidence outweighs the danger of unfair prejudice to the defendant. Changing the test from substantially outweighs to simply outweighs seeks to address the asymmetry in the assessment of whether evidence with significant probative value should be admissible under the current test, which is disproportionately weighted towards the exclusion of such evidence.

It would strike an even and appropriate balance between the competing interests of ensuring that relevant tendency and coincidence evidence with significant probative value is admissible, and in preventing unfair prejudice to defendants in criminal proceedings. Item 1 [4] to the bill replaces the term "any prejudicial effect it may have on the defendant" with "the danger of unfair prejudice to the defendant". Although the existing form of words is understood to refer to unfair prejudice, the proposed provision would mirror the formulation of section 137 of the Evidence Act, which sets out the test for when prejudicial evidence must be excluded in criminal proceedings. That provision is:

In a criminal proceeding, the court must refuse to admit evidence adduced by the prosecutor if its probative value is outweighed by the danger of unfair prejudice to the defendant.

The High Court recently held that the expressions "prejudicial effect" in section 101 and "unfair prejudice" in section 137 convey essentially the same idea of harm to the interests of the accused by reason of a risk that a jury will use the evidence improperly in some unfair way. The reform would align the language of the provisions with the consistent interpretation. This approach was favoured and largely supported by legal stakeholders. Taken together, the proposed reforms to the first and second limbs of the test for admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence are intended to facilitate greater admissibility of this evidence while retaining important protections to protect an accused person's right to a fair trial. I will now outline three additional changes that this bill will make to the Evidence Act 1995. Section 9 (1) of the Evidence Act 1995 makes clear that the UEL does not affect the operation of principles or rules of common law or equity in relation to evidence in proceedings, except so far as the Act provides otherwise expressly or by necessary intendment. Section 56 (1) provides that:

Except as otherwise provided by this Act, evidence that is relevant in a proceeding is admissible in the proceeding.

These provisions can be understood to exclude the principles of common law or equity that would otherwise apply in relation to the admissibility of tendency or coincidence evidence. The High Court has confirmed that common law concepts about propensity or similarity evidence "do not stand with the scheme of Pt 3.6 of the UEL" and that common law principles governing the admission of similar fact evidence have been abrogated and entirely replaced by part 3.6. Despite this, courts may still refer to these principles or rules in their consideration of the admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence under the Evidence Act and in doing so may be led into error by failing to recognise that provisions of the UEL are not intended to be applied in the same manner as the common law applied to similar fact or propensity evidence.

As the royal commission found, the interpretation of the Uniform Evidence Act provisions to date demonstrates how difficult it has been for the courts to apply the statutory provisions without importing common law assumptions, particularly as to unfair prejudice. Proposed section 94 (4) in item 1 [1] seeks to put beyond doubt that any principle or rule of common law or equity preventing or restricting the admissibility of this kind of evidence is not relevant when applying part 3.6 of the Evidence Act. This provision would implement royal commission recommendation 46, which states:

Common law principles or rules that restrict the admission of propensity or similar fact evidence should be explicitly abolished or excluded in relation to the admissibility of tendency or coincidence evidence about the defendant in a child sexual offence prosecution.

The implementation of this recommendation is not intended in any way to indicate that any principle or rule of common law or equity should be considered in the application of other parts of the UEL, except as provided for by the Evidence Act. The second additional reform relates to recommendation 47 of the royal commission, which states:

Issues of concoction, collusion or contamination should not affect the admissibility of tendency or coincidence evidence about the defendant in a child sexual offence prosecution. The court should determine admissibility on the assumption that the evidence will be accepted as credible and reliable, and the impact of any evidence of concoction, collusion or contamination should be left to the jury or other fact-finder.

This recommendation largely aligns with relevant High Court decisions about assessing the probative value of tendency and coincidence evidence. In *The Queen v Dennis Bauer (a pseudonym)* [2018] HCA 40, the High Court held that the risk of contamination, concoction or collusion generally only goes to the credibility and reliability of tendency evidence and is therefore an assessment that must be left to the jury, rather than a factor that the court can consider in determining probative value. However, the High Court also stated that there was an exception to this general proposition where:

... the risk of contamination, concoction or collusion is so great that it would not be open to the jury rationally to accept the evidence, the determination of probative value excludes consideration of credibility and reliability. Proposed section 94 (5) in item 1 [1] provides that when a court is determining the probative value of tendency or coincidence evidence it is not to have regard to the possibility that the evidence may be the result of collusion, concoction or contamination. This closes that small gap left open by the courts, and ensures that recommendation 47 of the royal commission is fully implemented.

The third additional change that would be made by the bill concerns coincidence evidence. Coincidence evidence is evidence that two or more events occurred adduced to prove that a person did a particular act or had a particular state of mind on the basis that, having regard to any similarities in the events or the circumstances in which they occurred or any similarities in both the events and the circumstances in which they occurred, it is improbable that the events occurred coincidentally. Evidence involving similarities in the complaints of multiple witnesses that make it improbable that they are lying is broadly understood to be a type of coincidence evidence. This type of evidence, however, does not sit comfortably in the language of section 98 (1) of the Evidence Act 1995.

Proposed section 98 (1A) in item 1 [3] would explicitly confirm that evidence from two or more witnesses claiming they are victims of offences committed by a person who is a defendant in a criminal proceeding adduced to prove, on the basis of similarities in the claimed acts or the circumstances in which they occurred, that the defendant did an act is a type of coincidence evidence. While consistent with the current position in New South Wales, the proposed provision would assist by providing a clear basis for the admissibility of this kind of evidence as coincidence evidence under the Evidence Act.

I now turn to the proposed commencement and transitional provisions in the bill. The bill provides that the new provisions, if passed, will commence on 1 May 2020. The commencement date will allow a suitable amount of time for education for legal practitioners and the judiciary about the reforms. Further, item 1 [5] of the bill provides that the reforms will not "apply in relation to proceedings the hearing of which began before the commencement of the amendment." The current provisions of the Evidence Act will continue to govern the admission of evidence in those proceedings. The passage of the bill also would not affect the validity of any notice given under the Evidence Act in relation to tendency and coincidence evidence sought to be led. These transitional provisions largely replicate the transitional provisions that were used in the Evidence Amendment Act 2007.

The intent of the transitional provisions is that, first, in the case of a summary proceeding, the reforms will not apply to matters in which a court attendance notice was filed prior to the commencement of the reforms; and, secondly, in the case of a trial heard on indictment, the reforms will not apply to matters in which an indictment has been presented and the accused person has been arraigned prior to the commencement of the reforms. The reforms will apply in circumstances where a court attendance notice has been filed in respect of an offence that will be heard on indictment but where the indictment has not yet been presented and the accused person has not been arraigned. I note that this intent is consistent with the decision of the Court of Criminal Appeal in *GG v Regina* [2010] NSWCCA 230. In that decision, which considered the 2007 transitional provisions, the Court of Criminal Appeal held that:

There is no doubt that the presentment of the indictment and arraignment of the accused person marks the commencement of the trial.

The purpose of the transitional provisions is to prevent the reforms impacting a proceeding, the hearing of which has already commenced. The text at proposed clause 28 (1), which provides that an amendment made to the Evidence Act by the bill "does not apply in relation to proceedings the hearing of which began before the commencement of the amendment", is intended to mean that the amendments in the bill will not affect criminal proceedings that have commenced, first, in the Local Court in the case of a summary hearing; or, second, in the District or Supreme courts in the case of a trial on indictment.

To conclude, I am very pleased to introduce the bill to make the changes to New South Wales' Evidence Act, which have been agreed by all Attorneys-General of UEL jurisdictions. I believe these reforms in the bill will implement a fairer approach to the admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence, which is informed by the findings of the royal commission about the use of this evidence in child sexual abuse prosecutions. The bill does not displace the requirement that evidence be relevant, the general exclusion of tendency and coincidence

evidence, and the general discretions and mandatory exclusions that apply to evidence if, for example, the evidence is unfairly prejudicial, misleading or confusing, or its probative value is outweighed by the danger of unfair prejudice to the defendant.

It does, however, make a number of significant changes that should encourage the evidence to be deemed admissible in appropriate circumstances. These changes are necessary. On the basis of its consideration of the current law, the royal commission concluded that "the criminal justice system is failing to provide adequate criminal justice for victims." The bill is a significant step towards addressing that failure. I accept that the bill will not mean that all relevant tendency or coincidence evidence will be admissible in a child sexual offence prosecution, as this evidence will not always overcome the legislative bar of the first or second limb of the tests for admissibility. This is appropriate, as safeguards should remain in place to protect an accused person's right to a fair trial.

I am, however, confident that passage of the bill would facilitate greater admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence. It would provide a clear signal from Parliament that certain tendency evidence will generally have significant probative value in child sexual offence proceedings. As the royal commission found, this evidence should generally have this value "even with no similarities beyond the incidents involving acts of child sexual abuse." It would also address the current imbalance in the second limb of the test, whereby the probative value of the evidence must substantially outweigh the risk of prejudice to the accused person.

The bill strikes the right balance by recognising and implementing important recommendations of the royal commission and ensuring that the rights of accused persons are maintained through the retention of judicial discretion at multiple stages of the process in the admission of tendency and coincidence evidence. I believe the bill also has educative value, in that it would ensure legal practitioners and the judiciary are made aware of the important work and findings of the royal commission and would guide future judicial consideration in line with contemporary understandings of child sexual abuse. The bill is another step in the New South Wales Government embracing the work of the royal commission, implementing its recommendations to support victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, and ensuring that perpetrators are held to account by the criminal justice system.

Before I conclude, I acknowledge the significant work of the intergovernmental working group, comprising representatives of all UEL jurisdictions, who developed this reform, and I thank the legal and academic stakeholders across Australia who contributed their time and effort throughout the extensive consultation process. I thank the New South Wales Parliamentary Counsel for drafting the model bill, as the lead drafting jurisdiction, on behalf of the Australasian Parliamentary Counsel. I acknowledge the substantial efforts of officers from the Department of Communities and Justice, in particular Paul McKnight, Mark Follett, Larisa Michalko, Ellie Fogarty, Rebekah Hitchenson and Stephanie Button. I also acknowledge Paul Miller and Kate Connors, who worked on this reform before leaving the department. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:22:43): I speak on behalf of the great workers of our State in contributing to this critical discussion. I, like every member on this side of the House, will not oppose legislation that seeks to improve the safety and wellbeing of our State's workers. The bill follows the 2018 Safe Work Australia review and a 2018 Senate inquiry into industrial deaths. It is undeniable that the bill is a response to a tragic spate of workplace fatalities last year. Every worker should be able to go to work feeling safe and protected, and we in this House must do everything we can to ensure that our State's workers return home to their families and their loved ones each and every evening. Unfortunately, this has not been true for many in the past. Between 2003 and 2018, 3,751 workers in Australia were fatally injured while working. Over the five years between 2014 and 2018, New South Wales saw 282 worker fatalities. That is an average of 56 workplace deaths each year.

One young man's life and his tragic death have become a symbol of workplace deaths in this State. Christopher Cassaniti was just 18 years old when he died at a Sydney construction site in April 2019. Christopher was crushed when a 15-metre scaffolding tower collapsed on top of him. The circumstances of his death were shocking, horrifying and traumatising for so many on site and right across the State. Christopher had his whole life ahead of him when he was struck down and killed at work. Since his death, his family and his parents, Patrizia and Rob, have joined calls for harsher punishments for employers when their employees die in industrial incidents on their watch. This family channelled their unimaginable pain and grief into calling on this Government to strengthen penalties for deaths in workplaces. They rightfully called for uniform industrial manslaughter laws. This bill unfortunately falls short of their goal.

Before looking at the elements of the bill that have disappointed me, Christopher's family, and workers and unions across New South Wales, I will first look at what the bill seeks to do. The bill seeks to amend the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to address risks, prevent harm and improve the Act to better protect workers. These amendments are based on the recommendations of a Safe Work Australia review of the model Work Health and Safety Act. The bill seeks to enhance the most serious offence provision, the category 1 offence, to capture grossly negligent conduct and strengthen the deterrent power of the Act. I truly hope that this legislation will increase the likelihood of category 1 prosecutions being commenced in New South Wales.

By prosecuting those offenders, and finally turning the scales of justice in favour of our workers over their employers, I hope we see a real reduction in the number of workplace deaths and injuries in New South Wales. When risky and dodgy employers learn for the first time there will be life-altering consequences for their actions, they will finally experience a small taste of what they have been putting their workers through. The bill also seeks to prevent people from using insurance or indemnity arrangements to avoid responsibility for paying work health and safety fines in order to reinforce the need for compliance.

To put it simply, the bill seeks to ensure that employers are no longer able to use underhanded loopholes to avoid facing the punishment they have been dealt and paying the fines they have been handed for taking advantage of their workers. Insurance arrangements should not give out rewards to employers liable for penalties under the Work Health and Safety Act. The bill will rightfully see penalties for work health and safety offences increase in line with the consumer price index. The bill increases the penalty against a company whose safety standards result in a workplace death from \$3 million to \$3.4 million and will see further increases in the future in line with inflation.

The bill seeks to ensure that mechanisms are in place for the effective review of decisions not to prosecute and timely updates are given to families on the progress of investigations every three months. This process should be built around delivering for our State's workers and their families. The bill will allow inspectors to exercise some of their powers upon entry without requiring re-entry. SafeWork inspectors will be able to order workplaces that have disregarded safety standards to stop work until the problems are fixed. The bill seeks to streamline cross-jurisdictional cooperation and make service of notices easier. I note that the bill also includes a number of clarifications regarding terms, duty of care on modern worksites, training providers, court orders and duty holders.

To restate what I said earlier, I will not oppose this bill. I will, however, stand with my fellow members on this side of the House, the views of so many of our State's workers and the attitude of our unions representing their members' interests when I say that this bill does not go far enough. Despite the appeals of Christopher Cassaniti's family, instead of including specific industrial manslaughter provisions the bill simply references the manslaughter provisions of the Crimes Act. The Crimes Act does not deal specifically with deaths caused at work. I ask the House to note that there has never been a workplace safety related charge of manslaughter under the Crimes Act. That is despite the fact that there have been deaths in our State's workplaces that should have resulted in manslaughter charges.

It is clear that the current system is failing our workers. Specific industrial manslaughter provisions should be included within this bill. Other States in Australia are already putting the safety of their workers first after introducing legislation and provisions for industrial manslaughter charges. Workers in New South Wales deserve the same rights and standards of safety as their comrades in Queensland and Victoria. Another note I have on this legislation relates to the use of the term "gross negligence". This term is not properly defined in the bill. The term "gross negligence" has the capacity to act as a problematic hurdle for charges laid in the future. Supposedly, a person is grossly negligent when their behaviour falls so far short of what is reasonable and involves such a high risk of death or serious injury that it deserves criminal punishment. A defined term specifically referencing exposure to death or injury by negligence would be less abstract and more easily applied in the future.

I remind the House that it falls to us all to ensure our State's workers are protected. So many of our workers are increasingly engaged in short-term or casual work. So many of our workers are being pressured to work in unsafe conditions. So many of our workers, especially young workers, do not feel secure enough to complain about safety violations in their workplace because they want to be asked back for another day of work. The burden of ensuring safety does not fall on the individual worker; it falls on us and the mechanisms we put in place in this House. I want this bill to go further. I want this bill to strike fear in the boardrooms of dodgy employers across our State.

I want any employer in our State who has little or no regard for the lives of their workers to wake up to themselves and change their act. I want any employer that is putting profit before safety in their workplaces to recognise their mistake, even if it is out of fear. I want workers across New South Wales to head into work every day feeling confident that their Government and their employers have done everything within their power to ensure their safety. To put it simply, I do not want another family in our State to lose someone they love in an avoidable incident at work. I will not oppose this bill. I will, however, support amendments put forward by my

Labor colleagues that seek to have industrial manslaughter provisions included in the bill, as well as other recommendations from the Boland review.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:32:14): I support the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Review) Bill 2019. I thank the Hon. Kevin Anderson, Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, for bringing this bill to the House with the purpose of amending the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to ensure better working rights and conditions for employers and employees in New South Wales. The proposed amendments to the bill stem from recommendations from the 2018 review of the model work health and safety laws, which encompass preventing workplace deaths, streamlining investigations and further clarifying the New South Wales workplace health and safety laws. The reforms are intended to make workers in New South Wales safer and further guarantee the current bill's primary focus: protecting workers and other persons from harm to their health, safety and welfare by reducing risks that arise in and around the workplace.

Although the current Act provides a strong framework for the management of risks to health and safety in the workplace, workplace deaths in New South Wales are still unfortunately much too common. Last year alone, unfortunately 47 workplace-related deaths occurred in New South Wales. There were 62 the year before. Those numbers are far too high. Additionally, it is understood that workplace-related injuries are excessively common. During 2016-17, 32,998 serious injury or illness claims were accepted in New South Wales. The Government believes all workers in New South Wales have the right to come home safe from work at the end of the day. Obviously all workers in the State should have healthy, productive and safe working lives.

All in all, the current Work Health and Safety Act helps to manage health and safety issues effectively. However, in 2018 two national reviews identified some significant issues in the Act that must be considered and addressed in order to ensure workers' safety. The first report was the product of an inquiry conducted by the Senate that examined the framework surrounding the prevention, investigation and prosecution of industrial deaths in Australia. The inquiry's report was published in October 2018 and detailed the devastating impact that workplace-related deaths have on victims' families. The report further recognised several issues regarding the prosecution and investigation of workplace fatalities. The second report was conducted by an independent reviewer, Marie Boland, on behalf of Safe Work Australia in 2018. When conducting the review of work health and safety laws, Ms Boland met with safety regulators, businesses, workers, unions, industry organisations, health and safety legal practitioners, academics and community organisations. Ms Boland then made 34 recommendations to improve the current laws.

The amendments in the bill are the result of careful consideration of those two reports. They aim to address the needs of workers in New South Wales and strike an appropriate balance between the objective of maintaining nationally consistent work health and safety regulation and the Government's goal of reducing risks to workers' safety in the State. The amendments will not affect the nature of the existing obligations of businesses to protect their workers from risks to their health and safety. However, they will address the ongoing concern of workplace fatalities, strengthen support for victims' families, streamline investigations, and give businesses and workers greater transparency and clarity on workplace health and safety laws.

The bill proposes the following amendments to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. Item [3] of schedule 1 inserts a note to the offences and penalties provisions of the Act to the effect that in certain circumstances workplace-related deaths may be prosecuted as manslaughter under the Crimes Act 1900. It has been the case for a long time that, when appropriate, a work-related fatality can be prosecuted as manslaughter by criminal negligence. That offence under the Crimes Act 1900 carries a maximum penalty of 25 years in prison. This amendment to the Act will clarify for employers, businesses, workers and the wider community that anyone who causes the death of a worker through negligence faces serious criminal penalties. That will help to improve the community's understanding regarding this aspect of the Act.

The 2018 review also identified the lack of prosecutions of category 1 offences as a serious problem with the offence provisions in the Act. A category 1 offence is committed when a person who has a health and safety duty recklessly exposes a person to whom that duty is owed to a risk of death or serious injury or illness. The 2018 review found that regulators have been hindered in delivering prosecutions because recklessness is difficult to prove. The review proposed adding "gross negligence" as a fault element to the category 1 offence. Under common law, a person is grossly negligent when their behaviour falls so far short of what is reasonable and involves such a high risk of death or serious injury that it deserves criminal punishment.

The proposed amendments to section 31 of the Act in items [4] and [5] of schedule 1 to the bill will make it easier for the regulator to bring category 1 prosecutions—the most serious work health and safety offence—particularly following a workplace death. A death is not required to bring a category 1 prosecution. The regulator will be able to prosecute grossly negligent duty holders who create risk to workers of death or serious illness, whether or not a worker is killed. The bill will increase the penalties under the Act so that an individual will be liable to imprisonment for up to five years and/or a fine of \$346,500. A corporation will be liable for a fine of

\$3,463,000. These amendments are key to the deterrent effect of the Act. Strengthening the penalties will ensure that individuals and businesses comply, ensure the safety of workers and decrease the number of work-related injuries and deaths. Moreover, the increased penalties are consistent with the risk-based preventative framework that supports the Act.

Another Senate inquiry in 2018 identified that trauma experienced by families after a workplace-related death is more often than not worsened by a prolonged investigation and the lack of information provided to them about that investigation. The bill proposes two amendments to resolve that gap in the current legislation and improve support for families and victims who have experienced workplace-related incidents. Item [16] of schedule 1 to the bill is one of those amendments. It amends section 231 to extend the time within which a person can ask the regulator to start a prosecution in relation to a workplace incident involving a risk of death or serious injury or illness from 12 to 18 months. Currently this time period is only between six and 12 months. Extending the time to 18 months will allow for the completion of the investigation and for a review by the Director of Public Prosecutions before the expiry of the two-year limitation period for related offences.

The proposed amendments in the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Review) Bill 2019 will further strengthen the regulator's efforts to assist a person conducting a business or undertaking to reduce the number of workplace deaths or injuries in this State. They will make it easier to prosecute workplace deaths, enhance the deterrent effect of the Act, streamline investigations and make key parts of the Act's framework clearer. The amendments will also ensure that the regulator provides better support to workers and families affected by a workplace-related fatality. By means of this bill, the Government is tackling the serious issues identified by the national reviews.

Industry agrees with the proposed amendments to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. The following organisations have indicated in-principle support for the bill: the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the NSW Chamber of Commerce, the Australian Industry Group, the Housing Industry Association, the Master Builders Association of NSW and the Australian Federation of Employers and Industries. The proposed amendments will ensure that workplaces in New South Wales are in the best possible position to manage workers' health and safety without further delay. The risk-based preventative framework of the Act will rectify the problems identified that are currently creating risks in New South Wales workplaces. I thank the Minister and his team and everyone who contributed to the bill before the House. I commend it to the House.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:41:20): I have concerns about the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Review) Bill 2019. I acknowledge the diligent work that has been done on this important issue by NSW Labor's shadow Minister for Consumer Protection, the member for Granville, Julia Finn; NSW Labor's shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, the Hon. Adam Searle, MLC; and Unions NSW and its affiliates. The bill makes some positive changes but it falls far short of what is required to keep workers safe. NSW Labor strongly believes tough laws are required to hold people responsible for workplace deaths caused by recklessness or negligence. Everyone who goes to work should be able to expect that they will return home safe at the end of the day. The reality is that we are a long way from that fundamental goal.

This year already, 21 Australians have been killed at work. Last year 162 Australians were fatally injured at work—an increase on the 144 workers killed in the previous year. Every one of those deaths is a tragedy, as are the injuries and illnesses that people sustain as a result of their work. It affects not only their families, friends and workmates, but also many more in the community. Too often we learn that something could have been done to prevent deaths and injuries at work. Even worse, sometimes we learn that the risks that led to workplace deaths and injuries were known or ought to have been known by employers before a person died or was injured.

Too many employers have put profits ahead of people. Whether through recklessness, negligence, selfishness or indifference, people have died or been seriously injured because their employer failed to take care and manage reasonably foreseeable risks. Although rogue employers are a minority, the harm they cause ripples out through our community. Too few rogue employers have been held accountable for the deaths and serious injuries they have caused. Immediately following its election in 2011 the Government did two things: It changed work health and safety laws and industrial relations laws. Now people have paid with their lives. There has been only one prosecution for the most serious category 1 offence. While it is welcome that the bill makes some changes to improve this situation, it does not go far enough. The Labor Party believes there should be a specific offence for industrial manslaughter. This would make clear that Parliament's intention is that employers who cause workplace deaths should be prosecuted and held to account. Labor would also re-establish an Industrial Court of New South Wales to allow these offences to be enforced. Labor's view is not that bosses should be jailed; it is that workplace deaths and injuries should never occur.

The reason that Labor believes an offence of industrial manslaughter is necessary is that it will act as a deterrent. I am also pleased that Labor is supporting Christopher's Law. This is an initiative of Rob and Patrizia Cassaniti, whose son, Christopher, died while working as an apprentice. He was only 18 years old. That is just

four years older than my son. I express our condolences to Rob and Patrizia Cassaniti and acknowledge the heartbreak that they have suffered. I acknowledge both of them for getting out in public to ensure this does not happen to any other young person like their son.

Christopher's Law will ensure all safety officers appointed to large-scale construction sites are independent and not employees of the builder so there is no incentive to turn a blind eye to an unsafe situation. It will also bring in third party valuers and estimators to check all bids and tenders on large-scale construction to eliminate poor construction practices due to cost cutting and time constraints, and ensure the white card cannot be obtained online but is available only after an approved TAFE course or a similar approved course. It will require apprentices to wear a different coloured safety hard hat so they are better able to be recognised and removed from inappropriate or unsafe situations. Finally, it will require all supervisory personnel to complete a full Health and Safety Representative Course or a Cert IV in work health and safety so they are more aware of the consequences of unsafe work practices.

These are practical, commonsense initiatives and they should be implemented as soon as possible. I acknowledge the unions and workers who have called for tougher laws to improve workplace safety. I also acknowledge those who, for many years, have continuously called on governments of both persuasions to improve workplace health and safety. I urge the Government to consider these amendments. If the Government is serious about making the legislation tougher, it should consider Labor's proposals. I acknowledge my colleagues the member for Granville and Labor's Leader of the Opposition in the upper House, the Hon. Adam Searle, MLC. I understand they will be introducing a number of amendments to improve this bill so that the laws of our State keep workers safe so that they can come home to their families and loved ones. I look forward to supporting their amendments.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:48:01): I support the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Review) Bill 2019 and I commend the Minister for bringing forward these important reforms. I share his belief that workplace deaths in New South Wales are far too common and it is something that he is doing something about. Before I go into detail about the fault element to the category 1 offence, I will address some earlier comments. This bill does not ignore the Boland review; rather it expedites elements of the 2018 Boland review that the Government felt needed to be adopted urgently in New South Wales. The balance of the Boland review will be dealt with as part of a national response later this year and a bill will be introduced in New South Wales in the second half of this year to engage with those recommendations. It is important to put that on record as it corrects the view and some of the comments made by those opposite earlier.

I welcome the proposal to add gross negligence as a fault element to the category 1 offence. This amendment makes the category 1 offence easier to prosecute and will be a strong deterrent to negligent behaviour that exposes workers to a risk of death or serious injury in New South Wales workplaces. At present to prove the category 1 offence, committed when a health and safety duty holder exposes someone to a risk of death or serious injury or illness without reasonable excuse, the prosecution has to prove that the person acted recklessly. Recklessness is difficult to prove. It requires the prosecution to show that the person was aware of the risk and consciously chose to disregard it. That is a heavy evidentiary burden. We know that the category 1 offence is difficult to prosecute because there have been so few prosecutions in New South Wales and in other jurisdictions that have enacted the model work health and safety laws.

In New South Wales there has been one prosecution for a category 1 offence since the model laws came into effect on 1 January 2012. From 2012 to 2019 there have been 419 work-related fatalities in New South Wales. Regulators have brought prosecutions in relation to many fatalities, but they have brought them as category 2 prosecutions. The category 2 offence carries maximum financial penalties that are half those of the category 1 offence, and a person cannot go to jail for a category 2 offence. Why have there been so few category 1 prosecutions? The 2018 *Review of the model Work Health and Safety laws*—an independent review of the model laws now operating in jurisdictions across the country—found that it was because recklessness was too difficult to prove.

Regulators can only bring prosecutions when they think they have a reasonable prospect of success. This is the problem that adding gross negligence to the offence will address. Regulators will no longer have to prove that a person knew of a risk and consciously chose to disregard it. It will be enough that the person's behaviour fell so far short of what is reasonable and involved such a high risk of death or serious injury to another person that it deserves criminal punishment. A work health and safety duty holder who exposes a worker to a risk of death or serious injury or illness through gross negligence will face the highest penalties under the Act.

Individuals will face five years' imprisonment and a fine of up to \$346,500, or up to \$692,500 if they are a person conducting a business or undertaking or officer of a person conducting a business or undertaking. Corporations will face fines of up to \$3.46 million. This will better enable regulators to hold those responsible for serious work health and safety breaches to account. I am aware that other Australian jurisdictions have enacted or

have introduced bills to enact industrial manslaughter offences. The New South Wales Government is confident that enhancing the category 1 offence is, however, the most appropriate course. It will enable work health and safety regulators to prosecute for the most serious offending conduct regardless of whether a death has occurred. That is a very important point. We want to prevent harm by addressing risks.

A person who breaches their duty and exposes a worker to a risk of death is highly culpable, even if the worker does not die and even if no worker is injured. The Work Health and Safety Act recognises this. It is underpinned by the principle of prevention. Grossly negligent workplace conduct needs to be deterred, whether or not it leads to a death in a particular instance. The point is whether it has the potential to lead to a death. We need to embed a health and safety culture in New South Wales workplaces to ensure that workers and the public are not exposed to the risks of death or serious injury and illness.

I share the New South Wales Government's belief—and this Minister's belief—that the most serious offence provisions must be an effective deterrent. Lowering the evidentiary threshold for the category 1 offence will incentivise vigilance by all. Work health and safety is a shared responsibility. All persons conducting businesses or undertakings [PCBUs], all officers of corporate PCBUs, all workers and all persons at a workplace must take reasonable care of themselves and others. When a prosecution for a category 1 offence is a real threat, when the offence is a real deterrent to negligent workplace behaviour, everyone is safer. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr Geoff Lee: Excellent! Please tell us about the bill again.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: Yes, I will. I will go back to the important point that I opened my contribution with: to acknowledge some comments made earlier in the debate about the bill not reflecting, or ignoring, the Boland review. It is important to acknowledge that the bill expedites certain elements of the review to ensure that they are urgently adopted in New South Wales. It is important to put at ease concerns of members opposite that full elements of the Boland review are not being dealt with. The balance of the review will be dealt with as part of a national response later this year, which will enable the Government to bring forward a bill in the second half of the year to engage with those recommendations. We all have friends and family members who work in a variety of different fields.

Mr Kevin Anderson: As landscapers.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: Yes, landscapers. I am in a running group and run with a number of friends, some of whom work on scaffolds. They often come to me for quiet discussions about some challenges they find in their workplaces.

Mr Mark Coure: Name them.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: No, I will not do that because I would not want to embarrass them or their employers if there were certain issues on that worksite that were not up to scratch. This incredibly important bill contains a number of significant reforms. The Minister is very dedicated. I am thrilled that he is present in the Chamber to listen to debate on the bill. It creates new offences and powers for inspectors, but I welcome in particular reforms to existing offences, in not just the Work Health and Safety Act but also the regulation. It will increase the maximum penalties for over 75 offences in the Act and over 550 offences in the regulation for the first time since the Act and regulation commenced in 2012. Over time it has become evident that penalties lose their real value as deterrents if they do not keep pace with increases in the cost of compliance. The costs of complying with work health and safety obligations have continued to rise.

Debate interrupted.

Members

CALLS TO ORDER

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind Opposition members that five of them are on three calls to order already, including the member for Gosford. I would hate to remove members from the Chamber at such an early stage of the sitting week.

Public Interest Debate

EDUCATION

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (16:58:14): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the Government's commitment to improve numeracy as part of our "back to basics" approach to education.

- (2) Welcomes the Government's commitment to making maths compulsory for all students from kindergarten to year 12.
- (3) Welcomes the Government's additional commitments to:
 - (a) recruit 100 specialist primary school maths teachers over five years;
 - (b) offer 320 scholarships valued at \$50,000 each for the STEM undergraduates and career changers to fund a master's degree; and
 - (c) work with universities to encourage students to take high-level HSC maths courses.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will be heard in silence.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I also acknowledge the great work done by Professor Geoff Masters on the New South Wales curriculum review. As appropriate, I met with Professor Masters. He seems to have a wonderful grasp of the difficulties, challenges and opportunities of how best to look at the curriculum and declutter it, and look at innovative ways that we can deliver high standards in not only maths but also literacy to ensure that we give our younger students all the opportunities that we possibly can at school. Members opposite will continue with the rabble; I am sure they will have their own views. On the Government side of the House, we support our young people, students and schools with real action.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Londonderry will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Members opposite are making a lot of noise. It is very disappointing that they do not support our schools.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Dr GEOFF LEE: In the interim report released last year, Professor Masters highlighted the importance of foundational skills in literacy and numeracy. Improving students' numeracy skills is a core priority for the Government. We know that those skills are crucial in the thriving world that is increasingly mechanised and digitised. No-one can argue that maths is not important for work and life. We all know that financial literacy enables many people to get ahead in life, whether it is adding up one's bank account, looking at financial charges, or understanding the contract on a mobile phone or the terms and conditions of a credit card. We know that numeracy and financial literacy is important for everyday life and being successful. That is why we believe maths in schools and the focus on numeracy are so important. That is why we are moving towards making maths compulsory in years 11 and 12.

We are living through a technological revolution. As our world becomes more data rich and technology enhanced, all students must be prepared. They need sufficient knowledge of applied mathematics to fully participate in further education, training and work. In fact, quite often employer groups lament the difficulties in attracting trainees and apprentices who have the requisite maths skills for things such as the construction industry so that, for example, they can work out the complex problems of carpentry. That is why maths is so important in our curriculum and why the Government is making maths compulsory in years 11 and 12. We have listened to the industry and experts and that is what we are delivering: decluttering the curriculum to focus on important things, including numeracy. We want every student to leave year 12 with the understanding of mathematical concepts that are needed to thrive in a technology-driven, competitive, globalised workforce. I am well aware of the need for more maths teachers. The Government is ramping up its efforts to attract more people into that career pathway.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Dr GEOFF LEE: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Ms Prue Car: He's putting us to sleep.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can leave the Chamber if you wish.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Well said, Madam Deputy Speaker. As part of our maths strategy that we launched in October last year, we are funding 320 scholarships valued at \$50,000 each for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics [STEM] undergraduates and career changers. The scholarships go towards a Master of Teaching degree to increase the number of specialist secondary mathematics teachers. We have a cultural change plan to improve the perception of mathematics in the broader community through maths ambassadors. We also have a suite of capability-building projects for teachers, which include a mathematics growth team headed by Eddie Woo. I send a big thanks to Eddie. What a fantastic and inspirational role model he is as a maths teacher. He is also a great bloke. The team is working with a number of schools to support improvements in teaching and learning, and a new mathematics-based HSC course for students who traditionally have not chosen to study mathematics. The pilot course is focused on numeracy and practical applications in everyday life.

As I said, those financial literacy skills are important for people's future. We know that they can have a multiplier effect throughout their lifetime. The 2019 pilot has been extended for 2020 and additional schools have been included. Work is underway on the development of a centralised platform where schools and teachers can easily access the best teaching resources, software products and professional learning. The Government is working in consultation with universities to improve initial teaching training for primary teachers in relation to the teaching of mathematics. I acknowledge and thank the Premier as well as the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, in the other place, for their commitment to excellence in education. I was also very pleased to be joined in my electorate last week by the Premier and Minister Mitchell for the official opening of Arthur Phillip High School in the heart of Parramatta. Arthur Phillip High School is an example of New South Wales' world-class education system and it will serve the community for many generations.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Londonderry will remain silent.

Dr GEOFF LEE: We support mathematics for all students in years 11 and 12, and that is why this motion is important. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (17:05:32): I am very pleased to speak to this motion after that particularly riveting contribution by the Minister, but I have to say that the Opposition disagrees with the premise of the motion that the Government has brought to the House this afternoon because after nine years of the Liberal Party and The Nationals in government in New South Wales we are at this most unfortunate place. After nine years of mismanagement of the education system—nine years—we are at a place where New South Wales is not number one anymore. It is not number one in English, it is not number one in science and it most definitely is not number one in maths. In fact, relative to other Australian States, between 2012 and 2018—let us remember who was in government during that time—New South Wales students have dropped from fourth to sixth in reading, dropped from third to fifth in science and dropped from third to fifth in maths. This is all under this Government's watch.

Let us look at one of the most embarrassing set of statistics that has been much talked about in the public space in the past few months, that is, the recent program for international student assessment results from late last year. What they show is that only just over half of New South Wales students can demonstrate elementary skills in maths. It is not acceptable that only just over half of New South Wales students can demonstrate elementary skills in maths. For the first time since the assessment began, 16 countries that previously performed worse than Australia have either outperformed us or are now on par. That means we have been overtaken by the United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Latvia and Iceland. Above us are Estonia, Slovenia, Latvia and Portugal. So we are going really well! We are doing really well under this Government's watch.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Rockdale that he is on two calls to order.

Ms PRUE CAR: Worse still, this is supposed to be one of the Premier's personal priorities, but she and this Government are absolutely failing the next generation if this is what their priorities mean.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Clarence will remain silent.

Ms PRUE CAR: The PISA [Programme for International Student Assessment] results show us going backwards, further and further. Our results are falling through the floor. It is simply embarrassing. We see this at an unprecedented time of population growth, when schools are under more pressure than ever before, teachers are under more pressure than ever before, and the plan is to include compulsory maths. I wish the Minister responsible were here, not the substitute Minister, so we could ask her exactly how this is going to happen. How is this going to happen when there is such a shortage of maths teachers? In fact, almost one in 10 students will never be taught maths by a qualified maths teacher.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PRUE CAR: What is happening in New South Wales is that this Government is putting more and more pressure on teachers at a time when they are under unprecedented levels of pressure in the classroom, making non-maths teachers teach maths, now making it compulsory, but not hiring enough maths teachers to make those subjects even conceivable in the classroom. This is not a government with a plan, this is a panicked government. This is a panicked government that has let these standards fall to embarrassing levels—they have plummeted on this Government's watch. The Premier might like to talk about education being her legacy, and I would agree with that: Education will be her legacy. Her legacy will be a generation of children who are not prepared for a changing world, a world of automation—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Oatley will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Ms PRUE CAR: A world where the economy will look nothing like it does at the moment. This generation of children will not be prepared because this Government has left standards to rot under its watch. It has let standards plummet to embarrassing levels and it has nothing but thought bubbles to show for it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PRUE CAR: This Government's legacy will be the worst-performing student results in New South Wales for 20 years at a time when we should be coming up with every way to support a growing State and not let our State's children fall behind the rest of the world. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Londonderry to order for the second time. I am waiting for silence in the Chamber. I call the member for Oatley, who will be heard in silence.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:11:29): When it comes to tackling the issue of improving the standard of our children's education, we are taking a back-to-basics approach. This is a Government that is focusing on the simple solutions that have proven results. Part of our commitment to this philosophy is making maths compulsory for all students, from kindergarten to year 2. Like the member for Cessnock and many on this side of the House, we are excited by that prospect. Maths is about so much more than just formulas and equations. Numeracy is an exercise for the brain; it strengthens our analytical skills, and forces us to think in a way that challenges and expands our minds. Maths is about problem-solving, an important skill for whatever field the students of New South Wales choose to enter. It facilitates creativity and uses parts of the brain that are not otherwise used. As a State and a society, maths has given us so much. Many of humanity's major developments, including air travel, telecommunications and the internet, are thanks to numeracy. I have witnessed firsthand that maths can be exciting and ignite a passion in some students.

Mr Alister Henskens: How often?

Mr MARK COURE: Many times. My son, James, has just started year 1 at Mortdale Public School and he loves maths. My wife, Adla, who is a schoolteacher, and I encourage that passion in James because we know that it is so beneficial for his development and has helped his performance in other subjects. That is why this is so personal to me. Every school student in New South Wales deserves the opportunity to experience the rewards of mathematics, and that is why we are making maths compulsory and supporting its growth in schools. I, like Minister Lee, welcome the Government's recent additional commitments to, firstly, recruit 100 specialist primary school maths teachers over the next five years; secondly, offer 320 scholarships, each valued at \$50,000, for science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] undergraduates and career changers to fund a master's degree; and, thirdly, work with universities to encourage students to take higher level HSC maths.

Of course, there is more, and we are already doing a lot more. This is a government that is delivering an education spend of \$6.7 billion over the next four years to deliver 190 new and upgraded schools across New South Wales, including \$1.3 billion for maintenance over the next few years. I know you all want to hear what Labor's track record is on education. In my own electorate its track record is pure and simple: the former Labor Government closed Narwee High School. What other schools were closed?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Oatley will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr MARK COURE: When the Government rolls out a new program the electorate of Oatley—my electorate—will never miss out. As part of the Government's back-to-basics approach for education across the State many of our local schools have benefited and will continue to benefit. Mortdale Public School—James' school—has employed additional staff to support students with special needs. That is not limited to maths; it includes speech therapists, coaches for teachers and additional staff who teach English. At Beverly Hills Girls High School—in the electorate of the member for Lakemba, but we share it—New South Wales government funding has allowed for extended library opening hours for an extra six hours a week.

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

Mr MARK COURE: Students have access to teachers, the internet and other information and communications technology [ICT] facilities that may otherwise be limited by socio-economic factors. There is also greater focus on Indigenous students, students with a disability and students who do not speak English as a first language. Narwee Public School has used funding to implement targeted learning intentions and success criteria in literacy and numeracy. This is critical for keeping students and teachers accountable and responsible and for ensuring that the standard of education is the best it can be. It is truly great to see our local schools supporting the Government's back-to-basics approach. As I said, mathematics is fundamental to a holistic and well-rounded education. The New South Wales Government has a clear plan for education and I am proud to be part of it. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:16:45): As an ex-teacher yourself, Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that this public interest debate is very close to your heart and I would like to set the record straight. Education of the next generation is all about giving them the best start possible. But we have a government that is saying we will go back to basics. What about future focus for the kids of New South Wales? The Minister for skills and his colleagues are patting themselves on the back for a job well done. I say it is too little too late. As the shadow Minister for Education has pointed out, for nine years this Government has managed our State's education system and we have continued to see results go backwards against other States and internationally.

The Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] results from 2019 are embarrassing. They show that only 52 per cent of New South Wales students can demonstrate "more than elementary skills" in maths. It is about time we took some action. Australia has fallen to the OECD average for the first time. Sixteen countries that we used to beat in these rankings are now out-performing us or are now on par. Three-quarters of year 7 to year 10 students were taught maths for at least one year by a teacher not trained in the subject. In New South Wales the number of teachers with a glamorous physical education [PE] degree teaching our kids maths—and that is no criticism of PE teachers—indicates that if we see these results we need to see an investment in maths teachers.

We also need to continue to look at the gender gap in maths performance, which has been going backwards since 2015, and get more girls into science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] learning. I remember the sticker on my science teacher's desk that said "Girls can do anything", and I think that travels with me to this day. What are we doing now to encourage more girls into STEM learning so that even the highest-performing students do not have recorded "worrying levels of decline"? In our schools, results are falling, schools are overcrowded and teachers are under more and more pressure. New South Wales students have dropped from fourth to sixth in reading. Where is a policy from this Government about improving reading? Reading is an absolutely crucial part of the future of our students in this State. New South Wales students have dropped in science and maths. This is the education legacy of this Government.

The Premier suggests that she will take the programs developed by teachers who achieve excellent results and roll out their teaching methods for other teachers across New South Wales. I do not think the Premier has got any idea how that hurts teachers across my electorate. To take the good results and the programs by good teachers and roll them out in low socio-economic areas with completely different needs is a stab in the heart to the teachers in my electorate. The Premier should have a good look at how she is talking about education in New South Wales. Teachers across New South Wales are so busy trying to fill in their paperwork, to record the tedium and to justify their existence that they barely have time to actually plan quality lessons. The member for Wyong's wife is a primary school teacher and she is up until midnight filling in the forms and doing the compliance for kids in her classroom.

Mr Alister Henskens: Every night?

Ms LIESL TESCH: Every single night.

Mr Alister Henskens: Up until midnight?

Ms LIESL TESCH: Absolutely. And maybe some of you should not look surprised. You should go and talk to teachers.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Gosford will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms LIESL TESCH: Maybe when you are out there talking to teachers you might listen to the fact that new teachers are being ripped off tens of thousands of dollars under a policy developed by your Government. They are earning \$30,000 less than their colleagues who entered teaching prior to this policy. Educators who have been moved out of TAFE because of the changes and the structural loss and have now moved into school teaching cannot get their prior training in TAFE as permanent and casual teachers aligned or recognised so that they get the qualifications they need to go into teaching. And what happens? Teachers leave the profession. It is devastating.

I am not just talking about older, experienced teachers who do not have the time to support the young staff; I am talking specifically about teachers with less than five years' experience who put up their hand to be teachers in this State, to go into that workforce, and do not continue in the workforce. We need to seriously look at how we can improve the lives of teachers and the quality of education beyond this deep commitment that the Government is offering. Making maths compulsory is good, but let us look further into how we can look after teachers for the length of their career in the New South Wales workforce. They are an incredible workforce and are to be commended. Hear, hear for teachers!

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:21:57): I commend the member for Parramatta for moving this motion. Education is the one thing that can be given but never taken away. It is a suit of armour we wrap around our students before sending them out into the world. As a government we must constantly strive to ensure that we are equipping our students with the skills they need for the workforce and the world they will be entering. The decision to go back to basics with education is significant. The importance of mathematics is not lost on me, as the wife of a maths teacher who is also a physical education [PE] teacher. I understand the passion of our educators and the challenges they have faced in improving results and, above all, in inspiring passion in their students for the subject of mathematics.

I welcome the Government's moves to improve numeracy around the State. The new mathematics-based HSC course, which focuses on the practical applications of numeracy in everyday life, is helping students understand the importance of maths skills in the modern world. Not every student is set to be a programmer, a PhD candidate or an engineer, but the benefits of maths in understanding budgeting, tax and shopping is something everyone can use. Rather than expecting primary school teachers to be "jack of all trades", the Government is committing to recruit specialist maths teachers in our primary schools. This change will ensure people with specialist interests pass on their passion for maths to our younger students, and it reinforces the importance of mathematics as a fundamental life skill.

For too long we have viewed maths as something serious and calculated—pardon the pun—but Eddie Woo has shown us that maths can be fun, engaging and taught in a way that shows off its practical applications in everyday life. The Mathematics Growth team headed by Mr Woo is a revelation in transforming how both students and staff view the subject. Utilising his passion will be a huge benefit to our schools no matter where they are in the State. Maths is a universal language and as a result it can be utilised in all walks of life and across a range of professions. It could be argued that it is more fundamental in a globalised world than English, which has been compulsory for all HSC students for years. It is common sense to make maths compulsory for all students. The nature of the subject means it can also be learnt and understood at the highest level in any part of the State, be it in an inner-city school or a remote connected classroom in the most isolated reaches of the State.

There is already strong proof of this with many rural and regional students making the high achievers list in last year's HSC results. More than five and a half hours' drive away from this Chamber is Barellan Central School. In any given year this school boasts a student body of around 130 students spanning from kindergarten to year 12. Despite their relative isolation and the challenge of offering a wide variety of courses to their small student body for the 2019 HSC, Barellan Central School gained a band 6 in mathematics last year.

At Cowra High School, a school in a town of fewer than 10,000 people, an E4 was won by a student for Mathematics Extension 1. These results are not accidental. Rural and regional schools are making the most of the technology available to them and helping their students tap into the pool of online resources which are available and set to expand. Building on this, the Government is developing a centralised platform where schools and teachers can easily access the best teaching resources, software and professional learning. Opportunity should never be limited by postcode and this will mean teachers in rural, regional and remote areas have access to many of the same professional development opportunities as those in metropolitan areas. I commend the Government for its maths in schools initiative and I commend the motion to the House.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (17:26:55): I welcome this debate to talk about and analyse the report card of this tired and worn-out Liberal-Nationals Government. You would think that, being the Government's day to introduce the public interest debate [PID], it would choose a topic that would rank highly in its favour. Of course, that would be somewhat logical. Just because Government members have read some numbers from this morning's talking points does not mean they actually understand them. It does not mean it will happen or they will solve the problems after nine long years. There are few more important tasks for a State Government than resourcing our public schools, but on every measure and against every matrix, the Government has failed students and parents. Today's public interest debate about compulsory mathematics, additional teachers and mathematics scholarships simply highlights the Government's woeful track record. The numbers do not add up.

The Government has dropped the ball and is desperately trying to pick it up again. From this year, students in New South Wales will have to meet minimum standards of literacy and numeracy to attain their HSC. The Government is only now announcing new maths teachers. It has set minimum standards but has failed to provide the support students need to reach these minimum standards—talk about putting the cart before the horse. We all know why the Government has moved this PID today. It has been reeling from the recent Program for International Student Assessment [PISA] scores. These results were damning and the numbers tell the exact truth of how the Liberal-Nationals Government has put our students into the negative zone when it comes to education.

Let us go through some numbers. First, maths results in New South Wales fell to 489 points in 2018 from 494 in 2015. Second, New South Wales is nationally in fifth position behind Victoria, the Australian Capital

Territory, Queensland and Western Australia, which are all Labor Governments I might add—I have never heard of a ranking numerical system where you claim to go forwards by falling backwards but under this Liberal-Nationals Government any number in the system is possible. Third, only 55 per cent of New South Wales students have attained the national proficient standard in mathematics. So much for being the No. 1 premier State.

We can talk about and tout a back-to-basics curriculum, but this is a government that cannot even get the basic numbers on its financial budget right. Because of this failure, it is our students and their future that miss out. If the Government wants to talk about numbers today, let us talk about them: (1) the \$1.3 billion blowout to light rail; (2) the \$6 billion budget blowout on WestConnex; (3) the \$225 million Parramatta high rise blowout; (4) the \$100 million on the football stadium; (5) the \$1.5 billion on the unnecessary relocation of the Powerhouse Museum—the list goes on. If you want to talk about compulsory mathematics, it is not our kids and our teachers but those opposite who need to go back to compulsory mathematics. Frankly, the Government's report card grade is a big fat "F". One can only imagine how many extra resources and how much better off our students would be if the Government had got its financial mathematics right and had managed the books right.

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

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Our good friends in the Labor Government in Victoria spend nearly \$5 billion more on education. It is no wonder that under a Labor Government mathematics is No. 1 in Victorian schools. Are we supposed to believe that just because the Government makes a couple of talking points in its public interest debate that it is magically going to resolve the chronic underfunding of our schools? Just because those Government members say it, that does not mean it is true. Where is it going to come from? When will they be available? Where will they be trained? What schools will they be allocated to? Will the students see the benefits in this decade or the next decade? I reckon my daughter will be at university by the time we see this. There are several aspects of this PID that do not add up. The truth is that the Government has had nine years to address the chronic shortage of maths teachers in New South Wales. It has had nine years to improve results and resources in our schools. After nine years it has failed and it will be failing for as long as we can say.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (17:32:15): In reply: I thank the members for their contributions to the public interest debate. This important motion sets out to acknowledge the Government's contribution and commitment to a back-to-basics approach to education, to making sure that maths is compulsory for all students from kindergarten to year 12 and to the whole range of activities that it is doing, such as the specialist primary school maths teachers, scholarships and working with universities to encourage more students to take up high-level HSC courses. It is surprising that there is a different tale on the opposite side of the House. The member for Londonderry got up and started politicising. It is very sad that she politicised this. I want to confirm that this Premier will go down as having made education her legacy. On a personal note, I hope my legacy goes down as committed to building skills and training in the State.

The House heard from the member for Oatley, Mark Coure. He agrees with the back-to-basics approach. He clearly understands the need for numeracy in the cognitive development of young people, especially in problem-solving and lifelong skills. It is especially important for individuals. He reiterated that maths can be an exciting subject. The member for Oatley is very excited by maths. The member for Gosford tried to politicise it. Let me correct the record that on this side of the House we support physical education [PE] teachers, unlike those opposite who do not like PE teachers. We do agree that we should encourage more girls to enter science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] careers.

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: The member for Cootamundra's words were very elegant—married to a maths and physical education teacher. Obviously on this side we support both maths and physical education teachers. I thank the member for Cootamundra for her outstanding description. Our role is to have inspirational teachers inspiring our young students to do their best. It is about passion and imparting that passion. We congratulate Eddie Woo on his contribution to our great State. The member for Macquarie Fields was very interesting. The Government is committed to going back to the basics and is committed to making maths compulsory for students from kindergarten to year 12. I commend the motion to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes49

Noes32

Majority.....17

AYES

Anderson, K	Barilaro, J	Bromhead, S
Butler, R	Clancy, J	Conolly, K
Constance, A	Cooke, S (teller)	Coure, M
Crouch, A (teller)	Dalton, H	Dominello, V
Donato, P	Elliott, D	Evans, L
Gibbons, M	Greenwich, A	Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C	Hancock, S	Hazzard, B
Henskens, A	Johnsen, M	Kean, M
Lee, G	Lindsay, W	Marshall, A
McGirr, J	Pavey, M	Perrottet, D
Petinos, E	Piper, G	Preston, R
Provest, G	Roberts, A	Saunders, D
Sidgreaves, P	Sidoti, J	Singh, G
Smith, N	Speakman, M	Stokes, R
Taylor, M	Toole, P	Tuckerman, W
Upton, G	Ward, G	Williams, L
Wilson, F		

NOES

Aitchison, J	Atalla, E	Bali, S
Barr, C	Car, P	Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A	Cotsis, S	Crakanthorp, T
Daley, M	Dib, J	Doyle, T
Finn, J	Harris, D	Harrison, J
Haylen, J	Hoening, R	Hornery, S
Kamper, S	Lalich, N	Lynch, P
McDermott, H	McKay, J	Mehan, D (teller)
Minns, C	Park, R	Saffin, J
Scully, P	Tesch, L	Voltz, L
Warren, G	Watson, A (teller)	

PAIRS

Ayres, S	Mihailuk, T
Davies, T	O'Neill, M
Williams, R	Zangari, G

Motion agreed to.

The SPEAKER: I thank all those involved in the development of the division application, which has now been implemented successfully, and the consultation process. I am pleased to say we have now moved into the new century.

*Private Members' Statements***VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS**

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (17:43:49): At 24 square kilometres, the Vaucluse electorate is the second smallest electorate in the State of New South Wales. What it lacks in size, it makes up for in diversity and uniqueness. It is a place of historical significance and home to beautiful natural icons. With just over 76,000 people living in the electorate, from Bondi Road to South Head in Watsons Bay, we are blessed to have people from all walks of life. Some have lived there since they were born and others have chosen to call our beautiful part of the world their home. On Australia Day, we celebrate these differences. On that day across the country, Australians by heart became Australians on paper as they pledged to become Australian citizens.

I look forward to our local citizenship ceremonies every year. This year I started off at Woollahra Municipal Council's ceremony held at the council chambers. The ceremony was hosted by Mayor Susan Wynne. We were joined by Australia Day ambassador and Australian journalist Terry Willesee who, as our guest speaker, shared some tales about his stellar career and explained what being Australian meant to him. On that day 37 local

residents pledged to become Australians. They hailed from across the world, from Tanzania to Belgium, Brazil to Scotland—such diversity. It was fantastic to meet with them and hear their stories over delicious lamington gelato cakes. One citizen had actually lived in my electorate for 17 years, but this year had finally decided to make their pledge of citizenship. I was joined by my Federal colleague Dave Sharma and by Woollahra councillors Nick Maxwell and Anthony Marano, who I also acknowledge.

After that I attended the Waverley Council citizenship ceremony at Easts Leagues Club in Bondi Junction. This was a really big ceremony. This year 65 residents took the pledge to become citizens. It was great to hear the emotional chorus of *I Am Australian* by Bruce Woodley sung as confetti fell from the ceiling and as our new citizens flapped their Australian and Indigenous flags in the air. When formalities concluded, we also gathered together and enjoyed some Australian treats, including, of course, meat pies. It is no surprise that many new citizens within Waverley Council are residents of Bondi and Bondi Junction, grouping around our iconic, world famous Bondi Beach. It is an amazing jewel which lures people from all around the world and, in many cases, it is good enough to make them want to stay. I mention my colleagues Waverley councillors Leon Goltsman, Tony Kay and Will Nemesh. They were present at that ceremony along with Dave Sharma.

After that I headed to Bondi Beach, where thousands and thousands of beachgoers were embracing what was a very hot summer day. I visited the Cottage Point Rural Fire Service crew, who had brought their fire truck to the Bondi sands. It was a welcome reminder that so many Australians were doing it tough on Australia Day. By their visit, the local community had an opportunity to extend their gratitude and thanks to the firefighters. I too thank them for their generous visit and for their work right across New South Wales.

Australia Day is also an opportunity to recognise Australians for their service and commitment to State and country. Of course, the Order of Australia honours are announced and I congratulate this year's awardees from my local area, including Robert Goot, AO, SC; Emeritus Professor Jules Guss, AO; Professor Alison Ritter, AO; Professor John Piggott, AO; Anthony Abrahams, AM; Bettina Arndt, AM; Lisa Chung, AM; Glenn Shorrock, AM; Dr Anthony Graham, OAM; Roger Clifford, OAM; Gail Marshall, OAM; Rabbi Dr Jeffrey Cohen, AM; Charles Aronson, OAM; the late Jeremy Spinak, AM; and the late John Fordham, AM. I thank them for their distinguished service to our community and country.

I warmly welcome to my electorate those who pledged their citizenship. I really appreciate the decision they have made to be citizens, particularly of my electorate. It has been my privilege to represent our wonderful and unique electorate in this Parliament since 2011. It has also been my pleasure to serve all of those constituents over time and indeed, from now on, those people who became citizens on Australia Day. I commend my statement to the House.

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR COLIN TATZ, AO

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (17:48:49): Australia is home to one of the world's great multicultural success stories, with Wollongong a leading example of this success. People from all parts of the world have come together to make this country their home. In a new nation, with a fresh start, bonds are formed that stretch across historic divides. Many of those who have settled in Australia have fled from the regimes of post-World War II Europe, South Africa, Cambodia, Armenia, Iraq, Syria and other countries where tyranny has been able to flourish and has resulted in the deaths of millions of people.

I have travelled to some of those countries and taken the time to visit some of the places where the worst crimes against humanity were committed. They are chilling places and they can only exist with complicity, which is sometimes borne out of fear of speaking up and sometimes out of agreement with the people who live nearby. Often these crimes start with the presentation of simplistic solutions to difficult problems, such as blaming groups, religions, tribes or races for the ills that befall the collective when no blame should rightly be attributed to them. Those solutions seek to repair problems by breaking others and creating new and different problems for a targeted community. They are presented by populists who know that they do not have the answers but seek nothing more than the power to sway things in a way that suits them and their supporters. It is this populism that we must all be alert to.

Professor Colin Tatz was one person who was acutely aware of this. Professor Tatz passed away on 19 November last year, having spent a lifetime dedicated to the task of understanding history and helping us to recognise the undercurrents that breed intolerance and hatred. Colin knew the root cause of many of those problems because he and his wife, Sandra, who is in the gallery this evening, saw firsthand people being taken away and locked up without trial, among other things—sometimes on nothing more than a rumour or false report—under the draconian powers introduced as part of South Africa's apartheid regime. After fleeing South Africa, Colin and Sandra settled in Australia, where Colin said he felt immediately at home. Within a decade he had become Australia's youngest appointed professor when he became the founding chair of politics at the University of New England.

For six decades he dedicated himself to what in Judaism is called tikkun olam, which means to repair a broken world. His work on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, sport and politics is well known, but it is his work on genocide that has left us with a wealth of research that helps us to understand genocide and anti-Semitism, especially in an Australian context. He had an understanding of prejudice, racism, discrimination and how the laws that govern us can be used to divide us, destroy us, and target individuals and groups with the aim of suppressing and removing their rights. His work in genocide studies helps us to better understand and recognise the signs that lead to the destruction of human rights and the rise of totalitarian regimes. His message was that these things cannot happen without a bystander, by which he meant those who are indifferent and hostile—perhaps even complicit—to what is taking place.

Bystanders are not just individuals. They can be the judiciary, teachers, the legal and medical professions, the police, religious institutions and, of course, parliaments and their elected members. As elected members it is our responsibility never to remain silent in the face of racism, discrimination, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and injustice. It is that simple: never remain silent, no matter how difficult or uncomfortable that might be. Individuals the world over are again seeking to present simple, populist solutions to complex problems. Often hidden in these solutions is the apportionment of blame to individuals, races or religions. This is rarely said directly but instead is hinted at using thinly veiled language. It is our role as leaders in our communities to challenge this behaviour and language. It is our role to provide groups being unjustly targeted with comfort and the certainty that they will not become a convenient group at whose feet blame can be laid. Wearing a yarmulke or hijab, sporting a beard, wearing a cross or other outward displays of religious beliefs, being poor or possessing other personal qualities and traits should not make you a target of hate or blame.

Colin taught us that while we cannot deny our history, no matter how uncomfortable it might be, we can effectively counter those who seek to divide and destroy by speaking up and standing up for human rights and the right of every individual to live in a just, free society. Much has been said about Colin since his passing. My colleague in the other place the Hon. Walt Secord provided a fine tribute which noted the reflections of many in the Jewish community. One of the best tributes I have heard was by ABC Radio's Phillip Adams, who described Colin as a fine scholar and a good bloke—simple but accurate. Colin's academic career left us with 26 books—two co-authored by his sons, Simon and Paul—and more than 100 scholarly articles. He has left us with the reminder that the responsibilities of public office stretch beyond the daily headlines. I enjoyed some memorable discussions with Colin, who was tough to win an argument against. I extend the deepest condolences of my wife, Alison, and I to Sandra, Simon and Amanda, and Paul and Karen. Thank you for sharing Colin with us and let those in this place today and in the future not forget the lessons that his life's work has taught us—that we must continue to work to fix a broken world.

DAVID DARCY

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (17:54:10): I am delighted to inform the House that David Darcy, an Archibald winner and resident of Murrurundi, was at the recent opening night of the Archibald Prize 2019 Regional Tour at the Regional Arts Centre at Muswellbrook, which helped make the event the great triumph it was. As some in the House may be aware, David Darcy was successful in taking out the 2019 Archibald Prize, the ANZ's People's Choice Award, with his portrait of elder Daisy Tjuparntarri Ward. The painting was titled "Tjuparntarri Women's Business", which had over 20,000 votes by the public to secure this incredible achievement.

David moved to the region from the Blue Mountains three years ago and has certainly made Murrurundi his home as he has opened up an art studio called Darcy and the Fox. This is where by chance he met with Aboriginal elder Daisy Ward after she walked into his studio looking for art supplies when she was visiting a friend in Murrurundi. Daisy Ward is a respected elder of the Warakurna community and Ngaanyatjarra people of Western Australia. Ms Ward works as a cultural and community liaison officer for regional schools in Western Australia and is a director on the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council. She also is a qualified translator, artist, sought-after storyteller and advocate against domestic violence.

Super-Tjupa, as she is referred to by friends, has a remarkable connection to country and traditional culture. David Darcy is quoted as saying, "Over several weeks we got to know each other and I discovered I'd met an extraordinary woman." The vivid portrait of Ms Ward is somewhat striking, showing her face smeared with modern oxide red. The strength and emotion visible in her gaze struck a chord with visitors to the Art Gallery of New South Wales and recently to the many visitors at the Regional Arts Centre in Muswellbrook, including me. David Darcy made his transition to painting only 2½ years ago after a successful career in photography, publishing and film. He was named as a finalist in the National Photographic Portrait Prize, taking out the 2016 People's Choice Award for his image of actor Levi Miller on the set of *Red Dog: True Blue*. Dogs have always been a passion for David and he is well known for his portraits and books on mongrels. He has nine bestselling books and in his words has "chased dogs all around the world".

When David moved to Murrurundi he was inspired by the Archibald Prize and met his first subject, local Murrurundi artist Charlotte Drake-Brockman. In 2018 David was selected as an Archibald finalist for his work. It might be noted that Ms Brockman had a portrait in the exhibition and Michael Reid, owner of the Michael Reid Art Gallery in Murrurundi, was the subject of a portrait by Robert Malherbe. The Upper Hunter electorate is blessed with a wealth of creative and artistic individuals. I again congratulate David Darcy on his magnificent win and also the Regional Arts Centre of Muswellbrook, which is displaying the winners of the Archibald Prize until 8 March 2020. When visiting the electorate of Upper Hunter please visit David's studio, Darcy and the Fox, at Murrurundi. I am sure everyone will be fascinated by this amazing and very talented artist.

SUPERINTENDENT DAVID DARCY

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (17:58:11): As incredible as it seems, having just heard about one David Darcy who is an artist, I will talk about one David Darcy who is a superintendent of the northern beaches command. He too is an artist in the sense that he has managed his career and his professionalism in an extraordinary way. Next Thursday Superintendent Dave Darcy marches out after a 37-year career. Dave has been a member of our community for a number of years. In 2013 he came to the Manly Local Area Command as area commander. Shortly after, he had the very significant role of bringing the commands on the northern beaches together under the Northern Beaches Local Area Command.

David Darcy started 37 years ago as a constable, undertaking general duties at Gosford and Eastwood. He has progressed through the ranks and has received accolades throughout his career acknowledging he is an amazing police officer. I specifically acknowledge that he has received the Australian Police Medal, the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct, the Commissioner's Valour Award, the Commissioner's Citation for Courage, the Deputy Commissioner's Olympic Commendation and a Unit Citation for being involved in the Cronulla riots response.

Since Dave came to the northern beaches he has brought his own style of consultation and caring to his roles. Particularly relevant to the local Manly area, Dave started by ensuring cooperation amongst the various hoteliers and the industry generally to ensure that there was a collaborative approach to making certain that the local community were well protected against the excessive use and ravages of alcohol. In recent times I have had quite a bit to do with Dave in his committed, energetic and enthusiastic way ensures that people who have attempted to commit suicide are connected with an appropriately trained member of the community to care for them. We want to ensure that people with mental health issues are given the support they need.

David Darcy has also made sure that family members are given similar support. Dave has worked with the community with a passion and zealotry that one can only believe when one sees how hard he has worked. In fact, that epitomises his whole career. He was recently noted as saying that he looked back on his career as a rich tapestry, which was his way of coping and achieving resilience. In his lessons to younger officers he talks about building resilience and that it is part and parcel of staying in a career for a long time. The *Police Monthly* states:

His way of coping—thinking of his career as a rich tapestry.

"Each day is just one thread, and we've had thousands and thousands of days," he says.

"Everyone has these horrific dark spots and periods of light, but it's the entirety you have to look at to really get an appreciation of what your life and career has been about."

I look at that tapestry now and think that that is not a bad piece of work. On behalf of the northern beaches community and also of the areas where David Darcy has worked, I can say it certainly has not been a bad bit of work. Dave has done an amazing job. He graduated in 1982 with a Bachelor of Science from Newcastle University, a Bachelor of Social Science (Justice Studies) from Newcastle University in 1991 and a Master of Criminology from Sydney University in 1993. He has undertaken various policing programs at the City East Target Action Group, the City East Anti-theft Unit, Kings Cross, Bankstown and Manly and northern beaches area commands. He has also worked as operations manager at the City East Region. No matter where he worked Dave has been a well-loved part of those communities. We on the northern beaches love everything he has done for us as the local police commander and we will miss him. Goodbye, Mr Darcy.

TRIBUTE TO JILL EMBERSON

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (18:03:25): On 13 December 2019 Newcastle lost a true light, a fighter, a warrior—someone who was faced with one of life's toughest battles and said, "Bring it on." From her diagnosis with terminal ovarian cancer in 2016 until her passing last year, Jill Emberson was the nation's leading voice in the campaign to lift awareness of this insidious disease and increase funding into its research. Jill had never once lived her life quietly, and she was not going to die that way. Jill was a familiar face and a familiar voice long before this, beginning a career in broadcasting and journalism in the ABC Radio's Sydney newsroom

before presenting the *Mornings* program on Triple J in the 1980s. From there she moved to ABC television, becoming a reporter on the science and technology program *Quantum*.

In the late 1980s she disappeared from our airwaves to work as a communications specialist, but in 2009 Jill returned to join ABC Newcastle as its *Mornings* presenter where her passion and talent for storytelling shone. She created a popular podcast called *Meet the Mob*, which told the stories of local Indigenous people. She was even nominated for a Walkley Award for her *Hooked on Heroin* radio series, which tackled the heroin crisis in the Hunter. When Jill was diagnosed with terminal ovarian cancer she did not simply lie down and take it. She said:

I need to be a voice. I couldn't sleep well at night, knowing that I didn't use what I could to tell the story of this cancer. My hope is that women will feel more able to raise their symptoms with their doctors, that their doctors will pick them up a bit better.

Jill was a storyteller and, boy, did she have a story to tell! Jill taught us that ovarian cancer is the eighth most common cancer affecting women in Australia. She taught us that ovarian cancer has a five-year survival rate of only 45 per cent and that every year 1,000 Australian women lose their lives to this horrible disease. By comparison, breast cancer has a five-year survival rate of 91 per cent and was receiving four times the research funding. Knowing this, Jill got to work. She created the Pink Meets Teal campaign, creating an on-the-ground movement for funding fairness. She took the cause all the way to a meeting with the Federal Minister for Health and delivered a powerful address to the National Press Club. Only one year ago she stood in front of the Prime Minister and said:

I need you to know that all of the women like me feel like we're on our knees in trying to advance this cancer and fundamentally that means we need significant sums of money.

Two months later \$20 million was granted towards ovarian cancer research. However, Jill's cancer story was not simply about the money. Through her episode of *Australian Story* and an award-winning podcast called *Still Jill*, we experienced the highs as Jill's campaign got results and we saw the physical and emotional pits of cancer diagnosis and treatment. We watched a love story unfold as she married Ken in 2018 and we witnessed just how far she would go as a mother to make life wonderful for her daughter, Malia.

At Jill's memorial service Ken told us a tale called "The Storyteller and the Medicine Man". It was the story of Ken and Jill, wrapped in laughter, tears and a little bit of magic. That is what Jill was—a little bit of magic—because her legacy is not simply the path she has forged in obtaining funding for ovarian cancer. It is the hope she inspired in other women with that diagnosis and the faith that generations to come may not have to experience the same harrowing fate. It is how she taught us to face mountains with courage and where to draw the strength to climb them. Her legacy is in her smile, her vivaciousness and the way she inspired us all to speak up a little more. Most of all her legacy is Ken and Malia. Jill is not gone. Every day she lives through them as they continue to show us how to be strong, how to be brave and how to fight.

OXLEY ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (18:08:37):

As millimetres and inches of rain fell throughout the Oxley electorate, as the green shoots of recovery began to give hope to our farmers and communities, and as the stress for our water supply reduced, it was my honour to attend the State memorial service on Sunday 23 February in recognition of those impacted by the recent New South Wales bushfires. It was a magnificent service. The flowers on the stage were incredible. The saddest sight was the two children of the dads from the Holsworthy Rural Fire Service brigade playing in front of the stage, as only toddlers can. Our hearts broke for those two little kids who will never see their dads again.

The RFS chaplain lit a candle for Mr Barry "Bazra" Parsons from my electorate, who died in his little house at the back of Willawarrin. Family and friends lit a candle for Mr Christopher Savva, a dearly loved resident of South Arm in my electorate. Mr Savva's car was involved in an incident as he tried to escape the fires on that terrible day, Friday 8 November. It was a wonderful service, bringing together our firefighters, their families, friends and communities. It was a great honour to be there. I was delighted to be in the company of Irene Pachos and Darryl Aldridge from the Nambucca Fire and Rescue NSW crew. Unlike the two gorgeous young men from the Holsworthy brigade, Irene and Darryl survived after a tree fell on their truck during the fires. Irene suffered serious injuries and attended the service in a brace. She has the most beautiful smile. It was encouraging to see her and her compatriot and friend Darryl on the road to recovery, to see their passion and to see them recognised by the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and Shane Fitzsimmons. I know that will always be special to them.

While we contended with the fires, it was my pleasure to attend the official opening night of a wonderful play called *Flame Trees*, written and directed by Chris Dockrill of Crescent Head. Chris is a former student of the school that Brad Hazzard also attended. In fact, they are very good friends. Chris has been an outstanding teacher and drama leader in the Macleay Valley community. *Flame Trees* is an excellent, realistic production about life in a rural and regional community, its challenges and the ties that bind. The play was performed at the Bandbox

Theatre in Kempsey, which we all support and want to see renewed to a fresher life. It was an incredible production. The stage was one of the best I have ever seen.

The play is set in a country pub and it felt like we were sitting in a country pub. Some great actors were involved. I acknowledge President of the Kempsey Singers Inc., Brian Lindbeck, who helps manage the theatre. In particular, I give a shout-out to Deano as "Den" Appleby. I thought he was brilliant. I do not think he was typecast but he was very good as the local footy coach. There was some sincere and wonderful talent. Colleen Harradine was also very good in the role of Cynthia. It was a great night and a great production. Some of the students from the local high schools have had the opportunity to see it. I acknowledge director and writer, Chris Dockrill, for bringing the community together in such an inspiring way with his energy and creativity.

I also acknowledge that the Government has decided on a site for the new connected learning centre at Nambucca Heads. It was a privilege and pleasure last Friday to host Geoff Lee, the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education and member for Parramatta. We held a forum to talk about the challenges of the bushfires and what we can do going forward—I note the Minister for Energy and Environment has entered the Chamber—such as encouraging TAFE to provide certificate II courses in land management. This will give young people who may be struggling to find jobs in our communities the opportunity to obtain a land management qualification so that we can then replace lost fences and restore the fire trails through our national parks and other public lands. [*An Opposition member interjected.*]

The SPEAKER: Order! The member has on a jacket and tie. I am turning a blind eye to the T-shirt for today only.

SHARE THE LOVE CAMPAIGN

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (18:14:21): Today I want to share the love. In a couple of private members' statements last year I was able to provide a few lines of song to assist in getting my theme across. While I do not have the vocal skills of my father, the Hon. Greg Smith, SC, I have recently been given some singing lessons and coaching by a music icon from the eighties. So the House can perhaps look forward to some more dulcet tones from me. My electorate and my community have been devastated by the recent bushfires and, in recent weeks, by floods and storms. I have been humbled and inspired by the resilience of my community to, first, deal with these crises; and, second, to look forward to the road to recovery.

The Southern Highlands was impacted by the fires on two fronts: from the Green Wattle Creek fire in the north and, in the Goulburn electorate, the Wingello/Exeter and Bundanoon fires from the south and the east. Not only were homes lost but also many businesses were severely impacted. This brings me back to sharing the love. Destination Southern Highlands has recognised the need and put together a campaign to encourage tourists back to that wonderful part of my electorate. I had the privilege to attend the launch of the Southern Highlands bushfire recovery campaign, Share the Love, on 13 February. This was held at the wonderful Centennial Vineyards in Bowral and I was joined by my parliamentary colleague and member for Goulburn, Wendy Tuckerman. The campaign is coordinated by Destination Southern Highlands.

The co-ambassador for the campaign is none other than my new-found singing coach and local Southern Highlander, Leo Sayer. The campaign aims to stimulate business opportunities and increase visitations to the Southern Highlands to support tourism operators, retailers and service businesses that have been severely impacted by the recent bushfires in the region. It also aims to create awareness that the Southern Highlands is alive and well and open for business. The campaign is an integrated multimedia campaign using mass media of television, print and radio along with a big focus on digital advertising, social media marketing, email marketing and a targeted public relations campaign. It is now up and running.

The local bushfire recovery ambassadors are entertainers John Waters and Leo Sayer. They will front the campaign with key promotional messages. John has narrated an inspirational and moving video recounting the events and encouraging tourists back to the Southern Highlands. I urge all members to go to YouTube to view it. John recently organised and participated in the very successful FireAid concert at the Bong Bong racetrack on 24 January. The event was attended by over 7,000 people and raised more than \$350,000. It was a great stimulus to the local visitor economy as well as providing a much-needed boost to local morale. John managed to get a few of his singing mates, including Leo and Daryl Braithwaite, to come along and perform.

The Share the Love campaign will target local residents to support their local businesses as well as inviting their family and friends to visit the Southern Highlands. It will also target the region's key markets of Sydney, Canberra and the Illawarra. Local businesses will use the campaign with the hashtag ShareTheLove and the campaign website in their marketing. A dedicated campaign site has been set up on visitsouthernhighlands.com.au to list the campaign messages and offers. Local businesses have video clips of their offers and Share the Love messages positioned on the website and used in social media channels. They have also

put together some great offers and deals to share with local residents, their family and friends, and potential visitors to the region.

The Southern Highlands is already home to many great events and festivals. In October this year we will have FabFest celebrating the sixties, while the Southern Highlands Jazz Festival will be held in May. But the need is for visitors now, not just to the Southern Highlands but to all parts of the State impacted by bushfires. The sense of community that I see daily continues to amaze and inspire me so if you share the love with the Southern Highlands community, the Southern Highlands will share the love right back. I urge all members to come and visit the Southern Highlands and share the love.

MOORE PARK ENTERTAINMENT QUARTER

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:19:03): In November last year Carsingha Investments Pty Ltd, lessee of the Entertainment Quarter [EQ], submitted to the New South Wales Government an unsolicited proposal for a 99-year lease over the site in Moore Park. In exchange, Carsingha—which is owned by Sydney business luminaries Gerry Harvey, John Singleton and Mark Carnegie, amongst others—would invest \$1.2 billion in a redevelopment of the site as a cultural and commercial precinct, including 20-storey commercial towers and a hotel. Much of this would be inconsistent with the objects of the State Environmental Planning Policy No 47—Moore Park Showground, which aimed to preserve the site as public space and the home for Australian radio, film and television. No doubt Carsingha intends to use its considerable clout amongst the Sydney establishment to amend that State environmental planning policy to enable its commercial aims.

This is, as one member of Sydney's business community remarked to me, "a very Sydney story". Sydney residents will be familiar with the Entertainment Quarter as the former site of the Sydney Royal Easter Show, until it moved to Sydney Olympic Park in 1998. Speaking to any number of stakeholders, the one thing on which everyone agrees is that the EQ has simply not worked. It trades a handful of days a week and resembles a ghost town for much of the year. After almost six years, the current lessees have made no attempt whatsoever to make the EQ work. In 2014 Carsingha acquired the site—which has a lease that runs to 2046—for \$80 million, well above what other bidders in the market were willing to pay. It has decided on its strategy, which is to pay overs for the site and use its considerable influence to amend those planning controls to secure a 99-year lease and a windfall gain in the value of the site.

I have examined the master plan and I have been briefed by the CEO of the EQ. The adequacy of those plans can be tested by an impartial and rigorous planning process. There is no doubt that local residents, businesses, the entertainment industry and I desperately want the EQ to work. The issue is not so much a question of planning but the fact is that a 99-year lease is effectively a privatisation of valuable, scarce, historic public land conveniently located close to the Sydney CBD, the Centennial Parklands and the fastest-growing residential precinct in New South Wales—if not Australia—Green Square. A 99-year lease will not return that land to public use in any of our lifetimes, nor the lifetime of the next generation. Plans for a hotel, which are incorporated in the proposal, are usually the first step towards residential development, as was observed to me by someone who is very highly qualified in matters of planning and whose views I respect.

Sydneysiders are sick to death of this sort of story—a story they have heard 100 times over. Someone with power and influence acquires a site with one set of rules and uses that power to get a favourable rezoning or a new set of rules to suit their commercial purposes. More often than not, it is not in the public interest but, rather, the interests of private profit. Governments of both colours have fallen prey to this sort of tactic. The time has come to put an end to this sort of behaviour. Sydney's deserved status as a great global city, which it has always had the potential to be, is under constant threat.

The public are being robbed of that potential because of the relationships between the influential, the lure of a quick buck and the inability of governments to resist the overtures of the rich and powerful in favour of evidence-based planning. Sydney has the potential to be one of the great cities of the world but its growth is being cruelled by short-term, profit-driven thinking. I encourage the New South Wales Government to reject this unsolicited proposal in favour of a proactive, evidence-based planning review of the Moore Park site to see how it can encourage the development of cultural, commercial and, above all, public uses of that very important site.

LUTHERAN AGED CARE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:24:11): For over 60 years Lutheran Aged Care has been delivering services to the people of Albury. The organisation has always been committed to the principles of providing outstanding care and compassion for its residents. Managing Director Wendy Rocks tells me that Lutheran Aged Care looks forward to continuing to be a vibrant member of the community for years to come. It was on Valentine's Day in 1960 that Lutheran Aged Care commenced service delivery. Lutheran women from the Riverina began by providing residential care for the frail and elderly in an Albury cottage known as Riverview Terrace.

Those remarkable women, who identified the need for aged-care services, then worked tirelessly to ensure that our community has been well served for over 60 years. The first nursing home, as it was called then, opened with 20 beds in 1975. Five residential units for retirees were constructed on site. Over time, it became clear that the service delivery needed to expand, so by the late 1980s the committee of management decided to construct a new facility. That was the O'Brien Court facility in Albury, the organisation's first purpose-built aged-care facility. It is now a specialised memory support area known as Arrunga.

In 1991 Pemberton View Independent Living Village opened, with a total of 35 houses. In 1993 the delivery of community packages commenced, which is now known as Home Care. In 1994 a new 60-bed nursing home began operations at Yallaroo in West Albury and by 2001 Lutheran Community Services included delivery to veterans, multicultural services, and rural and regional services to Corowa and Culcairn. In 2005 it began to offer Extended Aged Care at Home [EACH] packages, which heralded the beginning of high-care services. Another significant marker occurred in 2005 when the Dellacourt residential aged care opened and linked with the original O'Brien Court residence, which resulted in a 92-bed facility. Four years later that grew to 122 with the completion of the Alkira extension. Nicholson Park was added in 2009, which was the same year that Emily Gardens was opened at The Rock, near Wagga Wagga.

Originally, Lutheran Aged Care was set up to provide what were then known as nursing home facilities. Over time that has expanded greatly to also encompass other healthcare services for residents. The organisation has an experienced, tertiary qualified team that is dedicated to supporting the independence of clients. The team offers specialist services in dementia and palliative care whilst working in effective consultation with medical professionals. Many former workers and volunteers now live in one of the villages or choose to enter residential care at Lutheran when they retire.

Wilma Trabant has a unique perspective of the wonderful work done by Lutheran Aged Care over the years. Wilma has been an employee and a supporter of Lutheran Aged Care and is now one of its residents. She remembers fondly how in the old days records were all paper based and how over the years there has been a shift to a more efficient computer-based system. After 30 years of working for Lutheran Aged Care, Wilma was so impressed with the facilities on offer that she decided to move into Dellacourt so that she could have access to high-quality care whilst feeling secure and maintaining her independence. Ron Asquith is another person who has been working with Lutheran Aged Care for many years. In fact, Ron joined the committee of management in 1987 and has had an ongoing association ever since.

Lutheran has a 100-plus strong volunteer program, including some vulnerable people. A number of the volunteers have also gone on to become employees. Lutheran Aged Care is proud of its professional development program, much of which is delivered on its own online platform. Much of the training is mandatory. Staff are paid to attend because management considers that support of staff is a key priority. The commitment to the health and wellbeing of clients, maintenance of facilities and fresh food has greatly impressed Wilma and Ron, who both agree that the organisation provides innovative and progressive aged care and wellbeing services with a passion. In fact, those values are so entrenched that regularly conducted surveys of staff indicate that the majority commenced working there because of their perception of the organisation's commitment to those principles.

On Saturday 15 February I was fortunate to attend the sixtieth celebrations of this wonderful institution at Dellacourt. I congratulate Lutheran Aged Care on its 60 years of service to our local community. In particular, I acknowledge chairman Phillip Edwards, pastoral care team members—Pastor Darryl Mattner, Angela Uhrhane and Debbie Lieschke—home care manager Rosanna Younings and, of course, Wendy, Wilma and Ron. Together we look forward to many more years of the caring presence of Lutheran Aged Care in Albury.

VERY REVEREND ARCHIMANDRITE APOSTOLOS TRIFYLLIS

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I acknowledge Rodney Moffatt and Tony Mubarak in the gallery, guests of the member of Canterbury and member for Lakemba. I have met Tony many times. He is very active in the Canterbury-Bankstown area.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:29:27): On behalf of the people of Canterbury and New South Wales, I acknowledge the extraordinary contribution made to our community by the Very Reverend Archimandrite Apostolos Trifyllis. Father Apostolos was one of the beloved parish priests at the All Saints Greek Orthodox Church in Belmore and All Saints Grammar. All Saints Belmore is one of the most dynamic and active parishes in the Greek Orthodox Church and this spirit owes much to the energy and enthusiasm that Father Apostolos has brought to his work. He came to the parish of Belmore five years ago and we all absolutely fell in love with him. Previously he had served as head of the Patriarchal Library of Alexandria, having been ordained as a priest and elevated to the rank of Archimandrite in the Cathedral Church of Annunciation in Alexandria in 2012.

Over the past five years Father Apostolos has been tireless in his good works for our community. He has organised many fundraisers for national and international natural disasters. For example, during the recent bushfires Father Apostolos worked with many members of the local community to coordinate and send vital supplies to bushfire-affected areas. He has also run annual Christmas toy drives for sick children at Canterbury Hospital and Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital, and has brought together diverse groups in our community such as the Riverwood Community Centre, the Greater Western Sydney Giants and Campsie police, and people such as my colleague Jihad Dib, Tony Burke, Councillor Nadia Saleh and me to make those events a success.

Father Apostolos has grown attendance at church services and performed countless christenings, name day celebrations, blessings and, unfortunately, funerals. He has also guided community members who have gone overseas for pilgrimage. In addition to caring for people of faith, Father Apostolos has been a representative of the Greek community in Australia's multicultural society. As members of this place know, Australia and Greece have deep, historical bonds that were forged during the conflicts of the First and Second World Wars. Father Apostolos has honoured those historical periods by representing the church at events to commemorate Anzac Day, the Battle of Crete and Remembrance Day. I acknowledge particularly Father Apostolos' work in reaching out to people from different age groups.

He has worked with many older members of our community to meet their needs and has organised forums on topics like dementia to educate and inform the community. In his role as chaplain for All Saints Grammar School, Father Apostolos has mentored countless students and provided them with guidance and spiritual support. He has also engaged young people through groups, including the Belmore Youth Community, the Community of Belmore Youth Society and the Central Youth Committee NSW. Given his faith and devotion, it should be no surprise that Father Apostolos has been called upon to serve the Greek Orthodox Church in a new role.

Tomorrow Father Apostolos will leave All Saints Belmore to serve the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in London. Members of the Belmore parish are very sad—many tears have been shed in our community over the past couple of weeks. We are very sad to see Father Apostolos go. We are grateful for all that he has done for us, many things that we will never know about, and how much he helped people. No matter what circumstance and who they were, he always reached out. We rejoice that his faith and devotion have been recognised by the church, providing him with this very important opportunity to serve the people of London.

On behalf of our community, I thank Father Apostolos for all that he has done. We thank him from the bottom of our hearts for bringing us all together, and particularly for bringing our kids back to church. They enjoyed the English liturgies and how Father Apostolos related to everyone, regardless of age. On behalf of every member of my community, I wish him every success in his future endeavours.

BAULKHAM HILLS ELECTORATE SCHOOL MAINTENANCE

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (18:34:35):

On behalf of the constituents of Baulkham Hills, I speak in anticipation of the New South Wales Government's \$6.7 billion investment over the next four years to deliver more than 190 new and upgraded schools to support communities across New South Wales. In addition to this, a record \$1.3 billion is being spent on school maintenance over five years, along with a record \$500 million for the sustainable Cooler Classrooms program to provide air conditioning in schools.

This is the most significant investment in public school infrastructure in the history of New South Wales. An estimated \$200 million was spent on 968 additional maintenance and upgrade projects at public schools across the State during the past few months. The maintenance blitz focused on additional repairs and upgrades, including roof works, new floor coverings, drainage, electrical work and painting. We are now over halfway to clearing the additional maintenance backlog at schools across the State, and we are on track to achieve this by July this year. The efforts of tradespeople, builders and department staff across the State have been outstanding, handling both the task of bushfire recovery from day one and pushing on with our record school maintenance commitment.

In Baulkham Hills specifically, five schools among the 968 schools across the State have received additional maintenance work. These include: Crestwood High School, which received roofing maintenance work; Matthew Pearce Public School, which received painting maintenance work; Jasper Road Public School, which received painting maintenance work; Model Farms High School, which also received painting maintenance work; and Excelsior Public School. As a sidenote, I am incredibly excited about the upgrade underway at Excelsior Public School, which is expected to be completed by the middle of the year. As at December 2019, I was advised that the upgrade was progressing well, with the new administration building and Block A refurbishment now complete. The new three-storey building, Block L, will house a new library, canteen and learning spaces, and is nearing completion. These works represent a commitment not just to maintain our public schools but to continuously improve them.

As a government, we are also investing in non-government schools to assist them in building more classrooms to cater for growing enrolments. In 2019 the State Government committed \$500 million in funding for the Building Grants Assistance Scheme over the next four years. Under the scheme, grants are directed to independent and Catholic schools with the greatest need to support non-government schools to build, extend or upgrade their facilities to provide more student places in growing communities. The scheme is administered by the Association of Independent Schools of NSW and the NSW Catholic Block Grant Authority, and takes into consideration fees, demographics and socio-economic characteristics of the school.

I am pleased to announce that in Baulkham Hills, students and teachers at St Gabriel's School at Castle Hill will benefit from over \$3.9 million in capital assistance to upgrade the school's facilities under the scheme. The grant is for the construction of the stage two development of a mixed special school, which will include general and specialised learning areas specifically designed for students with extensive physical and cognitive needs. The building project also provides for the refurbishment of administration, staff and pupil building services, as well as general and specialised learning areas. The funding of the building project will benefit the entire St Gabriel's community and means that the school can continue to deliver the very best facilities for students to learn and grow, and for teachers to educate and inspire our next generation.

I commend the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government for maintaining our record of responsible financial management and securing healthy surpluses so that we can deliver for our local communities and keep investing in schools and things that matter. I also commend the principals, the staff and indeed the P&Cs from all of the schools for working with the Government to ensure that the outcomes achieved are in the best interests of the community.

SHELLHARBOUR ELECTORATE SERVICE NSW CENTRE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:38:10): In the last parliamentary sitting week I hand-delivered hundreds of letters signed by my constituents and made out to the Minister for Customer Service. My constituents have a simple and very reasonable request: They are asking for the same convenient access to government services as the rest of the Illawarra and the majority of New South Wales. The electorate of Shellharbour has been without a proper Service NSW presence since 2015, when the Shellharbour Motor Registry closed down. A temporary Service NSW digital kiosk was set up at Stockland Shellharbour, but this closed also in July 2017 and has never been replaced. At last year's budget estimates the Minister revealed that currently 11 local government areas across New South Wales do not have a permanent Service NSW presence—11 out of 129.

And it gets worse. When mobile service centre routes are taken into account, only two local government areas in the State do not have a Service NSW presence at all. Unfortunately for my constituents, Shellharbour is one of them. You can understand my community's frustration when we are one of only two local government areas without convenient access to government services. Ninety-eight per cent of New South Wales has more convenient access to those government services than Shellharbour does. That is unacceptable. I have written to the Minister about this issue on numerous occasions. Sadly, time and time again, the Minister refuses to act. More than 80,000 people live in the Shellharbour State electorate, and this number is only set to rise with the ongoing development of West Dapto. Once complete, West Dapto alone will introduce an additional 19,000 dwellings, housing over 50,000 residents in our community.

Prior to the 2019 election, Labor pledged to deliver a Service NSW centre for the Shellharbour electorate and its booming population. I am asking those opposite to do the same. In the last budget the Liberal Government committed to building 10 new Service NSW centres over the next four years. Unfortunately for the people of Shellharbour, those 10 new centres are headed for different areas of Sydney. The needs of Shellharbour and every other regional area in the State have been ignored yet again. Shellharbour, just like other deserving communities, should have been on this list. Currently, my constituents are forced to travel to centres in Kiama, Warrawong or into Wollongong to access services. Those journeys can be difficult for individuals who rely on public transport. Unfortunately, often those individuals are the same ones who would be unable to access the services online.

Without a local Service NSW centre, those individuals are falling through the cracks and can be left feeling out of the loop and unable to access the assistance they need. Then, of course, there are also those people who prefer to receive assistance face to face, and they should be able to do so locally and conveniently. Last month it was announced that a lease had been signed for a new Service NSW centre in Engadine—the same centre that was pledged in last year's budget. Engadine's new facility is expected to open in May. The Roads and Traffic Authority office that was previously in Engadine was closed four years ago, a year after Shellharbour's Service NSW centre closed. Those opposite have clearly realised that it was a mistake to push those people to make a less convenient journey to a Service NSW centre in Miranda. I am asking for the exact same treatment in Shellharbour. If it is good enough for Engadine, it is good enough for Shellharbour.

In the last sitting week I met with the Minister for Customer Service in his office. I presented his office with the letters from my constituents and shared the concerns of my community with him and his staff. I once again called for real action and for a Service NSW centre to be delivered for the people of Shellharbour. I thank the Minister for meeting with me and hearing me out, and I thank each and every one of my constituents who reached out to my office, shared their views and frustrations, and had their say. I hope that the Minister is finally ready to act because the people of Shellharbour are certainly ready to have a Service NSW centre located close to them.

NORTHERN TABLELANDS ELECTORATE AGRICULTURAL SHOWS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:42:43): I share with the House the amazing levels of resilience among our rural communities as demonstrated by the recent round of agricultural shows held throughout the Northern Tablelands electorate. As all members from the bush know, a good country show in a country town is a wonderful barometer—a window into the soul, if you like—of how things are travelling in the town. Country shows generally go ahead rain, hail or shine, and recently even in bushfire smoke. With a lot more shine and smoke than rain in recent years, the hardworking committees behind our local shows were facing very much an uphill battle to get the gates open and the fairy floss flowing in 2020. However, as they always say, you can't keep a good show down, and it was against the backdrop of welcome rain and smoke-free skies since the start of the new year that the shows went on—at least across the Northern Tablelands.

Some welcome relief came in the form of a funding fillip from the State Government for each of our region's 11 shows. This delivered up to \$5,000 for each show society to help with the substantial costs to the committees of running their shows. Some used it to buy entertainment, some used it to help subsidise entrance fees and some used it to plug the holes left by a lot of their regular sponsors withdrawing due to the drought. The first show out of the gate this year, the Uralla Show, took place on 8 February and delivered some welcome rain. President Wes Styles and his small but hardworking committee did a brilliant job. The show was a one-day event but it was fun-filled from open to close. The wildly popular signature demolition derby and fireworks rounded off the successful day. Show secretary Sue Barnden always steps up, and her efforts this year to fill the pavilions and keep entries coming in were nothing short of amazing.

The Tenterfield Show was on the same weekend. While just outside my patch, in the Lismore electorate, president Matthew Duff reported that recent rainfalls had show-goers dancing in the mud—even around the bar. The mighty "Royal of the North", the Glen Innes Show, opened for business with all the usual fanfare and fun. I spent a couple of days there to do it justice and I am always incredibly impressed with the breadth of exhibits and community involvement. President Andrew Hancock leads an almost 100-strong committee, as well as a small array of volunteers who keep the show buzzing across three wonderful days. The mood was buoyant despite the recent bushfires and the long-term impacts of drought.

Last weekend was a Northern Tablelands double-header. I made a beeline for the two-day Guyra Show and the Ashford Show, which had been reduced to a single day from the usual two. This year Guyra Show Society president Richard Post presided over a cracker of a show. There were smiles all over the place as exhibitors paraded livestock that had come through drought looking wonderful and pavilions were filled to bursting with entries. From preserves to paintings, crochet to cakes—the special men's cake competition as well—and flowers to fleeces, it was all there.

Ashford's drought-buster show also did not disappoint. Even though it was pared back by a day, it entertained the huge crowds. Show society president Gilbert Fitzhannim and secretary Melissa Willcocks can be incredibly proud of the committee they led and the effort they went to, given a very challenging year of drought around the Ashford district. I was thrilled to see Jason Luckett, a schoolteacher at Ashford Central School, awarded life membership of the show society for running the bar for more than 28 years on a voluntary basis—a thoroughly deserved honour and a man who is always very popular come show time.

Coming up in the Northern Tablelands, we have the Inverell Show this weekend and the Armidale and New England Show the following weekend. I am sure they will also be a testament to the resilience and strength of their respective communities through hard times. As the member for Northern Tablelands, it makes me tremendously proud to visit these shows year on year, knowing how tough our communities have had it over the past 12 months, in particular, and seeing how hard these volunteers work to deliver optimism and hope despite having copped it in the neck on their own properties or in their own businesses. I thank the State Government—particularly Deputy Premier John Barilaro and the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, Bronnie Taylor—for the ongoing financial support of our show societies. I commend all show volunteers, from the ticket collectors to the poop scoopers in the livestock pavilions, for their dedication. It certainly takes a village, as they say, and the Northern Tablelands is home to the best shows of all.

TANYA WHITEHOUSE, OAM

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (18:47:53): I thank the agriculture Minister for talking about country agricultural shows. I note that the Camden Show, which is "Still a Country Show", is on Friday 27 March and Saturday 28 March—the week before the Sydney Royal Easter Show begins. It gives me great pleasure to speak about our newest OAM recipient in Camden. Tanya Whitehouse, OAM, was awarded the honour at the recent Australia Day awards. Tanya has been the co-ordinator of the Macarthur Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service for more than 25 years. She was very humbled to be nominated for the award, but we all know in Macarthur that she is a most deserving recipient. As a solicitor with the Macarthur Legal Centre, Tanya works tirelessly for those experiencing domestic violence in the Macarthur area. Her passion to make a change for the better is beyond reproach. Tanya strives to empower women to speak up and seek help. Her aim is to ensure the victims of domestic violence feel safe and supported and know they are not alone.

Sadly, too many women do not seek help and remain in a violent situation for many reasons—mainly to enable the children to have a roof over their heads and, in some way, stability in their lives. I am sure fleeing a violent situation is a very difficult decision to make. People like Tanya endeavour to assist the victims and their children to seek a safer place to live. In most cases when victims approach an organisation such as the Macarthur women's domestic violence team, they have been experiencing unspeakable violence for some time. When fleeing the family home, in most cases they leave with nothing but the clothes on their back. The organisation arranges for accommodation, financial assistance and—something we all take for granted—a mobile phone. The organisation averages 67 cases per week. In the period January to June 2019, its members attended 212 hearings.

Tanya is also a member of the Camden-Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee and the Campbelltown Domestic Violence Committee. She is on the NSW Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council and supports the Men's Behaviour Change Program, which is run by Campbelltown BaptistCare. Tanya has been recognised for her work through other awards, such as the Justice Medal and ministerial award. Each December the Macarthur community comes together for a fundraising breakfast in Camden. The event highlights the scourge of domestic violence and aims to make people aware that it is out there and it is in their local community. I have attended many of these breakfasts over the past eight years and they truly are fantastic events to open up the eyes of people in our community. Tanya and her wonderful team are the linchpin of domestic violence advocacy in the Macarthur region. At times the job can be highly stressful, but at all times the team works to try to make a difference in someone's life. On behalf of the Camden community and the wider Macarthur community, I congratulate Tanya on a well-deserved award.

HURLSTONE AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (18:51:47): I have previously spoken in this Chamber about the tenacity of my constituents. They continue to fight for their fair share, no matter how many times the Liberal Government disappoints them. I am delighted to report that late last year one such community fight resulted in a clear win for people power. After years of the executioner's axe hanging over Hurlstone Agricultural High School at Glenfield, common sense finally prevailed. The Liberal Government has backflipped on its atrocious plans to relocate the school to the Hawkesbury. It was a long, hard-fought campaign but we did not back down.

The Liberal Government tried to rob students in south-west Sydney of a high-quality public agricultural education. The Government was only interested in handing over the school's valuable land to developers—all part of a fire sale of valuable education land, on the block for a song. The Liberal Government tried to turn its back on nearly 100 years of Hurlstone's history in its rightful home at Glenfield, but our community would not let the Government get away with it. They fought and fought hard. They joined my Hands Off Hurlstone campaign until the Liberal Government finally succumbed. Local residents have rightly celebrated the fact that Hurlstone will remain in its rightful home at Glenfield in south-west Sydney.

We all look forward to Hurlstone maintaining its proud and strong tradition at Glenfield, but it has to be said that this victory is a little bittersweet. The Liberal Government is still pushing ahead with plans to sell most of the school's land to developers. Ideally the green open space at Hurlstone should be left alone, but this Government's obsession with overdevelopment means that our community will have to put up with more congestion and concrete. So our community fight is not over. We will now turn our attention to saving as much land as possible. Hurlstone Agricultural High School must be provided with extensive hectares for its dairy and boarding facilities and to meet the future demands of agricultural education in south-west Sydney. I have already advocated to Landcom and the education Minister that it is crucial to leave the extensive green open space around the hilltop schools of Ajuga, Campbell House and Glenfield Park.

The students at these schools have special interests and special needs and the green vista is crucial to their schooling and overall wellbeing. If this Liberal Government is intent on continuing with its obsession with

overdevelopment, my community will continue to fight to ensure it does not keep repeating the same mistakes. I insist on adequate infrastructure to ensure existing residents do not continue to feel the brunt of overdevelopment. The new primary school will need to be large enough to cater for local families. More commuter car parking is essential. Streets need to be wide enough for on-street parking. The community will need recreational facilities and playgrounds in the absence of large backyards.

Rest assured, I will closely scrutinise Landcom's master plan for the Hurlstone site when it is released this year. I will continue to advocate for the best possible outcome for my community. I will always fight for my community's fair share. This whole process of trying to relocate Hurlstone to Hawkesbury has been a colossal waste of time and money. There has been unnecessary stress and uncertainty heaped upon the school community. My focus will be on ensuring the promises of funding for Hurlstone's upgrade and the retention of the dairy are not broken. The fight to save Hurlstone includes some key figures and I acknowledge them in this Chamber. My heartfelt thanks goes to Hurlstone alumni Dr Peter Benson, the late Laurie Porter, former Hurlstone principal John Norris and former Macquarie Fields MP Dr Andrew McDonald. Their ongoing passion and support served our community well.

I also recognise the late former member for Macquarie Fields, Stan Knowles, and the late former Campbelltown mayor, Brenton Banfield, for their past efforts to save Hurlstone. They believed Hurlstone's place in our history and heritage should be and always will be at Glenfield. They also believed in the school's distinguished role in delivering a fine public education for students in south-west Sydney. Finally, this Liberal Government will do well to remember that my community is tenacious. We fight for what we believe in. This fight serves as a lesson for all governments of all persuasions to keep their hands off Hurlstone.

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (18:56:39): I speak on the dairy industry and its importance to Australia and regional New South Wales, in particular my electorate of Myall Lakes. People take for granted the milk they get off the shelf at the supermarket. However, so much goes into ensuring the best quality milk goes on those shelves—that is the role of the dairy farmer. All members know that dairy farmers have really been coping it and doing it tough for so long now. Unlike many producers, they are price-takers. They cannot hold onto their product and wait for a better price. They have got to get it out the door to the processor straight away.

The market is distorted by the pricing of Coles and Woolworths with their \$1.10 a litre milk. The normal input costs, such as electricity and other things, have gone up over the years. The drought has seen the cost of feed rise—the cost of dairy meal has gone from something like \$200-something a tonne to over \$700 a tonne, yet there is still that fixed price for milk at the farm gate. That is why they are in this peculiar position. They cannot stockpile the milk and wait for a better price. They cannot tell the processor what price they want for the milk and therefore what it is going to be sold for in the supermarket. We are still in drought and have seen bushfires. People are hearing about prices going up for produce, whether it be avocados or other produce, because of the impact of the drought on farms. However, the price of milk stays the same no matter what happens. The dairy farmer still gets the same price, no matter the cost of living or how much their input costs go up.

Last year, from memory on 6 November, we made an announcement in the Myall Lakes electorate. We decided in the weeks leading up to that that we needed to do something in my electorate for the dairy farmers. As a result of the drought, they needed help. We decided we would put a fund together to get some money to the dairy farmers, particularly those who needed it, to help them financially but also to send the message that we want to help our local dairy farmers. We started the MidCoast Drought Appeal—local people helping their local dairy farmers. The MidCoast Council area includes not only Myall Lakes but Gloucester, in the electorate of Upper Hunter, as well as Coopernook, Johns River, Moorland and Hannam Vale in the electorate of Port Macquarie.

To kick it off, I spoke to the Lions Club's Follow Your Dream Foundation, which donated \$20,000. When we announced the appeal on that Friday morning we had over \$50,000 already. We had Lions clubs, Rotary clubs, Quota clubs, the Country Women's Association and Probus clubs all there to support it, which is why so much money was raised so quickly. That very night the catastrophic fires hit my area and what we wanted to do for dairy farmers took a back seat. However, now our attention is turning back to the dairy farmers. Last week I had the pleasure of taking Minister Melinda Pavey into the Local Land Services office in Taree where the Women in Dairy were putting together packs to give out to all the dairy farmers. They went out the next day with the Lions Club to give out those packs and financial vouchers to dairy farmers in the area. I congratulate them all.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:01:50): I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his passionate contribution in the House tonight recognising the important role that around 575 commercial New South Wales dairy farmers play, not just

in our economy but as an important and valued part of the local community, particularly in his electorate. I think it is a credit to him in his role as local MP that he is actively involved in not just lauding the work that the dairy farmers do but practical measures to assist them. At the moment at the State level we are going through a process of developing a tailored response package for the dairy industry in response to the bushfire devastation on the North Coast, Central Coast and in the southern part of New South Wales. The efforts of the member for Myall Lakes have been noted by this House. His advocacy will certainly result in a good outcome for our dairy farmers.

LINDFIELD VILLAGE GREEN

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (19:02:57): Development pressures and increased residential density generally prompt increased demand for open space for the benefit of local residents. Local councils play an important and often challenging role in providing such recreational amenities for their local communities. Ku-ring-gai Council should therefore be commended for its plan to deliver an immensely valuable facility for my local community in the form of a proposed new village green in my electorate of Davidson. Construction of the Lindfield Village Green in Tryon Road, Lindfield will commence in April this year. The project will take approximately 18 months to complete. During this time, the Tryon Road car park will be closed. While I do not look forward to the noise that will be generated right next to my electorate office, I do overwhelmingly welcome the project.

The highly anticipated community project will play an integral role in providing much needed open space and improved amenity for the area on the eastern side of Lindfield railway station, while generating a village atmosphere. The project includes a cafe, public toilets and an outdoor area that can be used to host markets, outdoor cinema, live music or other performances. A basement car park will be accessible by dual lifts and stairs. The basement car parking will feature 105 additional commuter parking spaces funded by the New South Wales Government, as well as 136 short-stay spaces to replace those that are being lost at ground level due to the new facility.

The New South Wales Government previously committed to funding 240 additional commuter car parking spaces near Lindfield station. I am pleased that in addition to the 105 that will be provided on this site, the remainder of those spaces are to be provided as part of the proposed Lindfield Village Hub car park site on the western side of Lindfield station. The additional parking and enhanced local activity associated with this project will place some further strain on local traffic movements following the recent completion of nearby residential and retail developments. Ku-ring-gai Council will need to promptly progress proposed traffic management changes so that, when opened, the new facility can be enjoyed to its full capacity without incurring undue further traffic problems. I urge council to act sooner rather than later.

Transport for NSW has already approved various changes on the eastern side of Lindfield station, including moving the pedestrian traffic lights from the middle of the shops on Lindfield Avenue to the corner of Tryon Road and Lindfield Avenue. This should enable commuters to more safely access Lindfield station and provide better traffic flow for drivers along Lindfield Avenue. There is still a need to address other general traffic movements as well across the Pacific Highway, including where both Strickland Avenue and Balfour Street meet the Pacific Highway. When considering further developments, particularly on the western side of Lindfield station, these changes are becoming more urgent. In conclusion, I applaud Ku-ring-gai Council for bringing this exciting project a step closer to fruition. I also highlight and thank the New South Wales Government for its contribution to providing additional commuter car parking spaces in the area. They are much needed and much appreciated. I look forward to this project and its associated developments continuing to be delivered for the benefit of my local community.

CENTRAL COAST FLOODS

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:07:36): I speak about the recent storm event on the Central Coast from 7 to 12 February. At the request of myself and a number of my colleagues on the Central Coast the storm was eventually called a natural disaster. The event touched all parts of The Entrance electorate and its coastal waters. Tuggerah Lakes and The Entrance channel are important features and their storm-triggered flooding had disastrous effects on many of my constituents. Whilst flooding is an accepted part of life on the Central Coast, we should be getting better at managing flood risks. However, the events which led up to this recent flood lead me to suggest that this is not the case. My concerns about flood risk around Tuggerah Lakes were first raised with the Minister for Energy and Environment on 13 February 2019 when the dredging of The Entrance channel—an important part of flood mitigation on the coast, The Entrance channel is the only point where flood waters can escape from the lake to the ocean—had been stopped by order of the Environment Protection Authority [EPA].

Having met with the Central Coast Council about this I had urged the Government to allow council to continue to dredge so that the accumulation of sand would not vegetate, making it harder to move when we next

had a large storm event. The response from the Minister came back quite promptly on 22 February. The Minister advised that notwithstanding the prevention notice from the EPA, council could continue to dredge in accordance with its licence. Prior to this I had made a number of representations to council about the dredging program because I had received concerns from many of my constituents, including The Entrance Boat Shed, about the state of the channel and I was concerned that the dredging program council was undertaking be appropriate and thorough.

I note that dredging has been part of the Central Coast Council's core duties since 1993. Council owns its own dredge. Dredging had been an annual activity, but over time that stretched to where the interval between dredging campaigns has been three or four years. I think that is part of the problem causing the current flood risk around the lake. In December 2018 I was advised by council that dredging had concluded for the year. The dredge would be returned to the Wyong River and removed to have repairs undertaken. It is a big concern that council now says repairs cannot be undertaken, the dredge will be decommissioned and it has no plans for a new dredge. Council suggested to me that:

...the EPA's direction to immediately cease dredging meant that a small section of the sump on the downstream side of the bridge could not be completed. It also prevented us from dredging on the upstream side of the bridge to protect seagrass beds in the vicinity of the boat hire business.

The Minister's response illustrated to me that council could indeed continue to dredge within its limitations. However, the response from council indicated otherwise. This is concerning and part of the problem. Council and the State Government continue to offer contradictory statements on the channel and because of this action to reduce flood risk has not occurred. On 15 January 2020 I wrote to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing urging her to review flood risk around Tuggerah Lakes. I asked that council be contacted and the lake be reviewed to ensure flood risk was minimised. I have not heard back from the Minister. To impress upon council the seriousness of the matter, all Labor members wrote to the CEO on 5 February. We have had no response. Flooding occurred across the lake on 10 February.

The floodwaters had built up over the weekend of 8 and 9 February and flooding had occurred in the outlying suburbs of Ourimbah and Lisarow. On 10 February the water had accumulated around The Entrance channel. It could not get out because dredging had been inadequate. As a consequence in my view flooding has been deeper and more prolonged than it should have been. The Entrance channel is a dynamic environment. It needs to be actively managed to mitigate flood risks. The current balance of responsibilities between the State Government and council over who is responsible for flood risk needs to be managed better. We cannot sit back passively and hope an occasional dredging campaign and Mother Nature will clear the channel. I have called for action and a new way of managing The Entrance channel and I will not let go of this. If money is needed, the State Government should be providing it to the Central Coast Council.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (19:12:45): Like many of us in this place I and my community were on high alert during the festive season. Usually a time of rest, recovery and spending quality time with loved ones, it was replaced with fear and anxiety for many fleeing for their lives. Many thousands of people in this State have been affected personally by the worst fires in living history, millions have been impacted by hazardous smoke and high temperatures, and every one of us has been affected emotionally by the loss of life, the destruction of places we love and the devastating loss of animals and biodiversity. What has become blatantly obvious to us all—and certainly the majority in my community—is that we need to reduce our carbon emissions as quickly as possible and prepare for life on a warmer planet. I will have a lot more to say about our transition to a low carbon economy and the jobs and wealth of opportunities that will accompany that transition.

I reflect on what we should be prioritising as communities rebuild and prepare for life on a warming planet. It was heartening to hear the Speaker, and member for Davidson, talk about exactly the sort of social infrastructure that I highlight. Hard infrastructure is essential but we also know that it fails us during natural disasters. People in fire-affected communities certainly can attest to that. The Greens will be monitoring closely every single day in this House and in the other place the clean-up effort to see that it moves on quickly to the rebuilding of people's homes, water tanks, sewerage pipes and electricity connections with every support that can be mustered. We have an opportunity and an obligation to reflect on the social infrastructure in every single one of our electorates. Whilst social infrastructure—the public amenity, public buildings, our parks and the many places we connect to each other within our community—will not save any of us from catastrophic fires or extreme weather events, they are crucial for engendering the very connections to the people around us, which can be critical to both survival during and recovery after a natural disaster.

In July 1995 a heatwave in Chicago killed 739 people. Over 200,000 people were without electricity and water for several days. Across the city, buildings baked like ovens, roads and railways buckled and thousands of cars and buses overheated. Nobody saw it coming because politicians and the media downplayed the warnings

and tried to put a positive spin on it—even as it was happening. That sounds a bit familiar. As one would expect, poorer areas of the city were very badly affected, but what was incredible was that some communities that were very poor were not badly affected. This led researchers like Barack Obama adviser Eric Klinenberg to want to understand why this anomaly occurred. It was also the approach taken after Hurricane Katrina. Why were communities with the same wealth, gender, age and ethnicity affected so differently?

I believe that what Klinenberg discovered is crucial for us as members of Parliament to understand as we prepare for the future. He found that social infrastructure—the physical places and organisations that shape the way people interact—is the most important indicator of whether a community survives and recovers from natural disasters. Klinenberg found that it is the social connections, it is the sense of community, it is the friendships and neighbourly concern and care that make all the difference, and that this sense of being a community comes from how well the spaces that people interact in—their social infrastructure—is created and supported. Simply put, communities in Chicago that had robust social infrastructure were not as badly affected during the heatwave because people knew each other and they had social support networks to rely on when the physical infrastructure networks broke down, as they inevitably do.

People forge bonds in places that have healthy social infrastructure, not because they set out to build community but because when people engage in sustained, recurrent interaction, particularly while doing things they enjoy, relationships inevitably grow. Whilst it is almost cruel to talk about the social connections and social cohesion that can assist people after extreme weather events and natural disasters, it is certainly something that we should be considering as we see the rebuild happen. With the electorate of Ballina being one of the strongest volunteer communities in Australia, we have a lot of social infrastructure we can build on and I will certainly be focusing on working with my community to harness and build on that as we face the challenges of living on a warming planet.

CENTRAL COAST BUSHFIRES AND FLOODS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:17:33): As Dorothea Mackellar wrote in her poem *My Country*, Australia is a place of "droughts and flooding rains", a land of "flood and fire and famine". Nowhere was this truer than on the Central Coast over the past few months. Throughout November and December the Three Mile Fire spread east towards the Central Coast, endangering properties around Kulnura, Mangrove Mountain and Spencer. At the Australian Reptile Park at Somersby, Tim Faulkner and his team did an incredible job evacuating animals due to the fire risk, only for them to return to safety and a few weeks later be evacuated again due to flash flooding. At the northern end of the Central Coast, strong winds caused a small fire to quickly spread within metres of homes at Charmhaven on New Year's Eve. The expert work done by Rural Fire Service volunteers and aerial reinforcements by a Large Air Tanker helped protect people and property. Despite many hundreds of homes being in the line of fire, only one was lost.

As our Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, has said, never before have bushfires burned in New South Wales for so long and with such ferocity. Twenty-five lives have been lost this bushfire season. Behind each one of those 25 people is a village grieving their loss. I express my condolences to the families, friends, colleagues and neighbours who have lost someone. But I note again that the Central Coast is so fortunate to have avoided the worst. Our region is surrounded by national parks, State forests and open spaces. I encourage everyone to ensure that they have a bushfire plan in place. It is no small task keeping our community safe. Our region is very well-served by over 2,300 Rural Fire Service volunteers and 20 staff, which make up 57 brigades. Running this operation is Superintendent Viki Campbell, who has been acting as the Central Coast's Incident Controller for months on end. I am delighted that Viki has been awarded Australia Day Ambassador for 2020, which is very well deserved indeed.

More recently, the Central Coast has endured storms, damaging winds and hundreds of millimetres of rain. The fact that a natural disaster was declared within days of the storm demonstrates the ferocity with which our region has been hit. The declaration of a natural disaster means that support and assistance is now being provided for flood-affected people through the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line—this includes people whose homes and belongings have been damaged—and for council to clean up public assets. It is very disappointing that council's inaction at the Tuggerah Lakes over the past 18 months has led to the flooding of hundreds of homes. Deploying a bulldozer to move sand at The Entrance days after the rain fell is simply not good enough. It is too little, too late.

Every other coastal council in New South Wales is able to safely and sustainably manage their local waterways, and the New South Wales Government expects Central Coast Council to do the same. But we are not fobbing it off and leaving it up to council. The Government is providing \$600,000 for dredging at The Entrance, and council will be required to match this funding dollar for dollar. It is absolutely essential that this work occur for the safety and peace of mind of hundreds of home owners living on the edge of Tuggerah Lake. The

Government also expects council to develop and implement a long-term management plan for this local waterway, as it has done with others on the Central Coast.

Mr David Harris: It is already done. They just didn't follow it.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: It is a pity your councillors kept on avoiding it for 18 months. To conclude, I have been inspired by the way our community works together and bounces back through these trying times. On the Central Coast we have the highest proportion of volunteers in the nation, and that is evident through the generosity of people giving their time to volunteer in the Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service. Many in our community have also been generous with their money and resources, making donations of food and property to those who have been impacted by flood or fire.

In the brief time I have left I will speak about Con Ryan, the man who runs the 5 Lands Walk. He and his wife Margie had a caravan—they are self-confessed grey nomads. They took their caravan, valued at in excess of \$50,000, and gave it to a couple in Bega, not wanting anything in return. This is the spirit of our community on the Central Coast—people like the Con Ryans of this world and his family and other people wanting to give their all to help others who are in dire need. I am proud to represent the people of the Central Coast. When one sees the generosity and spirit of those people it shows what a wonderful region the Central Coast really is.

TRIBUTE TO AUNTY MAE ROBINSON

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (19:22:54): It is with deep sadness that I inform the House of the passing of a dear friend and Aboriginal Elder from my electorate of Cabramatta, Aunty Mae Robinson. Aunty Mae passed away peacefully on Tuesday 27 November 2019. A descendent of the Yuin and Kamilaroi people, she is survived by her beloved husband, John, children Chris, Stephen and Nigel, five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Melissa Williams, CEO of Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council, said, "Aunty Mae rose despite adversity." Her determination saw her rise up. An active and long-serving member of Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council, the roots of her activism were seeded in her childhood.

Born in 1942, Aunty Mae's early life was spent in Burnt Bridge, near Kempsey where she learnt the truth about being Aboriginal and the difference between the treatment of Indigenous people and the whites. Aboriginal people had to fight for status. She would tell the story about the local picture theatre in town and how the owner had certain parts of the theatre roped off to Aboriginal people. So the Local Aboriginal woman organised their own movies in the local community hall where all were welcomed. It did not take long for the theatre owner to realise that this was not good for his business and shortly thereafter the roping-off was quickly cancelled. It was Aunty Mae's first experience seeing the effects of people power. Aunty Mae was an outstanding student at school and won a Commonwealth scholarship. Despite this, she was forcibly removed from her family and sent to Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls' Training Home.

In later life, as a mature age student, Aunty Mae attended what is now the Western Sydney University at the Milperra campus and became a teacher. Aunty Mae taught at many schools throughout western Sydney. She became a national education consultant and was part of the team that developed the first Aboriginal Studies syllabus in Australia. She is listed as a life member of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. During her working life, Aunty Mae received many local and State government awards. She became an Elder on the Western Sydney University campus and in 2011 was awarded an honorary doctorate by the university. Aunty Mae was honoured in late 2018 by the naming of the Aunty Mae Foyer in Western Sydney University's Ngara Ngura building at its Liverpool campus. As Melissa Williams said:

Aunty Mae's influence has been vast. It is fitting that we reflect on how best we can respect her legacy, honour her achievements and magnify the effects of her contribution to community, education and the future of Australia's next generations

I extend my deepest sympathy to her husband, John, and her children and grandchildren on their great loss. We have lost a great Australian. Aunty Mae was an inspiration who showed us you can achieve whatever you want in life if you put your mind to it, no matter how many obstacles are placed in your way. Rest in peace, Aunty Mae.

TUGGERAH LAKES FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (19:26:10): I speak tonight about the storms and flooding that affected Tuggerah Lakes because there is a serious lack of knowledge and information about what happened. People have to understand the history of the lakes. I will be making several speeches on this topic because it cannot be covered in five minutes. It needs to be understood that the Tuggerah Lakes Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan was completed in November 2014 and adopted by the former Wyong Shire Council. There are serious issues in that plan around the fact that neither local government or State Government has done any significant work in meeting what is recommended in the report in the last decade.

A local resident who lives at Chittaway Point has written to me. He has gone through the report in great detail and outlined a lot of pertinent points. I think the reason that there has been inaction is the amalgamation. Not long after the report was completed, Wyong and Gosford councils were amalgamated. The report has been largely ignored because the council has been more focused on rewriting policies and those sorts of things instead of focusing on some very important issues. We should have learned the lessons after the 2015 floods, but none of the recommendations from that risk management plan have been put in place. At least, I have gone through it and I cannot find any that have been done.

I will start going through a few issues that I will expand on in later contributions. Recommendation 5 of the report states that a formal entrance management strategy to manage flooding is a high priority to be undertaken over the next four years. The report was done in 2014. The recommendation should have been completed by 2018. When the member for Terrigal talks about the past 18 months, it has been going on a lot longer than that. We have to understand the full history. The strategy has been ignored by both State and local governments for a decade. The recommendation states that the prime objective is to include consideration of emergency entrance openings for the management of flooding. It is a strategy that has always been put in the too-hard basket after a decade of procrastination spanning from the old Wyong Shire Council days into the time of amalgamation. The current Liberal-Nationals State Government has been in power the whole time since 2014.

The recommendation also states that council needs to clearly promote and educate the community on the difference between the management of The Entrance channel for flooding purposes and the management for other reasons, such as tourism and ecological benefits. Most of the community focus until the floods happened was all about how it looked and smelled rather than on flooding. It has been totally overlooked that the Cardno study in 2013, which was done by the State Government, is not specifically considering management of the opening during flood times and so council will need to look at that issue in further detail. That was a recommendation. The former Liberal member for The Entrance got the money to do a report and it was completed. A rock groyne was completed on The Entrance beach, which was all about sand nourishment for the beach. There was nothing about the opening, or flooding or any of those issues.

The recommendations of the flood consultants has been ignored for no apparent reason. Flood forecasting models are being considered by council, but this will probably need a State Government grant before starting the process. Why have other councils made progress in this area as presented at the 2019 coastal conference? A new dredge and dredging policy is also being considered by council, but again this is dependent on a State Government grant, which has now come after the flood. Why have the lessons not been learnt from the previous floods to understand why these things happen? The dredging that happened previously was all about making the channel look nice for tourists; it was not about flooding. People do not understand that they are two different things. That is just the start to the conversation. I have a lot more to say on this issue. I recommend everyone, including the member for Terrigal, reads this report.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:31:18): I highlight to the member for Wyong that six times since 2019—on 26 February, 26 March, 8 October, 11 February, 25 November and 9 December—motions were raised in council to look at addressing the issues with regard to dredging and the quality of the lakes.

Mr David Mehan: What have you done, Big Mouth? You've done nothing.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Unfortunately, those motions were blocked by the Labor and The Greens councillors on Central Coast Council. It is very interesting that members opposite come in here and cry crocodile tears.

Mr David Mehan: You're a joke. Sit down and stop wasting the whole world's time.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: The first time the member for The Entrance actually did anything in 4½ years was when this incident came up. He has done absolutely nothing and has been missing in action for 4½ years on this issue. His councillors, the Labor councillors, blocked every single motion to address this issue. This is Ettalong revisited.

Mr David Mehan: You need to fund it. You got them into this situation, you dope.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: You guys blocked the funding for Ettalong and you have done it for The Entrance.

Mr David Mehan: You haven't got a clue. You didn't open your mouth until after the floods.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: You should be ashamed of yourself. You are totally out of your depth, buddy.

Mr David Mehan: You are fucking hopeless.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Sorry, what was that?

Mr David Mehan: You are hopeless. You are effing hopeless.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I hope Hansard got that.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I direct the member for The Entrance to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of one hour. I will not accept that language. The member for Terrigal can say what he likes in response to a private member's statement, but what he said was also very controversial.

Mr Adam Crouch: I would never use unparliamentary language like that.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I am glad to hear that. Let us learn a lesson from that.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for The Entrance left the Chamber at 19:36.]

AUSTRALIAN CHINESE COMMUNITY BUSHFIRE ASSISTANCE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (19:33:23): The past three months have been some of the most challenging the people of New South Wales have ever faced. The impact of the bushfires has been devastating and heartbreaking for individuals and communities. It is said that the worst of times can bring out the best in people. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of the Australian Chinese community to the relief effort to support families and businesses affected by the bushfire disaster. On 29 November 2019, the Australia China Economics, Trade and Culture Association [ACETCA] organised a bushfire appeal dinner in Sydney. I was pleased to attend along with the Speaker, the member for Davidson. At the event more than \$390,000 was raised for the NSW Rural Fire Service, the Koala Hospital in Port Macquarie, and BlazeAid, which is a volunteer-based organisation that works with communities in rural Australia. When speaking about the fundraising dinner, the Executive Chairman of ACETCA, Dr Ven Tan, said the Australian Chinese community wanted to show how much they love this country and wanted to give something back to the community which has been very good to them.

In my electorate of Kogarah, local Chinese business and community leaders have worked together to contribute to the bushfire relief efforts. The Chinese business community in Hurstville, for instance, has rallied behind the work of the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army in Hurstville recently celebrated its 120th anniversary at a dinner organised by the Australian Chinese United Business Association Federation where a special fundraising drive helped raise more than \$49,000 for the Salvation Army, including \$10,000 for its disaster appeal. The Salvation Army Hurstville Corps are ably led by Captain Sean Li, who accepted the donations on behalf of those that donated. I thank everyone who contributed for their generosity.

On 16 January the Georges River Local Artists and Young Chinese Artists held their Art Expo at Kogarah School of Arts and used the occasion to help raise funds for bushfire relief. The art exhibition featured an auction of six paintings by Chinese students and their teacher. The auction raised \$1,700, which was then donated to the Salvation Army's Disaster Appeal. It is a small amount of money in the scheme of things, but it was everything that this group of people had and it was as much as they could donate in not just a token way but in a sincere effort to alleviate some of the pain that their friends in regional communities had gone through. I was pleased to attend the event with Mayor of Georges River Council, Mr Kevin Greene. The art expo was organised by Lydia Li, the director of Australian Chinese Tourism and Cultural Exchange Association, and I thank her for her leadership and her wonderful show of community spirit.

On 19 January the Sydney Musicool Ensemble [SME] held a dinner and concert which raised \$16,000 for the bushfire appeal. The SME was established in 2012 by a group of 10-year-old Australian-born Chinese children, with enthusiastic support from their parents. The concert involved a wonderful selection of music performed by the 45 young people in the SME, as well as the younger group, the Koala Ensemble. Seven year 12 students also took time out from their HSC studies to perform and to help emcee the concert. The money raised was donated to the Rural Fire Service as well as to WIRES. I pay tribute to our host for the evening, Mary Ma, the owner of Golden Sands Restaurant and resident of Hurstville. She opened her restaurant for free for the evening so people could come and raise money for the Rural Fire Service in support of bushfire relief. It was a magnanimous gesture and one associated with relief for the community. I congratulate Jordon Zhong, the leader of the SME, and all the members of the orchestra for using their talent and passion for music to support such an urgent and important cause. It is an example of what it means to be an Australian and to care about other Australians.

Community Recognition Statements

BEYOND DUTY EXHIBITION

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (19:38:29): On Monday 3 February I was honoured to join his Excellency Mark Sofer, Israeli Ambassador to Australia, and the Parliamentary Friends of Israel to unveil *Beyond*

Duty, an exhibition honouring the 34 diplomats from 21 countries who risked their lives and careers to rescue Jews from the Holocaust. *Beyond Duty* is a collection of photographs of those diplomats, who have been recognised as "Righteous Among The Nations" by Jerusalem's Yad Vashem, the world's pre-eminent Holocaust memorial. Those diplomats issued passports and transport permits, often in explicit defiance of their own government's policies, and are credited with saving the lives of over 200,000 innocent European Jews. We had the pleasure of hearing from his Excellency, who delivered one of the finest speeches on the topic of the Holocaust that I have yet heard. The photographs are to be displayed in the Parliament's Fountain Court until the end of February.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:39:25): I recognise Coffs Coast residents who have served their community with distinction. I was proud to see locals receive the recognition they deserve in the 2020 Australia Day Honours List. Transport and trucking king, Tom Lindsay, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his outstanding service to his industry and his community. This honour acknowledges Tom's role in keeping our nation moving for more than six decades, while generously giving his time to see Coffs Harbour go from strength to strength. He is joined in the Australia Day honours by Annette and Jean-Pierre Reifler, who were each awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia. This dynamic duo are founders of the celebrated Sherwood Cliffs Rehabilitation Centre at Glenreagh, where people seek help in their struggles with addiction. This important work has helped save many lives.

MING YUE LAY TEMPLE

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (19:40:19): I recently had the pleasure of attending Lunar New Year celebrations at the Ming Yue Lay Temple. The day was filled with many traditional dances and performances of Chinese background, including spectacular performances by the Qing Fong Lion Dance team lead by my staffer Kelvin Tran. This time is important for many in my electorate who celebrate Lunar New Year. For some it is a time to get together with family and friends and strengthen relationships, whilst for many others it is a time to reflect on their achievements last year and pray to the good lords for luck and prosperity for the year ahead. I thank the Ming Yue Lay Temple committee for inviting me to celebrate with them and look forward to doing so again next year.

CENTRAL COAST DISASTER RELIEF

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:41:11): I bring to the attention of the House a Facebook group that has started in the community called Central Coast Disaster Relief. It has 8,200 group members—a very sizeable number. Those volunteers have been working over the past few months putting together meal packs and also delivering supplies to communities desperate for assistance. First it was the fires and now they are helping respond to the recent flooding on the Central Coast. One of the group's deliveries late last year consisted of a convoy of cars travelling hundreds of kilometres to help a drought-stricken town in regional New South Wales. I acknowledge all 8,200 members of the Central Coast Disaster Relief group. We know that most of the work is needed after the fire is put out—people need to recover, rebuild and resume normal life. This takes time. Through these trying times, the members of Central Coast Disaster Relief are not focused on helping themselves but are focused on helping those in less fortunate situations. I commend the Central Coast Disaster Relief organisation.

WYONG RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB GROUP

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (19:42:12): At Wyong Leagues Club I was honoured to assist in launching *The History of the Wyong Rugby League Club Group* book written by Greg Tunn, including a history of registered clubs in New South Wales written by Jim Swanson. The book is dedicated to the pioneering members of each of the eight clubs in the Wyong Rugby League Club Group who had vision, drive, patience and resilience to establish the respective clubs that are all making significant, valuable and ongoing contributions to communities on the Central Coast and Goulburn. The Wyong Rugby League Club was first established in 1910 and is still operating strongly today, along with Wyong Bowling Club, Wallarah Bay Club, Budgewoi Soccer Club, Canton Beach Sports Club, Goulburn Railway Bowling Club, Avoca Bowling Club and Bateau Bay Bowling Club. Each club is different and was established based on strong individuals supported by the volunteers and the community. The history of the area is really important, as are the people who built the place through different groups in society. It is going to be a fascinating read and I certainly recommend it to everyone on the Central Coast.

MARK NUTTALL

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:43:24): I recognise the outstanding contribution that Dubbo's Mark Nuttall has made to the youth of our city. Mark retired earlier this month after 15 years of service to the community as the manager of the Dubbo PCYC. Around 100 people turned out to a surprise farewell in his

honour. I was pleased to attend the event and interview Mark about his time as manager. It was moving to witness his passion for empowering young people through sport. He has been described as "the absolute personification of community spirit", "the heart and soul" of Dubbo PCYC and "a true gem" who "will always have a special place in many people's lives". Under his leadership, the Dubbo PCYC has helped change many young people's lives through the Fit for Work and Fit for Life programs as well as Project Walwaay. I have no doubt this outstanding work will continue to change lives for years to come. I thank Mark and congratulate him on his contribution. I hope he enjoys retirement.

LAURIE O'CONNOR

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (19:44:45): I acknowledge Mr Laurie O'Connor, who is retiring after 25 years with Hurstville and Georges River councils. Laurie began his career in local government in the early 1980s as an engineer, working for various councils in southern Sydney before joining Hurstville Council in 1995 as manager, engineering administration. Laurie held several senior management roles before progressing to acting general manager. He has worked as the director of assets and infrastructure since the proclamation of Georges River Council in 2016, and has worked tirelessly for over two decades to serve the people of the St George region. I think the member for Oatley will agree with me. Laurie has delivered many projects that have benefited my electorate of Kogarah and the surrounding suburbs, including Lily Street Bridge construction, Hurstville Plaza, Penshurst Park Sporting Hub Project, Gannons Park and Hurstville Golf Course stormwater harvesting schemes, Oatley and Jubilee Park, Jubilee Community Centre, the reconstruction of the Harold Fraser pavilion and many others. I wish Laurie the best in his retirement.

TONY GADSBY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:45:17): I recognise Moree's Tony Gadsby for his wonderful work as the manager of the Moree Post Office. Tony has been working at the post office for the past 30 years and has been an integral part of the Australia Post team for 35 years now. Tony is a well-known, respected and well-liked member of the Moree community, always greeting people with a smile and priding himself on knowing almost every single customer who comes through the door. Tony was nominated and successful in being awarded the Moree Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down! Customer Service Appreciation Award in January this year for his service and friendliness in delivering that service. I commend Tony for his contribution to the community and to Australia Post, and note that he is strongly supported by his wife, Fay, and his children Renaye and Brenton. I thank Tony for his work at Australia Post and hopefully—it is probably hard for him to do another 30 years—he is there for many years to come.

PURPLE WEEK

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (19:46:19): Last week my electorate office joined other local businesses in turning Lismore and our villages purple during Purple Week. My senior electorate officer, Carmel Cook, known for her distinctive purple hair, was ready made for this novel way of counting down to the major event the Lismore & Villages Relay for Life at Southern Cross University on 28-29 March 2020. The relay is very special to Carmel as she has been a cancer survivor since 1999. She previously raised funds for the PET scanner at the Lismore Cancer Care and Haematology Unit by shaving off those purple locks. My staff and I donned purple clothing when volunteer chairperson of the Lismore & Villages Relay for Life Committee, Leanne Thompson, popped in with a Purple Week kit for our front counter. More than 40 local businesses participated in Purple Week, which marked the six-week countdown to what has become a popular community awareness and fundraising event hosted by Leanne and her volunteers to benefit the Cancer Council NSW.

O'CONNOR'S PHARMACY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:47:22): I congratulate O'Connor's Pharmacy on its sixtieth Anniversary celebration held at the pharmacy in Frederick Street, Oatley. I was delighted to attend the celebrations and witness the giveaways, discounts and promotions on offer. The O'Connor family has been caring for Oatley since 1959, providing a consistently high level of service and priding themselves on a customer-oriented approach. Current owners Tony and Gillian O'Connor commit themselves to values of decency, hard work, compassion and professionalism. They are also strong participants in local community events, including the Oatley Park Fun Run and Oatley Lions Festival, and through local schools and charities.

They have seen Frederick Street develop into a hub for small business. Their pharmacy is a mainstay of the Oatley landscape. Small businesses are truly the lifeblood of our communities and the driver of local economies. We are particularly lucky in the St George area to have not only great pharmacies, but also a diverse range of quality businesses to meet our needs. I thank Tony and Gillian O'Connor for inviting me to their celebration and wish them all the best for the future.

COMMISSIONER RAYMOND CLAUDE BELL, OAM

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (19:48:24): I note the many contributions that Commissioner Raymond Claude Bell, OAM, has made to the Australian Air League and within the Camden community. I acknowledge and thank the tireless work and dedication of Mr Bell in establishing and maintaining the flying school at Camden Airport. I congratulate Raymond Claude Bell on his many awards and accomplishments that have recognised his service to the youth, particularly through the Australian Air League.

JULIE AINSWORTH, OAM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (19:49:08): I congratulate Julie Ainsworth, who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in last month's Australia Day honours. Julie is a prolific volunteer, using the skills that saw her work as the general manager for the *Newcastle Herald* to serve on boards and committees for a variety of not-for-profits, charities and associations across the Hunter. Currently Julie is a member of the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation Board, the Orica Foundation Charitable Board and the Mark Hughes Foundation Advisory Committee. She is also a patron of Hunter Carers. Among others, she has also been a part of the Newcastle Knights Business Development Committee, the Samaritans Marketing and Fundraising Committee, and was an ambassador for the John Hunter Children's Hospital Kids Club. Julie is a true asset to our region. This recognition is very well deserved. Congratulations, Julie.

PORT MACQUARIE DOLPHINS PLAYERS**HAYLEY EGGLETON**

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:50:04): I recognise six of our talented Port Macquarie Dolphins players who were selected to compete at the Australian Country Junior Basketball Cup held from the 11 January to 18 January in Albury. Dolphins players were ecstatic to receive the news in September that six of their side would represent the Port Macquarie region in basketball, which is the largest contingency to be selected since the club's formation. All of our athletes competed at an extraordinary level last year at the New South Wales high performance trials, an indication of the incredible talent and quality performance training offered by the Port Macquarie Basketball Association.

I am pleased to acknowledge in this House those selected to participate from my electorate: Noah Pagotto, Kaden Lawler, Chloe Hanlan, Phailin McKibbin, Alice Hillsdon and Maddison Baxter. During the tournament the team was coached professionally on elite training methods and competition development. Club referee, Erik Ralph, and referee coordinator, Andre Caltabiano, officiated at the event in Albury and received overall praise for their professionalism. I take this opportunity to commend Port Macquarie basketballer Hayley Eggleton who recently competed in the Australian country under-14 representative basketball side in New Zealand. Well done!

IDA LEESON

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:51:04): The Inner West Council recently held an event naming a prominent balcony at the new Marrickville Library for inner west LGBTIQ+ and feminist trailblazer, Ida Leeson. Ida Leeson was appointed as the first female librarian at the Mitchell Library in 1932. Her appointment was controversial and groundbreaking: People questioned the appropriateness of appointing a woman to such a senior position in the State's library system. Ida lived as an openly gay woman, sharing her life with her partner of 50 years, Florence Birch, in their inner-west home. People like Ida fought for recognition and inclusion in every aspect of life, living their lives unapologetically and true to who they were.

I congratulate the Inner West Rainbow Community and Inner West Council on their recognition of Ida Leeson and on their ongoing support of the LGBTIQ+ communities across the inner west. Ida and remarkable people like the 78ers paved the way for those celebrating this Saturday's Mardi Gras this weekend. Oxford Street will again come alive with glitter and colour, allowing us to celebrate the LGBTIQ+ community. Happy Mardi Gras to everybody.

DIMMOCKS RETREAT WILDLIFE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:52:15): I congratulate Dimmocks Retreat Wildlife rehabilitation and rescue, which is located in Bundanoon in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. Dimmocks is completely self-funded and run by a husband and wife team. Justine and Greg are specially trained to rehabilitate native wildlife for release back to the bush under a Wildlife Rescue South Coast licence. They have devoted their lives to rescuing orphaned, injured and sick wildlife on their property in Bundanoon, including kangaroos, wombats, possums, birds, echidnas and ducks. Surviving on donations from their community, Justine and Greg have offered many of the residents of Bundanoon and surrounds donations of food for the abundance of wildlife left homeless and starving during the recent bushfires that decimated the area. I acknowledge the dedication and hard work of Dimmocks Retreat Wildlife and congratulate it on its efforts.

CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:53:09): I thank the Central Coast Council for the fantastic celebrations that were shared by so many one month ago tomorrow—26 January—on the Woy Woy waterfront. Despite the heat and the challenging summer, hundreds of people turned out, especially as the evening cooled, for the fantastic gathering along Brick Wharf Road to listen to an INXS tribute band alongside the Woy Woy channel, with reflections of serene mangroves, ducks paddling past and sea slugs gliding beneath the surface. This great celebration is now part of our community culture. Besides the local art and craft stalls, tasty food, live entertainment and the lantern festival, the meander along the Woy Woy bike path brings an opportunity to purchase home-made lemonade at Pop's House near the Lions park every year. This year Ella and Marlee set up their stand to support injured koalas affected by the bushfires, donating a fantastic \$152 to WIRES. Thanks again to Central Coast Council, and everyone involved for working so hard to make our beautiful community stronger.

BECKOM PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:54:09): I congratulate Beckom Public School on receiving a Sustainable Schools Grant. The Sustainable Schools Program is a four-year, \$10 million program that provides schools with the opportunity to engage students in developing a hands-on project. The projects improve the schools' sustainability and teach students environmentally sustainable practices. This year Beckom Public School has eight enrolments. Its funding will go towards a kids in the kitchen and garden program. The program includes learning about growing and cooking healthy and sustainable meals, which involves water conservation, propagation, planting a variety of seasonal vegetables, and creating a kitchen garden. Companion planting and sustainable methods of maintaining a garden will also be part of the program. Parents and the community will be invited to become involved. I commend Beckom Public School for its successful application.

AL-FAISAL COLLEGE, AUBURN

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:55:06): I recognise the outstanding academic achievements of Al-Faisal College, Auburn. In the 2019 academic year, some 212 students from the school achieved an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank [ATAR] of 90 or above. Al-Faisal College is one of my electorate's largest schools and has been improving its HSC performance every year. The school ethos is to develop respect for others, a love of learning and a desire to grow to be good Australian citizens. Al-Faisal College celebrates the academic achievements of its 2019 Higher School Certificate students. The school was ranked twenty-third in the State. Nine students were listed on the HSC All Rounders list and the school boasted HSC first place in Arabic. Top 10 results were also gained in biology, Arabic continuers, standard mathematics and mathematics extensions 1 and 2. One extraordinary student, Dania Al Rifai, achieved an ATAR of 99.95. The graduates of Al-Faisal College's class of 2019 have gained admission to a wide range of tertiary courses, including medicine, accountancy, law, engineering, commerce and teaching. I congratulate the students of Al Faisal College.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I acknowledge Lachlan Peterson, who has joined Georges River Young Liberals in my conference—one of the largest Young Liberal branches in the State and a very important branch to me. He may be a future member of Parliament.

ST MARTIN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**FRENCHS FOREST PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (19:56:36): I am pleased to acknowledge two successful applicants for Woolworths Junior Landcare Grants 2019 in my electorate of Davidson: St Martin's Catholic Primary School and Frenchs Forest Public School. The program aims to inspire children to learn about sustainable food production, waste management and enhancing biodiversity. It provides grants of up to \$1,000 to primary schools and community organisations for worthwhile environmental initiatives. St Martin's Catholic Primary School, located in the suburb of Davidson, received a grant of \$875 for its project "A New Buzz in the Playground". Students will be involved in installing, and ensuring the survival of, a hive for stingless bees, encouraging them to be stewards of the earth. Frenchs Forest Public School received a grant of \$1,000 for its Bush Tucker Garden Project, which encourages diversity of native bush food plants. I commend and congratulate all involved, especially the schools, on successfully promoting environmental sustainability to their students.

TASHA ARMOUR

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:57:39): I acknowledge Tasha Armour who was recently named Shellharbour's Citizen of the Year for 2020. Ms Armour established Rare Ovarian Cancer Incorporated, or ROC Inc., after her daughter was diagnosed with the disease in 2016 at the age of only 16. Unfortunately the disease has a very poor survival rate due to a distinct lack of funding for research. Determined to make a difference, Ms Armour has dedicated time and effort to raising funds to improve research into the disease. I am

lucky to have been in contact with Ms Armour since late 2018. Last year I attended ROC Inc.'s gala dinner. It has been inspiring to watch Ms Armour establish and lead this campaign, and fight for her daughter's health. In the 18 months since establishing her not-for-profit organisation, Ms Armour has raised over \$50,000 for vital research. I congratulate Ms Armour on her well-deserved title. I look forward to continuing to work with Ms Armour. I wish her, her daughter and Rare Ovarian Cancer Incorporated all the best for the future.

DAWN MAYNARD

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:58:53): I recognise one of Port Macquarie's true unsung heroes from Fire and Rescue NSW—station officer Dawn Maynard, who was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in the Australia Day Honours 2020. Dawn has served valiantly as a firefighter for 34 years, including nine years at the Port Macquarie Fire Station. Dawn has worked in a variety of operational roles. She was one of the first female firefighters to join the brigade and rise through the ranks to station officer. During her years with Fire and Rescue NSW Dawn has become a mentor and role model to her peers, and helped a number of women progress to senior positions in the brigade. She is described as a stalwart of the profession and an expert on most procedures including the daily tasks of administration, drills, fire call-outs, home safety checks, and even the mundane, laborious chore of mopping the floor. Dawn is also an instructor at the appliance training unit. Dawn's diverse knowledge, work ethic and years of service make her well deserving of inclusion on the Australia Day Honours List.

LIZ TOMLINSON

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (19:59:50): I acknowledge the work of former Narrabri local Liz Tomlinson and her dedication to the Narrabri community. Born into a farming family, she learned to notice the needs of others as a preschooler at her mother's side, delivering hot meals to the elderly. She has actively demonstrated her belief in community involvement through numerous positions held while at high school, at university and as a parent. As a rural financial counsellor based in Coonabarabran, she assisted clients beyond her job description while also caring for her seriously ill husband. Liz is a passionate advocate for the farming community who puts her economic law, adult education and policy development skills to use every day in numerous community positions. I thank Liz for her commitment and service to her community

SURF LIFE SAVING JUNIOR BRANCH CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:00:37): The annual Surf Life Saving Junior Branch Championships were held on 2 February at Copacabana in my electorate of Terrigal. I acknowledge the fantastic performances of the following competitors from Central Coast surf clubs: Lilly Hofer from Killcare and Noah Nakagawa from Wamberal for their wins in the under-14s beach doubles in sprint and flags, Hamish Taylor-Martin from Macmasters Beach for coming first in the under-13s board and ironman, Hayden McGregor from Wamberal for winning the under-11s surf race and ironman, and Casey Paige for coming first in the under-9s sprint and flag events. I congratulate all 15 Central Coast surf clubs on their participation and performance in the Junior Branch Championships. In particular, I congratulate Avoca Beach on winning the overall point score, and Terrigal and Umina Beach clubs on being runners-up. I congratulate all the Central Coast life saving clubs on their outstanding performances.

EMERITUS PROFESSOR THOMAS BOULTON, OAM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (20:01:36): I congratulate Emeritus Professor Thomas Boulton on being recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia in last month's Australia Day Honours. Emeritus Professor Boulton was named for his significant service to medical education and paediatric medicine. His career spans the University of Newcastle, the Nepean Teaching Hospital, the University of Notre Dame, the University of Western Australia and the University of Sydney. He has also worked on regional and Aboriginal child health initiatives. He is an ambassador for the National Organisation for the Prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and has been awarded for his work by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and Rural Health West. Emeritus Professor Boulton has undoubtedly had a positive impact on tens of thousands lives. The people of Newcastle congratulate him.

DIANNE AND JIM SHADOW

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (20:02:35): I congratulate Inverell's Dianne and Jim Shallow on their fantastic success at the NSW Veteran Golfers Match Play Championship held in Newcastle recently. The pair made history by being the first husband and wife duo to win both the men's and women's competitions in the same year. Dianne and Jim were both graded into division one on handicap and played four rounds of knockout golf at various golf clubs in and around Newcastle, often in hot and windy conditions. Dianne and Jim were extremely humble in their victories, and should be commended for their hard work and determination throughout the championship. Living

the quiet life, Dianne and Jim have spent the better part of this year travelling around in their caravan and playing veterans weeks of golf competitions throughout Queensland and New South Wales. It is clear from these results that they are cleaning up everywhere they go.

AUBURN GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (20:03:24): I recognise one of the outstanding schools in my electorate, Auburn Girls High School, and its tremendous performance in the 2019 HSC. In the 2019 HSC Auburn Girls High School's ranking jumped 182 places in just two years. The students achieved 21 band 6 results across a wide range of subjects: English advanced; English extension; mathematics; mathematics extension; economics; chemistry; physics; personal development, health and physical education; visual arts; and Tamil. Fifty students in the 2019 HSC year gained early offers to universities before the Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranks were released, and 64 students received multiple university offers. Auburn Girls High School is highly regarded in the local community as an excellent place of learning for young women. The school's dedicated teachers and staff, led by principal Anna Tsoutsas, have put the achievement and excellence of students as their highest priority, embracing the school motto of "Learn Lead Succeed". I wish the students all the best in their future careers.

KICK'N THE TIN BUSHFIRE APPEAL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:04:17): I congratulate Marc McLeish and the Cowra Community on the successful Kick'n the Tin bushfire appeal fundraiser. Some \$9,500 was raised at the event and the Cowra community should be proud of its generosity. I commend those local magicians who drew crowds as they performed for the event. Cowra Services Club not only provided a venue for the concert but also matched the money raised on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The funds raised were presented to the Salvation Army, where it will go directly to communities in need due to the bushfire crisis. This is an inspiring example of a community coming together to donate time and money for neighbouring communities in need.

DESMOND WILLIAM GOULDING, JP

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:05:15): I acknowledge Mr Desmond William Goulding and his longstanding service to my community. Mr Goulding has served as a Justice of the Peace [JP] continuously for the past 47 years. He was first appointed a JP back in August 1973. Unfortunately, due to a health condition, Mr Goulding will not be reapplying for reappointment as a JP this year. Mr Goulding has been an active member of my community and a member of a number of local organisations. Prior to his retirement, Mr Goulding worked as a special constable in law enforcement, in local government and with different agencies. 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 and for that I and my community are grateful. On behalf of the people of Shellharbour, I thank Mr Goulding for his tireless service to the people of the Illawarra and wish him all the best for his future.

PETER THOMPSON

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:06:22): I recognise the longstanding contribution of Essential Energy employee and field manager Peter Thompson for reaching the momentous milestone of 40 years of service. Described as a respected and admired member of the Essential Energy team, Peter celebrated his ruby anniversary with his work colleagues over a barbecue on 30 January. Peter's career began on 30 January 1980 as an electrical fitting mechanic with the then Oxley County Council. In those early years Peter was rotated between various departments, learning a variety of skills in his apprenticeship. On completion of his training, Peter successfully applied for a role in the zone substation division at Kempsey, working alongside some of the most skilled in the profession.

As an electrical provider, Peter worked on a number of projects but notes on reflection his fondest memories were during his time as a Northpower employee and working on the race to establish the first electrical interconnector between New South Wales and Queensland. In May 2002 Peter commenced a new role as a zone substation field manager, overseeing some 50 major zone substations from Woolgoolga to Bulahdelah. Congratulations, Peter, on reaching this milestone and thank you for your contribution to the energy sector.

LIFELINE CENTRAL COAST

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:07:20): I thank Lifeline Central Coast for its amazing work supporting people across our community. I commend the great work of our amazing Lifeline staff and volunteer teams in providing over-the-phone and face-to-face counselling. With increasing Medicare payment gaps and significant wait times posing challenges for people requiring access to psychiatry, your face-to-face, immediate, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. weekday counselling support is such a fantastic resource for the people of the Central Coast. With Headspace wait times exceeding three weeks, I commend the talents and support offered by Lifeline to

people across the Central Coast who are suffering distress and need support or advice regarding personal mental health. I recommend calling Lifeline on 4320 7400 to arrange a face-to-face appointment or speaking with a counsellor over the phone. They are experts in providing crisis support and suicide prevention, and are absolutely ripper humans caring for our community. Alternatively, call in to the office at 15 Cary Street, Wyoming.

ST IVES LIONS YOUTH OF THE YEAR

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (20:08:22): Lions Youth of the Year is a valuable forum for high school students to develop leadership and public speaking skills. I was honoured to attend the St Ives Lions Club Youth of the Year evening on Monday 10 February at Killara's Greengate Hotel, hosted by club president Paul Doman, MC Richard Harding, event organiser Ann Perry and other Lions Club members. The dinner was also attended by numerous family and school representatives supporting the students. The six contestants were Tyla Aronson from Masada College, Jemima Guberina from Brigidine College, Emmanuel Nason from St Ives High School, Ian Polczynski from Killara High School, Gian Ellis-Gannell from Loreto Normanhurst and Mari Watkins from Roseville College. They each delivered a prepared speech, and addressed two impromptu questions on their role models and the recent bushfire catastrophe.

Congratulations to all who contributed to the event's success, particularly the organisers and the judges. I was pleased to present certificates to all six contestants, including Jemima Guberina, as the winner of the public speaking component. The overall winner was largely determined by prior interviews and announced as Mari Watkins. I wish her every success as she progresses to the next round and hopefully beyond.

DONG BEI ASSOCIATION

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (20:09:28): The Dong Bei Association recently hosted its Lunar New Year celebrations in the heart of my electorate. The Dong Bei Association is based in Canterbury and it was the first time that it hosted these celebrations in my electorate of Cabramatta. Many members in this House would know that Lunar New Year celebrations play a big part in the Asian community as it symbolises a time when families get together to spread wishes for good health and prosperity. This year is the Year of the Rat and it is celebrated worldwide throughout the Asian community. The Lunar New Year celebrations never fail to impress when it comes to attracting mass crowds to the loud drums of lion dancers or to Buddhist monks chanting. This was such a successful New Year celebration and I congratulate Mr Shangze Cui, the president, and hope that the Dong Bei Association will come back next year to host its celebrations in my electorate. I wish everyone good health and good fortune as we enter the Year of the Rat, 2020.

PAULINE WRIGHT

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:10:32): I acknowledge Pauline Wright, a lawyer who lives at Avoca Beach in my electorate of Terrigal. Pauline has made history by being the first female ever appointed as the President of the Law Council of Australia. This is an incredible achievement. Pauline's term will extend throughout 2020. Pauline has worked for decades in the legal profession; as principal of her own firm, as President of the New South Wales Law Society and as Treasurer of the New South Wales Council for Civil Liberties. Pauline has also been a prominent lawyer in our community for some years. Currently she is doing pro bono work for a community group opposing a development proposal in Kincumber. She is also vice president of the 5 Lands Walk committee, working in a volunteer capacity to make one of the Central Coast's biggest events a success. Despite holding such a significant position, Pauline still makes time to contribute in our community and I thank her for that. Congratulations again, Pauline.

LUKE REDDING

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:11:34): I acknowledge the remarkable swimming achievements of Dunedoo resident Luke Redding over the past couple of seasons. Luke has broken a number of records in the pool, travelling to carnivals all over the State. Luke attended his first carnival of the 2020 season in Canberra where he won three gold medals and three silver medals. Luke recently competed at the Country Club Championships, winning gold in the 50 metres butterfly, bronze in the 100 metres butterfly and bronze in the 100 metres freestyle. Luke trains extremely hard to achieve greatness and has ambitions of swimming for Australia in the Olympic Games when he is a bit older. Luke's dedication to the sport by continuing to train during the winter months shows great discipline for someone of such a young age. Luke's achievements are also not without special thanks to his mum and dad along with his coach Robert "Whiskey" Andreski who trains Luke at Coonamble—a two-hour one-way trip—three times a week.

CAMDEN HAVEN SWIMMERS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:12:26): I recognise the commendable efforts of our young, talented swimmers in the Camden Haven for participating at the Coffs Harbour and Taree Swimming

North Coast Speedo Heats and the North Coast Division 1 Championships in Port Macquarie. Local competitors who performed superbly in the pool at the Taree Swimming North Coast Speedo Heats include Arden Gloster-Horne, Amelia Goodridge, Madelaine Goodridge, Sam Hannaford, Blake Higgins, Chloe Higgins, Anneque Moad, Luca Pensini and Bailey Whitton. A standout and rival at the heats, Bailey Whitton from North Haven, dominated in the medal tally at the recent event, coming home as the age champion with his sights now set on competing in Perth at the Country Championships in April.

Attendees who performed exceptionally well at the North Coast Championships were once more Blake Higgins, Claire McIntosh, Sarah McIntosh, Darby Moore, Koda Oxenbridge, Luca Pensini, Billy Stapleton and again Bailey Whitton. Making a splash in Port Macquarie is rising swimming star Claire Macintosh, who took out the multi-class champion award. I also commend the under-12s mixed relay medley team for placing fifth and securing a personal best during the championships. Congratulations to all our winners.

SAVE OUR SONS DUCHENNE FOUNDATION

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (20:13:34): What a fantastic day it was last Sunday at Save Our Sons Duchenne Foundation community walk at Gough Whitlam Park in Earlwood. The grey weather did not stop hundreds of people from across Sydney walking almost eight kilometres, and raising awareness and funds to help find a cure for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. It was great to be joined by my colleagues Chris Bowen, MP, Senator Deborah O'Neill, Dr Friedlander, Jihad Dib, MP, and councillors Clare Raffan, Karen Pensabene and John Thain, as well as representatives from the United Services Union, secretary Graeme Kelly and president Glen McAtear. Well done to the organisers and founder of Save Our Sons Elie Eid, general manager Michael Galderisi, the sponsors, amazing MCs Rob and Tahir and all the volunteers. We say to Save Our Sons that we are with you, the community is with you and we will work together in a bipartisan way with all our representatives and all our community to ensure that we find a cure for this insidious disease.

BANKSTOWN CITY CHOIR

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was delighted to attend the Bankstown City Choir's end-of-year performance 'A Christmas Grace' at Georges Hall Community Centre on 24th November 2019, where the choir's talented performers brought the joy of Christmas to life through the wonder of music and song. Since 2014 I have had the privilege of serving as Patron of the Bankstown City Choir, which is now in its 46th year and still going strong. The choir first performed at Bankstown Town Hall on 10 April 1974 and over the years has showcased its talents at many charitable fundraising events, churches, shopping centres, Carols by Candlelight events, as well as many performances at aged care facilities and nursing homes, helping to brighten the day of countless admiring residents. It has a strong connection to Bankstown, having performed at the opening of Bankstown City Library in 1983, and again in 2014 to help open the current Library and Knowledge Centre. I acknowledge choir PRESIDENT Dot Hemming, Vice President Rita Harris, Secretary Gordon Learmonth and Treasurer Eileen Stevenson, as well as the other executive volunteers and the choir's many dedicated performers, and I congratulate them all on their marvellous success.

JUNIOR LANDCARE GRANTS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—The Woolworths Junior Landcare Grants Program, offers grants for Australian primary schools and early learning centres to promote and develop environmental, educational and social outcomes. I am pleased to congratulate two successful schools from Albury each receiving \$1,000 grant, St Mary's Primary School and St Anne's Primary School. St Mary's Primary School project is to create an Indigenous bush tucker path incorporating local Indigenous plants. Students will be involved in the design and construction. The bush tucker garden walk will deepen and strengthen cultural learnings about Indigenous plants and the environment.

The path will also act as a sensory experience for students in a "yielding play space". St Anne's Primary School project aims to design and create an indigenous bush tucker garden within the school grounds to improve local biodiversity, create a connection to nature and culture. The school will work closely with Wiradjuri elder of Yindymarra, artist Uncle Darren Wighton and Woolshed Thurgoona Landcare. Students will have the opportunity to learn, setup and manage Indigenous gardens, incorporating Wiradjuri language, art culture, skills and bush tucker. The projects will give each student an opportunity to learn and grow about the different Indigenous foods, plant life cycles, and local ecosystems in their new outdoor "living classrooms". Well done!

SRI VENKATA KRISHNA VRUNDAVANA

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise Sri Venkata Krishna Vrundavana who presented Srinivasa Kalyana on 8 February this year at the Whitlam Centre in Liverpool, within the electorate I represent. The celebration of Srinivasa Kalyana was a Hindu cultural event described by its organisers as a grand ceremony and is based on the wedding of Hindu deities. Also present was a representative of the Indian Consulate General

in Sydney, Ramanand Garge. It was an event that show-cased part of the multicultural fabric of South West Sydney and especially of Liverpool. This cultural diversity is one of our community's great strengths. It is one of the elements which makes Liverpool such an interesting place in which to live. Liverpool and the Whitlam Centre have become the venue for a significant number of Indian events. This is a welcome addition to our community.

TRIBUTE TO HORNSBY NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIRING STAFF

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—With the new school year well underway, I would like to pay tribute to three outstanding teachers from Hornsby North Public School who retired at the end of 2019. Judy Archer was a casual teacher at the school for over 13 years. Over this time, Judy managed to teach all grades and did so with a bright smile and positive attitude. Judy loved her role at Hornsby North so much she describes working there as "...like coming home." Anne Moyes was a kindergarten teacher for 19 years and she too will be remembered by all for her enthusiasm and commitment to her students. Not only was Anne a great help to her students, but also an invaluable mentor to younger teachers. Another outstanding contributor to the Hornsby North Public School community was Edwina Robinson. Edwina has worked in the school office for over 25 years and in Principal Maree Sumpton's words was "a champion for everyone". These exceptional women have helped make Hornsby North Public School the great place it is today. Thank you for your years of hard work and dedication.

TEARNNA MITCHELL, MADISON QUINN AND JODIE COOTE OF JUNEE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to acknowledge the efforts of three women who organised a fundraising event for local fire fighters on the 25th of January, 2020. Tearnna Mitchell, Madison Quinn and Jodie Coote, with the assistance of management at the Locomotive Hotel, organised an all-day event which included entertainment from local performers, a jumping castle and a mechanical bull. Thanks to the efforts of these women and the staff at the Locomotive Hotel, several fire fighters who have been on the front line of the region's bushfires were able to relax and enjoy a day off, and much-needed funds to assist their efforts were raised.

TWILIGHT AT TARONGA TURNS 25

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I rise to acknowledge that this year is the 25th anniversary of 'Twilight at Taronga'. For 25 years Taronga Zoo has been one of the most spectacular concert sites during summer, and what could be more perfect than enjoying a band and music, while watching the sunset over our magnificent Sydney Harbour. The series kicks off at the end of January, with a line-up of headline acts each weekend before finishing with the comedy gala on 7 March. Not only is this a chance to enjoy a great evening out with friends and family, it is also a way to contribute to the conservation work that Taronga Zoo undertakes. Each year Taronga uses this platform to promote an initiative that they can educate their guests on. This year they are focusing on the Litter Free Oceans campaign which aims to protect our marine life and oceans. I'd encourage everyone in this place to grab their family and head on down to Taronga Zoo, spend the day learning about some of the conservation and rehabilitation work the Zoo is doing to support our native wildlife, and then enjoy an evening of music overlooking Sydney Harbour.

FAR NORTH COAST RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I formally acknowledge the Rural Fire Service captains and volunteers within the Ballina Electorate for their exemplary management of the emergency situations across the state and the Northern Rivers area this bushfire season. Specifically, I acknowledge the efforts of each of the Rural Fire Service brigades in the Ballina electorate: Alstonville; Billinudgel/Ocean Shores; Byron Bay; Federal; Lennox Head; Main Arm; Meerschaum Vale; Mullumbimby; Newrybar; Wardell and Wilsons Creek. I commend the personnel from these brigades who defended our communities as well as those adjacent and across the state. Their management and response to the protracted bushfire season was exemplary and I acknowledge and thank each and every person within these brigades who helped keep ours and other communities safe.

ALBERT 'DIGBY' MORAN

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—The Northern Rivers of New South Wales has lost one of its treasures, the late Bundjalung artist Albert 'Digby' Moran. Digby, who grew up on Cabbage Tree Island near Wardell, passed away aged 71 earlier this year. I express my deepest sympathies to his partner Kerry Kelly and their family. Digby Moran was a wonderful artist, who also dedicated his life to helping mentor young Indigenous artists. His beautiful works were sought after and are in major collections throughout Australian art galleries and reached an international audience in Germany.

More than 700 people attended Digby's funeral in Wardell with his coffin painted in the colours of his beloved South Sydney Rabbitohs rugby league club. It was also surrounded by his artwork and boomerangs with Australian flowers placed on top. I had the honour of attending Digby's last major exhibition at the Lismore

Regional Art Gallery in Lismore's CBD. This was testament to Digby's positive spirit because he had lost many of his prized works during Lismore's major flood in 2017. Many art lovers on the Northern Rivers have acquired his paintings and they are a reminder of a First Nations artist with talent to burn and a big, open heart.

ST GEORGE DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I acknowledge a fantastic sporting club in my electorate – the St George Districts Netball Association. The SDNA has over 1,600 members and has been operating for more than 60 years. Netball is the most popular team sport for women and girls in Australia, yet historically there has been an underinvestment in netball, and in women's sport in general. That's why I was pleased to assist the club in securing a \$1 million grant to upgrade their netball courts. The 15 courts at Rockdale will be upgraded to create a fantastic facility for children, young people and adults playing netball in the St George region. Netball provides many health and social benefits to our community. It creates purpose for many people - not just through playing, but as coaches, umpires and volunteers. This upgrade ensures these benefits will be felt for years to come by future generations of netballers at SDNA. Congratulations to the Association, particularly President Peter Crawford and Vice Presidents Tamlyn Holtz and Lucy Smith and the rest of the committee for working so hard to secure this grant and for promoting this wonderful sport in the St George region.

GREG GIBSON

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Greg Gibson was much-loved member of the Marrickville District Lawn Tennis Club and a much-feared competitor on the court. Weeks before passing away in December from a short illness, Greg could be found organising Special Olympics tennis tournaments and winning sets on the court. Greg will forever be remembered for his performance on the court and his lifelong contributions to Australian tennis. For decades, Greg served as the president of the Marrickville District Lawn Tennis Club and was a stalwart and life member of the club for over 30 years. He was the NSW Tennis co-ordinator since 1995 and attended over six national games through his decades-long involvement in Special Olympics Australia. He was head coach for NSW Special Olympics four times in his long tennis career, head coach for the World Fames three times, and the technical delegate for tennis at the 2002 and 2014 National Games. Greg will be sorely missed and I send my deepest condolences to his beloved family and to all the members of the inner west tennis community. Vale Greg.

BOB MARKS AND KARL ZALEWSKI

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I wish to acknowledge Bob Marks and Karl Zalewski who have proven that good things can often come from heartbreaking tragedy. Last November, Simon Marks suffered a fatal heart attack while playing cricket for the Dora Creek Worker's Club's D2-grade team. While the incident brought great sadness to the local community, the team's vice-captain Karl Zalewski was motivated to make sure no other teammate would suffer the same fate. He set out to have a defibrillator installed at the club's home ground and at other sports grounds in the area. When Karl's plea appeared in the local paper, the first to step up was Simon's father Bob and a few mates who all chipped in to provide the Dora Creek club with a \$2500 defibrillator. While I acknowledge that the State Government is making a considerable effort to have defibrillators installed at sporting venues throughout NSW, this was a wonderful effort that will no doubt save lives. In addition to Karl and Bob, I also wish to acknowledge Bob Sainsbury, Russell Ware, Cenny Wagemaker and Bob Woods who chipped in for the machine. Great effort by some great people.

JUNIOR LANDCARE GRANTS – ST GABRIEL'S SCHOOL

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I am pleased to announce that St Gabriel's School in Castle Hill will receive grant funding of \$994 under Round 2 of the Woolworths Junior Landcare Grants for their project From The Garden To The Table. The program aims to inspire children to learn in a practical manner about sustainable food production, waste management, and ways of enhancing biodiversity and habitats. In 2018, Woolworths partnered with Landcare Australia to launch the Woolworths Junior Landcare Grants Program. The program provides primary schools, early learning centres, and eligible community organisations grants of up to \$1000 for environmental projects. The first round of grants delivered more than \$500,000 to 538 primary schools and early learning centres across Australia. This round has delivered a further 616 grants to support the delivery of worthwhile environmental initiatives. I congratulate St Gabriel's School on their contribution towards a more sustainable future and commend Principal Jon Franzin on fostering this attitude in our younger generations.

MEN'S SHED CHORALE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—In celebrating Seniors Week 2020, I acknowledge the Men's Shed Chorale, a wonderful group of seniors who are renowned for putting smiles on the faces of their audience. The Men's Shed Chorale consists of members aged between 65 and 93, showcasing a repertoire ranging from popular music to musical theatre. Having previously performed together in the prestigious Sydney Male Choir for decades,

eight years ago these men identified the need for a more casual and less structured choir for retiring members. These talented gentlemen perform in retirement and aged care facilities throughout the Shire and beyond, and over the past four years have played an integral part in our local Police Remembrance Day Service. I was pleased to present this outstanding group with a one-off \$5,000 discretionary grant from the Hon. Bronnie Taylor MLC to fund a qualified conductor and accompanist, and relieve some financial pressure for members. From the Miranda electorate I acknowledge the group's organiser, Winston Eldridge, and members Peter MacFarlane, Kevin Judge, Colin Powell and Bob Sawszak. I commend the Men's Shed Chorale for positively promoting what our seniors can achieve.

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PARTY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to inform the House of the success of the 2019 edition of Oatley's Community Christmas Party. The Community Christmas Party, which I have the pleasure of hosting every year, is one of my favourite events on the calendar, as it is a chance to celebrate the community achievements of the year just passed. 2019's Christmas Party brought together 130 of our community leaders, a number which rises every year. As I addressed the room, what resonated with me was the strong spirit of service present amongst the guests. Although we see them as community leaders who have achieved so much in their respective fields, they are also humble servants of our local area. It was also a lovely opportunity to simply relax and wind-down after a year of hard work. I would like to thank Georges River Council for allowing us to use Hurstville Oval's Booth-Saunders' Pavilion, a great venue for the evening. I sincerely hope that all guests enjoyed their evening, and I look forward to seeing them at this year's Christmas Party!

MARGARET MOORE

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—It is my privilege to recognise the outstanding work and commitment of Margaret Moore to the community of Griffith. Margaret was awarded "Citizen of the Year" at the Australia Day celebrations in Griffith, recognising her wonderful work and dedication. Margaret is a tireless worker giving of her time and energy to local organisations including Country Hope, Avanti Rotary Club, Griffith East Inner Wheel, Griffith Heart Support Group, Cancer Council NSW and Riding for the Disabled. Margaret is a familiar face at all the fundraising events and each year she gets the town's shop fronts decked out in pink by convincing local businesses to support and decorate for "Pink Up Griffith" to raise money for breast cancer research. It is due to the selfless dedication of Australians like Margaret that make our communities, and help raise much needed funds for the organisations which help and support so many in our community. I personally want to congratulate Margaret on her award as "Citizen of the Year" and thank her for her wonderful contribution to the community of Griffith.

AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS 2020

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I rise today to congratulate the recipients of Australia Day Honours for 2020 from the Eastern Suburbs, including from my electorate of Coogee. I congratulate Tamarama's Geoffrey Marc Carr, a St George Dragons player and administrator. Mr Carr, who served as the CEO of both New South Wales Rugby League and Australian Rugby League was been recognised with an OAM for his service to the sport. I also congratulate Peter Charles Kahn of Clovelly, the president of the Randwick and District Historical Society, for his service to local history which was recognised with an OAM. Mr Kahn's contribution to local history also includes his 62 years of membership of the Sydney Tramway Museum, where to this day he remains as a historian and public relations officer. Both Mr Carr and Mr Kahn have made incredibly valuable and meritorious contributions to our community, and this award recognises the significance of their achievements. I extend my congratulations to those from across the Eastern Suburbs, New South Wales, and Australia for their contributions as well.

EPPING ROTARY

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—I recently attended a dinner meeting held at the Epping Club for Epping Rotary. I was hosted by past president Bruce Jacob, as well as Peter Saez and David Taylor from the Epping Club. We were joined by the team from Epping Chamber of Commerce and Rob Phillips from the Epping Community Bank. Rotary Clubs are an integral part of any local community and we are privileged in Epping to have a fantastic group of local people making a difference through their fundraising efforts. I heard about Epping Rotary's great work with the Rotary Youth Programmes and the Rotary Youth Leadership Award.

Epping Rotary has also been actively fundraising for Christian Community Aid Youth Services and has been encouraging residents in the local area to donate to charities assisting our bushfire ravaged regional towns. We also had the opportunity to discuss important topical issues such as drought, coronavirus and bushfires, and Rotarians were also interested to hear about Federal Financial Relations Review, and the current opportunity for

reform to ensure financial security and prosperity to future generations. To Bruce and the members of Epping Rotary: thanks for having me, and keep up the great work.

GUNNEDAH AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation)—I recognise the efforts of Gunnedah and District Historical Society stalwarts, Shirley Coote, Esther and Don Underwood and Bob Leister who were recently honoured with life membership in recognition of their enormous contribution to the society. Organisations like the Gunnedah and District Historical Society are such a vital part of our communities, they are the 'keepers of the flame'. Bob Leister has served at the Society's president for the past 13 years and is a wealth of local knowledge.

Shirley Coote is also a long-term treasurer of the organisation and back in 1996 she launched her book Gunnedah's Lost Folks (Resting in Hunter Street Cemetery and Some Unknown Places), which has become an invaluable tool for family history researchers. Every organisation like the Society has 'behind the scenes operators' and Esther and Don Underwood provide immeasurable support in this role. The work of these four life members and other supporters of the Society is reflected in a busy and successful year with the launch of the Vietnam murals last Anzac Day. Visitor numbers have increased almost 500 per cent since the murals were listed on the Australian Silo Art Trail. Thank you for your contribution to our community.

MACQUARIE FIELDS SALVATION ARMY

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—If there is one word to describe the team at Salvation Army in Macquarie Fields it is welcoming. I had the privilege of visiting the Macquarie Fields Mission recently and it is evident the team cares about its community. From the ladies who sell donated goods in the shop, to the super barista Wez Koni who serves incredible coffee – the Salvos are well-regarded and respected by local residents. I'd like to welcome Captain Darren Kingston who joined the Macquarie Fields Mission in January. It is clear Darren has a dedicated team to carry out the Mission's work, including the Play2Learn playgroup, education and training programs as well as financial counselling and helping families in need. The Salvos work hard to be a place of refuge, community spirit and advocacy for local residents. I commend everyone in the Macquarie Fields Mission team and their volunteers for continuing their great work in our community.

BARRY GRANT, OAM

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I wish to congratulate an outstanding community member, Barry Grant on receiving a Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] for his service to veterans and their families. As the Member for Heathcote I have worked with Barry over the years in his role as President of the Woronora River Sub Branch and have always been impressed with his commitment to veteran affairs. Barry is highly regarded within our local community and a very deserving recipient of the prestigious OAM. I once again congratulate him on this honour and I look forward to continuing to work with him.

TRIBUTE TO ALLAN DREW

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—It is with my deepest sympathies that I announce the passing of Hills Local Mr Allan Drew. Allan was a local funeral director for almost 40 years, who was well known for his keen empathy in assisting families throughout their lowest points. He will be remembered as well for his charitable exploits, which resulted in his being awarded an OAM in 2009. Most notable was his application of years of experience in helping to repatriate bodies to Australia after the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami and 2005 Bali Terrorist Attacks – I'm sure his professional constitution and notable diligence was of some comfort to those who needed it most in their darkest of moments. However, his charitable exploits weren't always those of his profession. He was as well known for collecting blankets for distribution in the winter, or pairs of glasses for distribution to the needy overseas. The latter being done through the Kellyville Lions Club, of which Allan was a proud member. Allan is survived through his wife, Lesley, as well as a myriad of children and grandchildren to whom I offer my condolences.

CAROLS IN PYRMONT

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I'd like to acknowledge and praise the annual Carols in Pyrmont event that captures the festive spirit through community singing each year. Pyrmont and Ultimo residents celebrate the Christmas season each year with a community singing event and I'm pleased to be able to attend and support these events. The 2019 celebration was my final official event opening and cake cutting responsibility for the year. Sponsored by the Bendigo Community Bank, the event includes free food and drink and a live brass quartet. Funds raised last year were donated to bushfire relief. Carols in Pyrmont is expertly reinforced by the local choir Pyrmont Sings! Up to 40 choristers perform, creating a groundswell of tuneful sound that allows everyone to sing along, including lots of old favourites that many people know. Carols

in Pyrmont connects young and old, people from different faiths and from across the world. It is another great example of community in the inner city.

BALMAIN LITTLE ATHLETICS CLUB

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I recognise a wonderful sports organisation that does so much in our local area, the Balmain Little Athletics Club. Balmain Little Athletics has been operating since 1972 and does a marvellous job of encouraging grassroots sport participation, helping our kids grow and learn, and fostering those community connections that keep Balmain strong. The Club meets at King George Oval in Rozelle and anyone who has used our beautiful Bay Run would be familiar with their orange and black uniforms. I was lucky enough to support the Club's effort to install a long jump facility a few years ago at that site.

As with so many local clubs, Balmain Little Athletics runs with the support of a remarkable group of volunteers and parents behind the scenes. I want to acknowledge a few of those people including registrar Andrea Belunek, Alan Hill who operates the canteen, Richard Chen who coaches, officiates and manages athletes, and Tim Batho. I also want to make special mention of club President David Murphy. Thank you again to all the volunteers, parents and athletes that make Balmain Little Athletics such a wonderful club. I'll see you soon down at King George Oval.

BLAZE AID

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—In the middle of what was a chaotic and disruptive disaster period for my electorate, I would like to share a special thanks to BlazeAid and its volunteers, who set up camp in Adelong on January 16. More than 600 volunteers in total have since travelled from across the country to work alongside property owners as they rebuild fences and other infrastructure, following the Dunns Road Fire. More than just an extra pair of hands, these men and women have also been able to bring comfort, compassion and emotional support to devastated farmers.

The camp's coordinator, Christine Male said at least 60 volunteers had been consistently arriving for breakfast at 6.30am and coming in for the evening meal at about 4pm, painting a picture of the generosity and gracious spirit that can rise from the ashes of a disaster. Ms Male said the response volunteers received had been the most rewarding, with the community's reception to BlazeAid described as being "like no other". I also wish to thank and congratulate the many volunteers who have provided and are continuing to provide catering and other support for the camp.

SHIRLEY ANTONELLI

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I congratulate and thank Mrs Shirley Antonelli for her four decades of impeccable service to the tuck shop at Pendle Hill High School. A much-loved figure in the School's community, Shirley retired from the tuck shop at the end of 2019 and yet, despite her remarkable innings, she is not done yet. Mrs Antonelli will continue to help the school by assisting at the School's uniform shop in 2020. I wish Shirley all the very best in her semi-retirement from the life of Pendle Hill High School. She will certainly be missed as the friendly face behind the tuck shop counter. As a local Member, I am incredibly proud to have such dedicated and selfless volunteers, serving the community in my electorate. I wish all of students, parents, teachers, and equally, the volunteers at Pendle Hill High School all the best for this new academic year of 2020.

TRIBUTE TO GAVIN MCCORMACK

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—I pay tribute to the Mr Gavin McCormack, Principal of Farmhouse Montessori in my electorate of Manly. Farmhouse Montessori have two campuses across the Northern Beaches, with their preschool located at North Balgowlah, and their primary school campus located in the old Barracks Precinct at North Head Sanctuary. Gavin was recognised by LinkedIn as one of the Top Voices in Education for 2019, in part due to his ongoing work sharing teaching resources to schools and countries less well-off than Australia. In particular, he has worked to build a new school for a local community in the south of Nepal. It was one of the parents of a student at Farmhouse Montessori who first contacted me regarding this recognition for Gavin, showing just how proud the community is to have a Manly school and its Principal on such an esteemed list, joining academics from around the world. I recognise the ongoing contribution Gavin has made to the education of young people in my electorate, and I thank him on behalf of all the students and parents who have benefited from his leadership of Farmhouse Montessori.

SISTER MARJORIE MCLACHLAN

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise decades of invaluable community service by Port Macquarie's Sister Marjorie McLachlan who started our region's first soup kitchen at the Catholic Men's Club in 1990. A passionate volunteer who thinks only of others, Sister Marjorie noticed early on in her calling to the Catholic Church that homeless men were roughing it out on the verandah of the convent. From there

an idea was born to establish a soup kitchen to offer meals and support to those most vulnerable. Fast-forward thirty years, Sister Marjorie is still cooking for the soup kitchen today with no signs of retiring from her responsibilities. At the age of 85, Sister Marjorie's faith in God continues to shine through her daily service to the community in her tireless efforts to make a difference in someone's life, whether that be through the generosity of giving, education or spiritual guidance. Sister Marjorie's years of service was acknowledged in 2013 when she received an Order of Australia Medal recognising her outstanding work supporting those less fortunate in our community. I commend Sister Marjorie for dedicating her life's work to helping people in need.

SHOALHAVEN DISTRICT SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—Last Friday I was delighted to join the Shoalhaven District Senior Citizens Association with my colleague the Hon. Gareth Ward MP, to celebrate their 20th year of operation in their building on Berry Street, Nowra. We shared morning tea together and it was wonderful to see the strength of the club, who will surely go on to service the Shoalhaven District for many years to come. The Shoalhaven District Senior Citizens Association is a small-scale charity established in 1950. One of their main purposes is to increase the socialization of senior citizens and combat isolation by providing activities such as outings and in house activities such as cards and bingo. The association also donates to various local charities including the local nursing home, fire brigade and children's. My special thanks go to President and Secretary Cheryl Wright, Treasurer Jenni Hassett, Vice President Annette Wilkinson as well as Elaine Provost and Lynette McCall. Their ongoing contribution to our community on the South Coast helps so many and is truly deserving of recognition.

GARRY BACK

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—For over 30 years Garry Back would have been a familiar face for early morning users of Merewether Beach and Merewether Baths, but at the end of last year he hung up his high-vis and called time on his career as a beach cleaner. Garry started working for Newcastle council when he was 18-years-old, first finding himself tending to Rowland Park in The Junction and then Merewether's Townson Oval before moving to the beach and 3:30am wake-ups. As Merewether local, Garry has described his work as something he had a great pride in and that was on display for beach users every day in their pristine surrounds. On behalf of Newcastle congratulations, Garry, on a sterling career. You've earned a few sleep-ins!

JOAN ROBB, 2020 CRONULLA SENIOR OF THE YEAR

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I congratulate Joan Robb on being awarded the 2020 Cronulla Senior of the Year. Joan was nominated by BetterConnected, a not-for-profit, community-based organisation providing services and support to the residents of Sutherland Shire. BeConnected now BetterConnected is the result of four local community organisations, Jannali Neighbourhood Aid, Cronulla Neighbour Aid, Caringbah Neighbour Aid and Miranda District Neighbour Aid, merging in October 2015. More recently BeConnected merged with Rockdale Neighbourhood Aid and became BetterConnected.

Joan has volunteered with BetterConnected and predecessors for over 24 years. Joan's work as a volunteer has had a huge impact on the lives of the clients who access the services of BetterConnected. Giving freely of her time, Joan assists the many clients with their regular daily tasks, for example shopping. She also shares a coffee and a chat with the clients as she transports them and accompanies them on morning tea outings. Joan has held various important roles at the organisation including treasurer and a member of the management committee. The support she provides to these older people helps them to live independently in the community. This award is deserving recognition of Joan's tireless efforts and commitment. Joan is also active in the Caringbah Scottish Country Dance Club, where she is president.

MACLEAN HIGH SCHOOL RECONCILIATION PROGRAM

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I wish to offer my congratulations to Maclean High School on their reconciliation program which late last year was judged the leading school participating in the Australia-wide Narragunnawali Reconciliation in Education program for schools and early learning services. The program has been part of the School's curriculum for the past ten years, during which time the school's teachers have worked with the community and aboriginal elders to ensure they embed Yaegl perspective and reconciliation into the School. This recognition is a just reward for all the work that has been put into the program by the staff, students and the community but special mention needs to go to Instructional Leader Aboriginal Studies, Liza Hamilton; and the School's Aboriginal Education Officers Sam Kapeen, Krystall Randall, Anjanette Warburton and Deborah Breckenridge.

INVERELL VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUAD

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise the Inverell Volunteers Rescue Squad for celebrating 40 years of service to the Inverell community last weekend. Inverell Rescue Squad provides a crucial service to Inverell and the wider community, with members being on call 24 hours a day, seven days per week. The squad can be called to assist police, ambulance, fire and the local shire council when needed, with the majority of call outs being related to motor vehicle accidents. The squad consists of mechanics, a farmer, retail and service industry personnel, constructionists, IT and office personal, health and care workers, truck drivers and even a police officer. I commend Inverell Rescue Squad for their vital contribution to Inverell and wider community and wish all members the very best.

JUDITH GREEN MBE, OAM

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I would like to recognise and congratulate Judith Green on the celebration of her 100th birthday on the 12th of January 2020. Living for century is an achievement in itself, but few would have a list of accomplishments as lengthy as Judith's. Judith was born in Redfern in 1920 and became qualified as a social worker and in 1942 she enlisted in the Australian Women's Army Service [AWAS]. The British Commonwealth Overseas Force appointed Judith as the Captain of Social Services on the Island of Kobe, Japan for two years, repatriating Australian servicemen following World War II. Following her service in Japan, Judith was the head social worker at Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital (now Westmead) for more than 25 years before eventually coming to live in the Southern Highlands. Judith was awarded with a Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 1977 in recognition of her role in the care and/or placement of more than 100 orphaned children transferred to the Royal Alexandra Hospital from orphanages in Vietnam following the end of the Vietnam War.

MENAI BUSHFIRE BRIGADE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)— I would like to thank the members of the Menai Bushfire Brigade who have been fighting fires or supporting the firefighting effort across our State over the past months. These members I have been advised of include: Stuart Townsend; Daniel Grant; Paul Ciacchi; Jake Stanton; Wayne Xuereb; Ian Burke; Daniel Humphrey; Matthew O'Brien; Blair McDonald; Joshua Dodd; Jackie Townsend; Wendy Stanton; Brock Howard; Stephanie Furdek; David Kerr; Robin Tuckfield; Renzo Alessi; Gregory Cameron; David Balange; James Ward; Timothy Williams; Josh Warner; Ros Daw; Gregory Squires; Peter Townsend; Jenny Watts; Michael Quinn; Jonathan Bain; Jason Campbell; Lynette Ward; and Raul Quintana. The NSW Government, the NSW community as a whole, and myself thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the months of service you have given to keeping many communities safe across our state. Your service, dedication and passion is second to none. Thank you.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:17 until
Wednesday 26 February 2020 at 9:30**