



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 5 March 2020

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 5 March 2020

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 421D of the Local Government Act 1993, I announce receipt of a Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Local Government 2019*, dated 5 March 2020, received this day and authorised to be printed.

[Notices of motions given.]

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2019-2020

Debate resumed from 4 March 2020.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (09:44:21): Today I speak on the 2019-20 budget. As previously stated in this Parliament, the Camden electorate is one of Australia's fastest-growing areas. The drivers of this growth make up a range of people from different backgrounds who came to Camden with the aspiration to provide a better lifestyle for themselves and their families. As demands grow for better infrastructure and services, the people of Camden have experienced a breath of fresh air from a Coalition Government that has delivered and continues to deliver. With a surplus in the last budget of over \$800 million, the Coalition has shown itself to be stewards of a growing New South Wales economy. This stewardship has seen New South Wales in its best ever state, which has allowed the Government to present a budget as extensive and detailed as this one.

A record-breaking \$93 billion spending on transport infrastructure will greater connect New South Wales, with Camden residents directly benefiting from this massive amount of spending. Some \$300 million has been pledged over the next four years to improve commuter car parking at train stations across New South Wales. Within the Camden electorate, the Leppington train station has already seen an allocation of \$212,000. Further to that, it has been announced that rather than the 350 extra commuter car parking spaces committed to at the election, an extra 1,000 car parking spaces will be provided in the Camden electorate. Construction on these will begin in the middle of this year and is due to be completed by the middle of next year.

A \$5.64 million pledge for greater bus connectivity in Gregory Hills will see more residents turn to public transport for their daily commutes, which will lessen traffic and delays on some of our busiest roads. The Coalition has delivered on its promise to greater connect the Macarthur region by pledging \$705,000 to plan for stage two of the Spring Farm Parkway. Over \$259 million has been announced for upgrades on Bringelly Road and the Northern Road, which will improve connectivity for residents between Camden and Penrith. These investments demonstrate the Government's high level of commitment to cater for a growing Camden and follows the Treasurer's statement that the legacy of this Coalition Government "is appearing before our very eyes".

The new airport in western Sydney will take this Government's legacy to new heights. For a growing Camden, the investment in the Western Sydney Aerotropolis is wonderful news as it will provide our ambitious families and individuals with new jobs and education opportunities right on their doorstep. The Government will build on the \$5.3 billion investment from the Commonwealth Government to deliver new employment precincts within the aerotropolis such as the agribusiness precinct. The aerotropolis is expected to create more than 200,000 jobs. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the residents of Camden and, indeed, the entire Western Parkland City.

A \$79.6 million investment, over four years, in education will deliver a new western Sydney mega TAFE. This will directly benefit the residents of Camden and greater western Sydney and will educate the next generation of skilled tradesmen. This TAFE will provide the modern facilities needed to support specialised training in construction trades such as plumbing, electrical and carpentry. The western Sydney mega TAFE will be complimented by widespread expenditure in education available for Camden residents. Tertiary education options in Camden will multiply thanks to the commercial negotiations that the New South Wales Government is

progressing. The University of Newcastle, University of New South Wales and University of Wollongong—NUW Alliance—as well as the Western Sydney University will hopefully see these institutions establish a presence in the aerotropolis to continue to provide further opportunities for Camden residents and those across the greater western Sydney area.

Our children will also benefit from renewed schools within Camden as a result of \$134 million expenditure towards continuing the construction of new schools including Oran Park High School and Gledswood Hills Public School, both of which were opened at the beginning of term one in 2020. This, in addition to the construction of Catherine Hill primary school as well as a new primary school at East Leppington, is set to be delivered by early 2022. Existing schools, such as Harrington Park Public School and Oran Park Public School, are also being upgraded. The Oran Park Public School upgrade was completed at the beginning of term one in 2020.

As part of an unprecedented \$18.5 billion Education budget in 2019-20 alone, improvements will be felt across the State in the form of 190 new and upgraded schools. As the Coalition Government shifts education performance onto outcomes-based goals, employing over 4,600 new teachers, psychologists and social workers to assist every high school, it will ensure that our kids are being taken care of. The New South Wales Government plans to deliver an education system that is the best in Australia and that competes in the top percentile of schools around the world. Such widespread expenditure in schools and education demonstrates the Coalition Government's intent of investing in our children and their future.

Furthermore, I point out that \$1.3 billion has been invested to clear the final aspects of the maintenance backlog in all public schools left by the former Labor Government. The Coalition Government has pledged to accomplish this by July 2020. The investment in education by the Coalition Government will ensure that the level of neglect endured by schools under 16 years of the former Labor government never happens again. After two terms in government, the Coalition is still cleaning up many of those messes and this extensive budget will see the last of the gaps left behind. With this good governance, the quality of education will continue to rise as the New South Wales Government continues to implement the Gonski principles. The young families who have increasingly come to call the Camden electorate home may rest easy, knowing that they are in the hands of a competent government that will cater for the education needs of all students, regardless of age or ability.

The opening of the Yandelora School for specific purposes in early 2019 delivers for Camden and the Macarthur region a school designed to meet the needs of students with moderate to severe intellectual and physical abilities. The school provides 16 purpose-built teaching spaces for students from kindergarten to year 12, as well as a hydrotherapy pool and accessible classrooms. With Camden being one of the fastest-growing areas in Australia, this school, among others being built across the State, demonstrates the Coalition Government fulfilling its promise of getting it done for the families and children of Camden and New South Wales.

In health care, the Government is also getting it done by delivering even better health care to the people of New South Wales. The people of the Macarthur region will benefit from the \$632 million redevelopment of Campbelltown Hospital as well as a further \$34 million investment in the Campbelltown Hospital car park. This will make health care in the Macarthur region more accessible than ever before and will provide residents with a new emergency department, more operating theatres and expanded intensive care, as well as enhanced paediatric services. A \$740 million redevelopment of Liverpool Hospital will see the establishment of the Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct, which will continue to further the medical education and services available for the residents of western Sydney.

By 2021, there will be more than one million people living in south-western Sydney, which is why this hospital has been such a priority for our Government and why there is much more to come. The scale of this investment in world-class health care is being felt across the State as part of the record-breaking \$10 billion healthcare infrastructure budget that the Treasurer announced, which will deliver new facilities for every corner of the State. The 2019 election demonstrated that people have not forgotten the disaster of previous governments for our State, especially their failure to deliver the investments that our State needed. As a new member of this House, I am proud to be a part of the legacy that this Coalition Government is making for itself as the Government that continues to offer new ideas and services to the people of New South Wales.

The investments in our citizens that have been made in this budget will secure our future success as a world-class State for generations to come. As I have stated before, a large portion of this success centres on the Camden area. Projects that will maintain the high quality of life that the residents of Camden enjoy continue to be funded and built by this Government. Despite what the Opposition may want to tell people, this Government is committed to seeing a greener New South at the centre of its development as a world-class State. Over \$4 million has been allocated for new green open space at Leppington. The beautiful Australian Botanic Garden at Mount Annan will include the establishment of the Australian Institute of Botanic Science at a cost of over \$27.5 million. This herbarium will house more than 1.4 million plant specimens. It positions Camden at the

forefront of conservation and management, and these works will continue to maintain the natural beauty of Camden for generations to come.

The Camden area is also quickly establishing itself as a sporting hub for western Sydney thanks to the \$15 million development of three sport and recreation facilities in the Camden area that will enable more kids to be out playing sport than ever before. The Western Parkland City Liveability Program is but another of the many initiatives that will result in the Government working with local councils to deliver a more vibrant and active western Sydney. The Government also announced a \$291 million expansion over the next four years to double the Active Kids Rebate, which will directly benefit the young families who call Camden home by promoting active lifestyles within the community. This budget also offers so much for the wonderful local small businesses that power our State's economy. Business owners in Camden will be relieved to see the implementation of the small business cost-saving package.

This package will offer \$300 million in workers compensation insurance premium discounts over three years for 280,000 employers across the State, as well as provide payroll tax relief by progressively increasing payroll tax brackets to \$1 million in 2021-22. This is set to promise roughly 38,000 businesses savings of up to \$8,175 off their tax bill. This means that our Government will cut red tape to ensure it becomes easier to do business and succeed as a small business in our economy. The Camden and Macarthur areas are being well facilitated by our Government to be places of commerce and trade where ambitious and prospective business owners and families can open up their small business with all the support they need from the Government to succeed.

I also highlight the line items in the budget that are directly designed to cut costs for constituents and provide much-needed cost of living relief. The New South Wales Government is committed to provide financial relief on power bills for independent retirees by introducing an annual \$200 energy rebate for eligible independent retirees to meet cost of living pressures. In addition to this, the New South Wales Government will help families and individuals in Camden find the cheapest deals on electricity by expanding the Energy Switch service to include household gas. This will provide financial relief to household gas users, as our Government listens and responds to a growing desire from constituents for a fairer deal on their electricity prices.

This budget and this Government demonstrate that our Government has been a breath of fresh air for the people of Camden, who have been neglected for so many years. The 2019 election saw the people of New South Wales continue to place their trust in our Government's plan for New South Wales. Right across the State we see services and infrastructure being delivered. Furthermore, we have expanded on this to deliver transport infrastructure that hugely benefits people across the State, and especially within the Camden area. My electorate is filled with families and individuals who endeavour to work, study and enjoy their lives in an area that is brimming with opportunities. Our kids are the future and they are being supported by record levels of investment in education infrastructure. Our roads and transport make up the backbone of New South Wales and are more connected than ever before.

This budget caters for transport infrastructure that benefits all corners of the electorate. Our role as a State that provides the very best in health care to constituents is being fulfilled by a \$10 billion investment in hospitals, with nearly \$1 billion in upgrades and revamps that will benefit the people of Macarthur. This budget is one that brings out the best in Camden. It celebrates the great natural environment that the people of Camden live in whilst encouraging active outdoor play among our future generations. This is a budget that was made possible by a government that listens and members who genuinely have it in their hearts to improve New South Wales for all its citizens.

The budget promises a place for my constituents and their families to live and grow. It sees the fastest-growing area in Australia enjoy all the access to the good jobs, strong education and high levels of health care that are needed to grow a State. The fact that our Government has invested so heavily in projects that will directly improve the lives of every one of its citizens for generations to come is truly a record-breaking feat—one that was brought about without having to raise taxes for constituents. This budget gets it done for the people of Camden as much as it does for the rest of New South Wales. As the Treasurer said, it is a budget of delivery that will kick off a term of delivery and I am happy to commend it to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): I thank the member for Camden for his contribution. I am sure the member for Tweed joins me in apologising to the member for Camden for the interruption.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (10:01:52): I speak in the take-note debate on the Budget Estimates and Related Papers 2019-2020. I begin by putting on the *Hansard* record yet again the fact that Labor achieved 16 triple-A credit ratings in the 16 years it was in government. It achieved surpluses in 15 of those 16 years, and the one year there was not a surplus was when we had the global financial crisis. I remind my colleagues on the other side of the Chamber of this because members of the Opposition have to sit here, particularly in question

time, and listen to the Treasurer trash Labor on its handling of the economy. The facts do not bear that up at all. It is important that I correct the record. I repeat it: some 16 triple-A credit ratings, surpluses in 15 of those 16 years and managing to deliver services to the State—because that is what State governments should do.

Mr Geoff Provest: Do you want me to move down there to the front bench so you can look at me?

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: I think so. The member for Tweed is going to—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The member for Tweed will come to order. I apologise to the member for Lismore.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: We cannot help it. We live in the same region so we watch each other closely.

Mr Geoff Provest: We are joined at the hip.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: We are joined at the hip in a lot of ways, probably as agrarian socialists—The Nationals are.

Mr Geoff Provest: Well done, comrade.

Mr Michael Johnsen: We're the friendly lot here, aren't we?

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: We are the friendly lot.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): I appreciate that members are enjoying their banter, but I would like to hear the member's contribution without interruption.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: As I said, I make that point because I get tired of hearing the other argument that is frequently made in this place. Making that point brings me to the issues of blowouts and project management. The examples I will turn to are those that have been highlighted recently in this place and particularly in the media and budget estimates. I am not even exactly sure what some of them are, but they are all Sydney based of course. From what I can tell, the Sydney Light Rail has gone from \$1.6 billion to \$2.9 billion. The Sydney Metro City & Southwest has gone from \$12.5 billion to \$15.5 billion. So one project has gone up by over \$1 billion while the second has gone up \$3 billion.

We hear a lot about WestConnex in this place. It has gone from \$10 billion to \$16.8 billion. That is a massive blowout. Again, we have to sit in this place and listen to the Treasurer bang on about the Government's wonderful financial management, fiscal responsibility and all the other things we hear from him, yet when I look at those figures I think, "How good is it really?" Then there is the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum. Wouldn't we like a Powerhouse Museum or something similar in the country? We would love it.

Mr Michael Johnsen: We are the powerhouse of the country. What are you worried about?

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: I think not. I have been in a few places. I certainly would not call the New South Wales Parliament the powerhouse.

Mr Michael Johnsen: No, I meant regional New South Wales.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: Regional New South Wales, of course. We would love that \$1.5 billion to be spent in the country. That brings me to one of my favourites: Restart NSW and regional jobs. It is clear that there is \$1.75 billion still owing from Restart NSW to the people of regional and rural New South Wales. That is a lot of money. I know my Lismore electorate would like even a small part of the \$1.75 billion that is owing. I hope it is not going to prop up WestConnex or the Sydney Metro City & Southwest. Why has that money not been delivered to country New South Wales? I hear the Deputy Premier always banging on about it too, saying how wonderful it is—the best thing since sliced bread—but he cannot deliver it to country New South Wales. And The Nationals wonder why they lose seats. They ought to look at what they do as opposed to what they say.

Mr Geoff Provest: I kept mine.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: And I took one.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): Government members will come to order.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: The Nationals ought to look at what they are delivering, or not delivering, and why they are losing seats in the country. That brings me to some of the election promises that were made by the Government, but particularly by The Nationals. The regional seniors travel card just keeps on giving through Minister Toole. Originally a card was mailed out—one came in my letterbox; they came in everyone's letterboxes—that said "Seniors". What do people think when they read "Seniors"? They think, "I am over 60 so I have got a Seniors Card." That is what they think it means. Everyone said, "Yes, this is good: \$250 will help in regional New South Wales. That will help us with our fuel costs, with some travel costs. That will be great."

Everybody expected the card to come after the election. They waited. But by 1 January—nearly a year later—there was nothing. People were coming into my office asking me about it and where it was. I put out a media release. I wrote to the Minister, who said "Don't know" and then a couple of days later it was announced it would happen. However, there was no machinery of government point established within Service NSW to make it happen. Then people were told it would be only for age pensioners, not seniors, and that they must have a special Commonwealth health benefits cards and things like that to be entitled to it.

Labor then drew to the attention of the Minister and the Government that a lot of seniors expected and wanted to get the card, particularly the veterans and war widow seniors—to whom it was eventually allocated. The people who are missing out now are seniors on disability pensions and carer's pensions. Ordinarily most of those people are entitled to the age pension, but they are still missing out. In budget estimates this week it was revealed that in the first month the budget has blown out and doubled. The Nationals lied when they posted that it was a regional seniors travel card and when it went to the Parliamentary Budget Office. The Nationals lied to the people in regional and rural New South Wales. It has been shown not to be available for all seniors, but for a limited group of seniors. I will keep adding pressure to make sure that all seniors who are entitled to the card get the benefit of it.

The State Government promised to take back 15,000 kilometres of roads that are managed by local government. Where are we? We are a few days off 23 March—one year on from the promise—and finally a panel has been announced. We are told how it is difficult, it will take a lot of time, it cannot be done straightaway and time has to be taken to carry it out. Meanwhile, we know that roads in country New South Wales have gone backwards. One only has to look at the NRMA website to see all the roads that have not had enough money pumped into them.

TAFE is a great institution that has been gutted, decimated and stripped bare, leaving but a skeleton that needs to be rebuilt. Recently I talked in this Chamber about the plumbing course that was removed from Wollongbar TAFE and students were told to go 2½ to three hours down the road to Coffs Harbour TAFE. Some people would have had to relocate there for a couple of days a week in 14-week blocks and could not do it. I have to say that TAFE at a regional level has announced that the course will be reinstated in Wollongbar after Easter, and I thank the general manager in the region. But I have been told that it will not be a two-year course; it will be a four-year course.

Next week I am meeting with the regional manager and I will submit that it needs to be a two-year course as it was originally set down so people can be qualified in a timely way, particularly the certificate IV. A plumber told me that he is not a Labor, Liberal or The Greens supporter, but he has heard Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Premier Gladys Berejiklian saying that they stand for jobs in the regions. He said, "This is about my job and I will not be able to have a job because I cannot get my qualifications." I said to him that it is more rhetoric and more honoured in the breach than in the delivery—there is no delivery.

Other promises that I thought would be in the budget were nurses, midwives, doctors, allied health staff and support staff in the hospital. My area was promised 280 nurses and midwives, 32 doctors and approximately 88 allied health professionals and support workers, but I have not seen one nurse, midwife, doctor, allied health worker or support worker. I have seen a nurse taken from a shift in Tenterfield. After a lot of community effort and campaigning, a nurse has returned but we want and need more nurses in Tenterfield District Hospital. Nurses were going to be taken out of Murwillumbah District Hospital. The Nationals trumpeted great promises but we have not one at Murwillumbah.

Debate interrupted.

Bills

CIVIL REMEDIES FOR SERIOUS INVASIONS OF PRIVACY BILL 2020

Second Reading Speech

Debate resumed from 27 February 2020.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (10:15:31): I am delighted to continue my interrupted second reading speech on the Civil Remedies for Serious Invasions of Privacy Bill 2020. Prior to being interrupted I was making the point about how much public concern there is about unauthorised sharing of intimate images. While that is criminalised now, take-down orders only follow a criminal conviction. That has a number of disadvantages, including the time lag that will be involved. Other legal avenues are complex and unclear. It may well be that the common law will in time develop remedies in tort and damages and there has been the hint of that in some judgements. Some observers think that development is inevitable. A much better course, in my view, is to provide a statutory basis for this. It is better for the Parliament rather than courts to make law.

The first component of this proposed legislation is the introduction of a statutory cause of action for a serious breach of privacy. This proposal has a long history and has been recommended by expert bodies many times. These include the 2008 Australian Law Reform Commission [ALRC] report entitled *For your information: privacy law and practice*, followed by the 2009 NSW Law Reform Commission report called *Invasion of Privacy*. There was also a Victorian Law Reform Commission report in 2010 called *Surveillance in Public Places*. In 2014 the Australian Law Reform Commission's report was entitled *Serious Invasions of Privacy in the Digital Era*. Then there was the Standing Committee on Law and Justice report. Most recently the final report of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] on digital platforms in its recommendation 19 said "introduce a statutory cause of action for serious invasions of privacy, as recommended by the Australian Law Reform Commission."

The ACCC made the obvious point that effective protection for individuals against serious invasions of privacy might not be captured within privacy legislation. Of the various models proposed, the one supported by the Legislative Council committee, and pursued by this bill, is that proposed in the 2014 ALRC report. Among other things, it is desirable for national consistency in this field and the ALRC probably has the greatest chance of achieving that. The ALRC model focuses on misuse of private information and on intrusion upon seclusion. This has the narrowest scope of any of the models. It is certainly narrower than the model proposed by the NSW Law Reform Commission. The bill follows the committee approach as well on the element of fault required. There is a fault element of intent, recklessness or negligence for governments and corporations. The fault element for natural persons is intent or recklessness.

The traditional principle of common law assessment of damages would apply and claims could be pursued in the District Court and the Supreme Court. The committee also recommended that the jurisdiction be extended to NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] and the bill also includes that proposal. That would allow a simpler, less expensive option for such claims. There also needs to be another way to resolve such breaches. For this reason the bill institutes a complaints procedure, and not just a damages option, or criminal proceedings. Complaints can be made to the Privacy Commissioner, who can provide non-financial redress. This includes apologies, cease and desist orders and take-down orders.

I now turn now to the provisions of the bill. Part 1 of the bill contains preliminary and definitional provisions. Part 2 of the bill establishes a cause of action for a serious invasion of privacy. People under 18 years of age cannot be defendants in such proceedings and the limitation period is governed by the Limitation Act. Clause 9 specifies that the cause of action covers intrusion on seclusion and misuse of personal information. Clause 10 provides the cause of action can be used only where the person in the plaintiff's position would have had a reasonable expectation of privacy. Clause 11 deals with the fault element required in the manner I have already mentioned. Criteria are provided to establish as to whether the invasion of privacy was serious.

Clause 13 provides that to find for the plaintiff, the public interest in privacy outweighs any countervailing public interest. Criteria are specified in the clause to allow this determination to be made. Doing what has not been able to be done in defamation law yet, clause 14 implements a single publication rule. Clause 16 sets out the available defences of lawful conduct, protection of a person or property, absolute privilege, publication of a public document, fair report of proceedings of public concern, and necessity and consent. Part 3 of the bill provides for jurisdiction to go to NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, analogous to part 2.

Part 4 has provisions about the Privacy Commissioner, whose main role is to receive and deal with complaints. They also have a capacity to assist or intervene in NCAT proceedings. Clause 47 sets out the capacity of the commissioner to make determinations and orders. Clauses 48 and 49 provide for enforcement mechanisms. Part 5 has miscellaneous provisions. The bill is based upon unanimous bipartisan recommendations from a parliamentary committee. As I often say, the iron law of politics in this Chamber is that the Government will never support an Opposition bill, no matter how meritorious it may be. I will enjoy the Government objections to this bill, those objections having necessarily to be objections to the arguments of all those Government members on the Legislative Council committee that supported the report on which this bill is based. Those Government members and I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AMENDMENT (STATE OWNED CORPORATIONS) BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 14 November 2019.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (10:21:54): In reply: I thank the members who have contributed to the debate and supported the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (State Owned Corporations)

Bill 2019. I acknowledge the contribution of the Attorney General and the members who represent the electorates of Charlestown, Manly and Canterbury. The arguments for the bill, which proposes to amend the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act [PPIPA], are powerful and simple. It is unacceptable not to extend the application of privacy principles and legislation to all State owned corporations [SOCs]. The reason that SOCs should be included in the privacy regime of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act is the same reason that other agencies should be included. They were only excluded because historically that meant they were not on a level playing field with private corporations.

Following a range of legislative changes, that is no longer a tenable argument, as the position of private corporations has been altered substantially. The SOCs say they voluntarily comply with those regimes now. If that is so, the case for formally compelling them seems irresistible, and has the advantage to complainants of formal structures, including access to external reviews. I note the lengthy history of support for the position in the bill, as I referred to in my second reading speech. That includes support from the Privacy Commissioner, the NSW Law Reform Commission and a statutory review of the Act by the Attorney General's department. The bill fills a regulatory gap. I turn to the arguments put by the Government in opposition to the bill. The first argument against the bill was that a one-size-fits-all approach to State owned corporations could not be adopted. That, with the greatest respect, is a nonsense argument. If we can impose a one-size-fits-all approach—called a law—on all other government departments and agencies already covered by PPIPA, and if they can all comply with the one-size-fits-all approach of PPIPA, so can SOCs.

The second argument raised related to the amount of work and effort that SOCs would have to undertake to implement such changes. Granted that SOCs proclaim long and loudly their commitment to privacy and say that they are morally bound by PPIPA, I am a little sceptical about that argument—to put it mildly. If it is correct, then SOCs have been misleading the people of New South Wales for years. As to whether SOCs wish to be captured by a State or Federal regime, I note that the bill only applies to corporations not covered by the Federal regime. If SOCs wish to be covered by the Federal regime rather than the State one, that is entirely consistent with the provisions of the bill before the House. I note, of course, the concession made by the Attorney General that the policy intent of the bill has merit and that he intends to progress a Government bill in the future that would remove the exclusion of the State owned corporations from the Act. I also note his commitment to bring forward a reform to establish a mandatory notification of data breaches scheme.

Those two proposals have been the subject of several private members' bills, including the one before the House in this debate, moved by me on behalf of the Opposition. They have been—or are about to be—voted down by the Government. Whilst I am obviously glad that the policy position looks like it will eventually triumph, there are two things to note. The first is that it has taken a very long time to get to this point; the Government has been remarkably tardy in its response. The second is that this looks like it will happen only because the Opposition has kept pushing—that is, I have kept moving private members' bills. Without the Opposition's persistence there would have been no change. As the member for Charlestown noted, the Opposition has been doing the Government's job for it. The history of the measures in the bill is instructive. There have been calls for this bill for some considerable time—as far back as 2004. The then Privacy Commissioner made an explicit recommendation in 2015. I moved a private member's bill in 2016, which the Government voted down.

In the new Parliament I reintroduced the private member's bill and gave my second reading speech in November last year. The Government started its consultation on the measures in December. A broadly similar story applies to mandatory notification of serious breaches of privacy. The Government only issued a discussion paper having voted down my bill. The only reason that these measures will eventually come forward on the part of the Government is that the Opposition has kept pushing by moving private members' bills. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

The House divided.

Ayes41
Noes46
Majority.....5

AYES

Aitchison, J
Barr, C
Catley, Y
Crakanthorp, T
Donato, P
Greenwich, A

Atalla, E
Butler, R
Chanthivong, A
Dalton, H
Doyle, T
Harris, D

Bali, S
Car, P
Cotsis, S
Dib, J
Finn, J
Harrison, J

AYES

Hoenig, R	Hornery, S	Kamper, S
Lalich, N	Leong, J	Lynch, P
McDermott, H	McGirr, J	McKay, J
Mehan, D (teller)	Mihailuk, T	Minns, C
O'Neill, M	Park, R	Parker, J
Saffin, J	Smith, T	Tesch, L
Voltz, L	Warren, G	Washington, K
Watson, A (teller)	Zangari, G	

NOES

Anderson, K	Ayres, S	Barilaro, J
Berejiklian, G	Bromhead, S	Clancy, J
Conolly, K	Constance, A	Cooke, S (teller)
Coure, M	Crouch, A (teller)	Davies, T
Dominello, V	Elliott, D	Evans, L
Gibbons, M	Griffin, J	Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S	Henskens, A	Johnsen, M
Kean, M	Lee, G	Lindsay, W
Marshall, A	O'Dea, J	Pavey, M
Perrottet, D	Petinos, E	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		

PAIRS

Haylen, J	Hazzard, B
Scully, P	Williams, R

Motion negatived.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT (CONTRACTS OF CARRIAGE) BILL 2019

Second Reading Speech

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (10:35:55): I am delighted to speak to the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2019. Members will be aware that this is the second time this legislation has come into this place. The bill before us was introduced in the upper House and now has come to the lower House. Support for this bill is growing because it is fair and just legislation, as I explained in my contribution to the previous bill. The Government appears not to be committed to provide safe working conditions or a safety net of entitlements for delivery drivers of bread, milk and cream for sale or delivery for sale as contracts of carriage under the Industrial Relations Act 1996.

For decades chapter 6 of the 1996 Act, and its predecessors, has provided a robust system of industrial relations for drivers of trucks, vans or other vehicles conveying goods. Notwithstanding that, those drivers are not employees but are engaged as contractors. This applies whether drivers are independent contractors running their own business, driving for a variety of different companies or simply contractors engaged by one body. As members will be well aware, there was a time when bread, milk and cream were delivered to our front doors. The industry sought protections under the Federal Independent Contractors Act 2006. I will return to this in more detail shortly. The Government has used the Independent Contractors Act to claim an inconsistency with the Industrial Relations Act or to claim that support for this bill would impose on the Independent Contractors Act. That claim is incorrect and inconsistent with law. Indeed, it is inconsistent with the aim of this bill, which is to provide appropriate protections.

Chapter 6 enables the Industrial Relations Commission to make contract determinations and contract agreements, regarding pay and other important working conditions, which are the equivalent of awards and

enterprise agreements. It also enables the Industrial Relations Commission to resolve disputes in the transport industry. This bill seeks to provide protection for these workers, which they do not have at this time. Every worker deserves to be protected by law and supported by the Act to ensure they have a safety network around their conditions and they are not exploited. Unfortunately, there is a major element of exploitation of workers in these industries. Why? Because they have no protections in the Act. We need to provide those workers with protections, and this bill will do that.

I draw the attention of the House to the Independent Contractors Act. The Government has stated that there is an inconsistency in law between the Industrial Relations Act and the Independent Contractors Act. The Independent Contractors Act introduced provisions for the regulation of a "services contract" to the extent of the competence of the Commonwealth Parliament, including the capacity to apply for remedies with respect to an unfair contract. The Independent Contractors Act, in a manner similar to the Fair Work Act 2009 when dealing with employees, includes a provision that it intends to operate to the exclusion of relevant State and Territory laws. I repeat: It intends to operate to the exclusion of relevant State and Territory laws. Section 7 (1) of the Independent Contractors Act provides:

Exclusion of certain State and Territory laws

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), the rights, entitlements, obligations and liabilities of a party to a services contract are not affected by a law of a State or Territory to the extent that the law would otherwise do one or more of the following:
 - (a) take or deem a party to a services contract to be an employer or employee, or otherwise treat a party to a services contract as if the party were an employer or employee, for the purposes of a law that relates to one or more workplace relations matters (or provide a means for a party to the contract to be so taken, deemed or treated);
 - (b) confer or impose rights, entitlements, obligations or liabilities on a party to a services contract in relation to matters that, in an employment relationship, would be workplace relations matters (or provide a means for rights, entitlements, obligations or liabilities in relation to such matters to be conferred or imposed on a party to a services contract);
 - (c) without limiting paragraphs (a) and (b)—expressly provide for a court, commission or tribunal to do any of the following in relation to a services contract on an unfairness ground:
 - (i) make an order or determination (however described) setting aside, or declaring to be void or otherwise unenforceable, all or part of the contract;
 - (ii) make an order or determination (however described) amending or varying all or part of the contract.

As advised, section 7 (1) is to be taken as a statement that the Commonwealth legislation intends to cover the field. Therefore, the regulation of independent contractors is covered by the Independent Contractors Act for the purposes of section 109 of the Commonwealth Constitution. Without the express exception in section 7 (2) of the Independent Contractors Act, the provisions of chapter 6 would be overridden by section 7 (1) (b) and/or (c). Section 7 (2) indicates that the exclusion in subsection (1) does not apply to certain State or Territory laws. Relevantly, section 7 (2) (b) (i) has the effect that section 7 (1) does not apply to:

Chapter 6 of the *Industrial Relations Act 1996* of New South Wales (and any other provision of that Act to the extent that it relates to, or has effect for the purposes of, a provision of Chapter 6) ...

In short, section 7 (2) (b) (i) of the Independent Contractors Act dictates that no inconsistency is intended to exist between the Independent Contractors Act and chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act of New South Wales and the provisions of chapter 6 can continue to apply to contractors who are also covered by the Independent Contractors Act. As to the motive for the position taken by the Government that there is an inconsistency, the question arises whether the reference to chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act in section 7 (2) (b) (i) of the Independent Contractors Act extends to chapter 6 as amended from time to time or is limited to chapter 6 as it existed when the Independent Contractors Act was originally enacted.

This is a not uncommon difficulty that arises when one piece of legislation refers to or incorporates a provision of another Act. The common law position is that in the absence of an indication that a reference to another piece of legislation is intended to be ambulatory, the reference to the legislation is taken to be in the form it was at the date the referring legislation was made. I note the presence in the Chamber of the member for Ku-ring-gai. I look forward to his contribution. I am very certain that he understands the tone and manner of my reference to the Act and the purported inconsistencies—which, as any good lawyer would be aware, are not there. However, interpretation legislation in all jurisdictions has reversed the common law presumption. Relevantly, section 10 of the Acts Interpretation Act 1901 provides:

References to amended or re-enacted Acts

Where an Act contains a reference to a short title that is or was provided by law for the citation of another Act as originally enacted, or of another Act as amended, then:

- (a) the reference shall be construed as a reference to that other Act as originally enacted and as amended from time to time; and
- (b) where that other Act has been repealed and re-enacted, with or without modifications, the reference shall be construed as including a reference to the re-enacted Act as originally enacted and as amended from time to time; and
- (c) if a provision of the other Act is repealed and re-enacted (including where the other Act is repealed and re-enacted), with or without modifications, a reference to the repealed provision extends to any corresponding re-enacted provision ...

The position dictated by section 10 (a) is that a reference to another piece of legislation is to be construed as including a reference to the legislation "as amended from time to time" and not limited to the legislation as it was originally enacted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I welcome to the gallery a group of young women, year 11 students who are attending Upfront!, the Parliament's empowering young women program, which is conducted by the Parliamentary Education team. In welcoming these young women today during NSW Women's Week—the awards ceremony that some members have just attended—I draw to their attention the fact that at this moment there is a majority of women members present in the Chamber.

[Interruption from the gallery]

This is quite an indulgence because I should remove people from the gallery for clapping, but they are all powerful young women and I appreciate that. It is important that we continue to empower women to take their rightful place as equals—or maybe more than equals—in our society. I believe we are inexorably moving towards that in our parliaments around Australia. I congratulate the young women in the gallery on taking part in the program and wish them all the best.

Mr GREG WARREN: I share your welcome to the students and the young women with us today. I hope you enjoy your day in the Parliament as well as my highly motivating contribution to the debate. I have been kicked out for less than clapping.

Mr Alister Henskens: And for good reason.

Mr GREG WARREN: And for good reason.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): You are safe with me.

Mr GREG WARREN: Such is the nature of your reasonable character, Mr Temporary Speaker. As such, the ordinary position dictated by section 10 (a) is that a reference to another piece of legislation is to be construed as including a reference to the legislation as amended from time to time and not limited to the legislation as it existed at a particular point in time. The operation of section 10 of the Acts Interpretation Act is subject to contrary intent in the Independent Contractors Act as shown in section 2 (2) of the Acts Interpretation Act. However, I do not believe there is any reason to find contrary intention in the Independent Contractors Act.

The purpose of section 7 (2) (b) (i) of the Independent Contractors Act is clearly to enable independent contractors in the transport industry to continue to have access to the provisions of chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act. I do not believe there is any reason to read into the Independent Contractors Act an intention that section 7 (2) (b) (i) be limited to chapter 6 as it existed at the time the Independent Contractors Act was enacted so as to freeze the provisions of chapter 6 as they existed in 2009. Such an interpretation would be inconvenient, have perverse consequences and be contrary to the apparent intent of preserving the chapter 6 jurisdiction notwithstanding the enactment of the Independent Contractors Act.

By operation of section 7 (2) (b) (i) of the Independent Contractors Act, no inconsistency arises between the Independent Contractors Act and chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act as amended from time to time. For these reasons, as the Government is well aware, neither I nor the law community believe the proposed amendment to chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act contained in the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018 gives rise to an inconsistency with the Independent Contractors Act for the purposes of section 109 of the Commonwealth Constitution.

I will not take undue time as I know that my colleagues will make a contribution to this important issue. What I will say is that commonly we hear from those on the other side that they are the friends of the worker. They gloat, parade around and crow about it, but when it is time to step up and do something that matters in this House, they are silent. When it comes time to support the worker when it matters and how it matters they oppose it. It is one thing in this Chamber and another outside. Being lectured by those opposite on the protection of workers is like being lectured by Stalin about the virtuous nature of human rights: It is absurd, inconsistent and incomprehensible.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: At least we do not support communism or socialism.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I ask members to direct their comments through the Chair.

Mr GREG WARREN: Yesterday the Government was exposed by The Nationals' comment about the coalmine in Singleton. In Singleton they cannot get \$1 out of their local member, a National, from Resources for Regions and yet it has the highest level of coalmining industry that contributes millions to the State's economy. The member for Upper Hunter will not give \$1 to Singleton council, but his party wants to shut down the coal industry, sack the workers and build a nuclear power plant. They are inconsistent and shameless.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is a private member's bill about the carriage of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale. Talking about nuclear power stations and the like is a long way from the carriage of cream.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I note the member for Campbelltown has been wideranging in his speech and is finishing with a flourish, which is an appropriate introduction for the Government speaker, the member for Ku-ring-gai. There is no point of order.

Mr GREG WARREN: The pursuit of a fairer New South Wales must be the pursuit of each and every member in this place. The reality is, there is an anomaly of law in place that does not provide the framework for safety and safe working entitlements for workers who are being exploited by this legal anomaly. Some members opposite are sympathetic to the bill and understand that there does need to be a change for the protection of workers. I know that because I have had that feedback from the industry workers and they are grateful to those members on the other side for being sympathetic. I ask those members to follow that up with action in the House through supporting the bill. The regulatory chaos is nothing more than rhetoric associated with previous contributions in the House. It is not a luxury that a worker seeks to have a fair, just and safe working environment—it is a right. It is our obligation as legislators of this State to fix this hole in the law and provide those workers with the safe working conditions and protection of entitlements that everyone else enjoys. I commend the bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (10:57:53): With your indulgence, I welcome the young women in the gallery to our Parliament. We had a fantastic Women's Day breakfast this morning at Darling Harbour that was well attended by many members of Parliament. Premier Gladys Berejiklian; Governor Margaret Beazley, AC, QC; the women's Minister Bronnie Taylor; media personality Erin Molan, chairing, attended the event. I did not see the a female Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: She was there.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I am told she was there. There were many women there and it was a great event.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: The water Minister.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The water Minister, the member for Oxley, Melinda Pavey, was also there. Michele Bell, Ku-ring-gai Woman of the Year, was also there. It was a wonderful—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Perhaps the member for Ku-ring-gai will move on from the indulgence and address the substance of the bill.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I will try to give a bit of context to what has been heard in the House. First, the member for Campbelltown is generally the way he started rather than the way he ended—a nice, avuncular fellow. He got a little bit fired up towards the end. The Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill brings forward some of the ideological differences between the different sides of the House, and I understand why he fired up a little bit. In a very broad, historical explanation, in 2006 when the Independent Contractors Act—a Federal Act of Parliament—was passed, there was a Coalition Government in Canberra. John Howard was the Prime Minister and it was his Government that passed the Independent Contractors Act, which provided some regulation around independent contractors. I do not know what areas you are from, but you are probably familiar with tradies and—

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): What is the member's point of order?

Ms Lynda Voltz: The convention of the House is that statements are addressed through the Chair. I would ask you to bring the member back to that protocol.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Auburn is correct. I remind members that they should address their comments through the Chair.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: To the point of order: I was facing away from you, but that does not mean—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Auburn is correct. That does not mean that the member for Ku-ring-gai was not addressing his comments, notionally, through the Chair. All members of this House are guilty of doing something similar. I did not take it as such, but as a point of fact, the member for Auburn is correct.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Further to the point of order: Given that the member presses the point, when addressing people in the gallery and he says, "I do not know what area you come from", directing his comments directly to them, he is not addressing his comments through the Chair, which is the protocol of this House. I ask you to bring him back to the standing orders.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for Auburn. However, I choose to not do that. I am observing a widespread common characteristic of debate in this House. It was rhetorical in the sense it was given. I believe the member for Ku-ring-gai is in order and should proceed.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: In many areas of Sydney we have tradies. They are a good example of what an independent contractor is. They are self-employed people. In 2006 the Howard Government introduced Federal legislation called the Independent Contractors Act. At that time we had a State Labor Government that lobbied for exceptions to the Federal legislation. Under the Australian Constitution, we have a provision—section 109—that says where a Federal Act is inconsistent with a State Act the Federal Act prevails. The State Labor Government negotiated some exceptions to the Independent Contractors Act—a Federal Act—so that certain industrial relationships would remain governed by the State Industrial Relations Act. What the bill seeks to do is take some of those work relationships, which in 2006 the State Labor Government chose to have governed by the Independent Contractors Act—the Federal legislation—and reverse some of that.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): What is the member's point of order?

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 59, relating to relevance. The reference the member is referring to is inconsistent with fact. It is also inconsistent with law, as the member knows. The matters he is referring to—comparing the Independent Contractors Act and the Industrial Relations Act—are inconsistent with fact. I would ask that you keep the member's contribution relevant. We admire his obsession with the Labor Party—our great Party—as we do too.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Campbelltown has had the opportunity to put on record his understanding of what that is. However, I do not intend to rule against the contribution of the member for Ku-ring-gai. The point of order is not upheld, but it is certainly on the record.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I point out that the member for Campbelltown spent some time talking about inconsistencies between Federal and State legislation. I am merely addressing the very matter he brought to the House. If that was irrelevant, he should not have brought it forward. If it was relevant, then I am directly addressing those matters. It is a surprising interjection from the member for Campbelltown, having regard to the history of this debate. It is regrettable that there are these kinds of interjections when they are clearly relevant and on the point that is to be debated on the legislation. I will not be deferred and deflected by interjections of that kind. Where there is an inconsistency between State and Federal legislation, the Federal legislation prevails under section 109 of the Constitution.

As the member for Campbelltown went through in some detail, section 7 of the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act expressly carved out chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act. The Independent Contractors Act says it will not apply to chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act of New South Wales. What this bill seeks to do, and it is not clear because it is one of the great pieces of detailed Labor work that I have seen in this place, is omit section 309 (4) (d) of the Industrial Relations Act. That is the sum total of this piece of legislation that is before the House. I want to say a couple of things about that. Firstly, as the Hon. Adam Searle noted when the bill was brought forward in the upper House:

In all respects, this is the same bill that was introduced into the last Parliament in the other place by Mr Greg Warren. That bill was ultimately defeated in the Legislative Assembly and the Government's view on this bill has not changed. But the question needs to be asked, after an election in which the electors of New South Wales decided who they wanted to continue as the Government of New South Wales and endorsed the views of that Government: Why is the Labor Party so devoid of ideas that the best it can do when time is set aside in this House on a Thursday morning for it to put forward private members' bills, is recycle bills it presented to the last Parliament that were

opposed by this Government? Do the people of New South Wales not deserve better than this pathetic and superficial recycling of legislation, as we are seeing with this bill? I think that is a legitimate point to be bringing forward in this debate. The second point I would bring to attention is: Why is Labor recycling legislation like this? What is the true motivation of Labor members? In the last Parliament a number of private members' bills were brought forward that were furthering the aims of the Transport Workers Union.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Looking out for the workers—looking out for those workers you love!

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Auburn will observe the standing orders and refrain from interjecting.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: If only Labor members would listen, they might actually learn something. During the last Parliament we had attempts to bring under the provisions of chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act taxidriviers and the like who had been excluded from chapter 6. That private member's bill came forward and was defeated. We also had in the last Parliament an attempt to bring the carriage of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale under chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act and that was defeated. Already in this session of Parliament we have had other bills that are recycling of bills that were brought before the last Parliament, opposed by the Government, and then brought again before Parliament in this term.

I simply think the people of New South Wales need to understand that the Labor Party is devoid of new ideas and it keeps recycling legislation to promote the interests of its trade union donors like the Transport Workers Union. Labor is bringing forward an agenda to reward the people who make donations to the Australian Labor Party. It is very important for the electors of New South Wales to understand that and to understand also that the time of this Parliament could otherwise be spent on the Opposition actually coming up with constructive and good ideas for the people of New South Wales. Instead, the time of this Parliament is being used by the Australian Labor Party to recycle pro-union legislation to further the interests of the people who give Labor donations. It is a great example of he who pays the piper calls the tune.

The extent of the Transport Workers Union donations to the Labor Party is a matter of public record. Since the Coalition Government has come into power, the donations have been in the hundreds of thousands of dollars and will continue to flow to the Australian Labor Party. The price for those donations is legislation like this bill needs to be continually brought forward. Whatever intentions the bill may have, there are essentially two bases upon which the Government opposes the bill. The first is that the Government's legal advice states that it may be constitutionally invalid and therefore have no effect. The second is that it is the Government's view that the proposed approach of simply adding certain types of carriage contracts into chapter 6 that were originally excluded is piecemeal. We believe that any reform in this area would be better achieved as part of a more comprehensive and broader regulatory plan. Both reasons for opposing the bill are very sound.

Ms Anna Watson: You just do not like the workers.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Again there is a discourteous interjection by the member for Shellharbour, who is a serial offender.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I appreciate the irony of the comment, which should be noted. It leads me to remind the member for Shellharbour that she should not interject.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act 2006 creates this constitutional issue. There is a philosophical difference in the way in which the Coalition thinks sections of the workforce are better able to work. Members of the Coalition believe that if people wish to be an independent contractor, they should be facilitated to be an independent contractor. That provides incentive. It allows people to be their own boss and it allows greater financial rewards for success if one is an independent contractor, rather than if one is paid the same remuneration as everybody else in a workplace whether everybody is working at the same level and achieves the same productivity or not. Members of the Coalition believe that incentive is the dynamic force of the economy, that workers should be incentivised and facilitated to be self-employed if they have the get-up-and-go to be so and that they should be financially rewarded for their hard work more than under a wage scenario. That is a fundamental difference between the Labor Party and the Coalition.

It was ironic to hear the member for Campbelltown refer to Joseph Stalin. The Labor Party approach is Stalinist—one size fits all and everybody gets paid the same whether they work hard or not—whereas the Coalition believes in incentive and reward for hard work. The Labor Party approach has been so out of touch with the way Australians think about their working environment that during my lifetime rates of unionism in Australia have gone from 90 per cent to 18 per cent. Workers are actually voting with their feet.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: Mr Temporary Speaker, can you bring the member for Ku-ring-gai back to the leave of the bill? Union density has nothing to do with this debate.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Shellharbour should wait to be given the call to take a point of order so that her point of order can be heard properly. The member for Shellharbour has the call.

Ms Anna Watson: Mr Temporary Speaker, can you bring the member for Ku-ring-gai back to the leave of the bill. Union membership density has nothing to do with this debate and he is completely off track and irrelevant, as he usually is.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): There is no point of order. It is a wideranging debate, which commenced during the second reading speech. The member for Ku-ring-gai has the call.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Indeed. I am merely responding to matters put forward by the Australian Labor Party in support of this private member's bill. Of course, this bill is symptomatic of the way in which the Labor Party works in its own echo chamber. Members of the Labor Party only hear the arguments that they think are right. They never actually listen to a contrary point of view or even think that a contrary point of view could be on the same topic. It is extraordinary, but there we have a great example of that with the interjection by the member for Shellharbour.

As I was saying, the great success of the philosophy of the Labor Party towards pushing people into award wage structures is the decline of unionism in Australia from approximately 90 per cent to now about 18 per cent. Of that 18 per cent there is a very high proportion in public sector employment. In the commercial world, the take-up of unionism is much less than the 18 per cent to which I have referred. The Labor Party has lost the battle of ideas. The Coalition really is the party of the worker because the overwhelming majority of workers—

Mr Adam Crouch: Are not members of unions.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: —are not members of unions. I thank the member for Terrigal for finishing my lines for me—not that we are in an echo chamber by any stretch of the imagination. My remarks so far are a response and preliminary introduction. I will come to the constitutional issues in more detail shortly. As with the 2018 version of the bill, the objective of the Opposition's private member's bill is to extend the application of chapter 6 of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act 1996 to include contracts for transportation of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale as contracts of carriage under that Act. A contract of carriage is defined as:

... a contract ... for the transportation of goods by means of a motor vehicle or bicycle in the course of a business of transporting goods of that kind by motor vehicle or bicycle ...

Bread, milk or cream delivery owners are currently excluded under section 309 (4) of chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996. Within section 309 (1) of that Act there is a definition of a contract of carriage. Subsection (2) states:

- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), a reference to a carrier includes a carrier carrying on business under a franchise or other arrangement.

Subsection (3) has other relevant refinements of the definition of a contract of carriage. Subsection (4), the one in question, states:

- (4) A contract of carriage does not include a contract:

Paragraphs (a) to (i) list the different categories of contract that are not a contract of carriage under the New South Wales Industrial Act. Subparagraph (d) states:

- (d) for the carriage of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale, or

It is through the mechanism in paragraph (d) that these contracts are excluded from the New South Wales legislation. Chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act is intended to provide a quasi-industrial framework for the regulation of the remuneration and conditions of owner-drivers who are not employees and therefore not covered by other industrial relations laws. On application the NSW Industrial Relations Commission may make contract determinations or contract agreements for particular sectors of the transport industry. Contract determinations and contract agreements are respectively similar to awards and enterprise agreements and establish a safety net of minimum mandatory remuneration and other employee-like terms and conditions for owner-drivers, such as leave, termination and dispute resolution procedures.

Put simply, the chapter 6 laws are unique in the Australian industrial landscape and they have enjoyed largely bipartisan support over many years. To put that in context, we have a situation where we have a Federal award system in the WorkChoices legislation and we have the Federal Independent Contractors Act 2006 to deal with independent contractors. Then we have this very strange, anomalous chapter 6 of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act that sits outside of both of them and is its own little ecosystem, unique in Australia, that is

administered by the NSW Industrial Relations Commission. The bill seeks to take the carriage of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale, which currently falls outside of that unique system, and put it inside it.

While chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act provides certain protections for owner-drivers, section 309 provides that a range of contracts of carriage are not covered by the laws. In his second reading speech the Hon. Adam Searle asserted that the exact reasoning behind the exemption of bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers is unclear. I will briefly outline some of the history behind the industrial regulation of this category of owner-drivers so that members may understand some of the historical foundation. Following amendments to the Industrial Arbitration Act 1940 in 1957 and 1959, certain groups of workers who may be regarded at common law as independent contractors were "deemed" to be employees for the purposes of the Industrial Arbitration Act, the Annual Holidays Act 1944 and Long Service Leave Act 1955. This included bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers.

In 1967 the then Liberal Minister for Labour and Industry, the Hon. Eric Willis—who subsequently became Premier—asked the Industrial Relations Commission to undertake an inquiry that considered the deemed employee provisions and, in part, whether to incorporate bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers into a chapter 6-like regulatory regime. This was an independent inquiry conducted by the NSW Industrial Relations Commission, which contains many former trade union officials as well as many people experienced in industrial relations outside the union movement. In 1970 the commission's inquiry recommended that the proposed framework for regulating owner-drivers was not appropriate for those classes of drivers and they continued to be deemed as employees. The deeming provisions were carried forward into subsequent industrial laws where they now appear in the Industrial Relations Act at section 5 (3) and schedule 1.

However, by virtue of the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act 2006 and its transitional provisions those deemed employee provisions were rendered inoperative in September 2011. The explanatory memorandum to the then Independent Contractors Bill made it clear that, following a transitional period, bread vendors would no longer be deemed to be employees. It provided a useful example that makes the status of bread vendors abundantly clear. It states:

Michael is a common law independent contractor who is engaged on a services contract by Hot Crossed Bakery Pty Ltd to deliver bread rolls to a series of shops. Under the relevant workplace relations legislation in the jurisdiction in which Michael works, bread vendors are deemed to be employees. This means that Hot Crossed Bakery must offer Michael pay and conditions in line with the relevant State workplace relations legislation despite the fact that, at common law, there would be no legal requirement to do so.

However, because Michael's rights and entitlements (and Hot Crossed Bakery's obligations and liabilities) are affected by the deeming provisions in the relevant State workplace relations legislation for workplace relations matters, proposed paragraph 7 (1) (a) [of the bill] would apply. This would mean that the provisions of the State law have no effect in relation to the services contract between Michael and Hot Crossed Bakery. Under the proposed provisions, Michael and Hot Crossed Bakery could choose whether he is engaged as an employee or an independent contractor, depending on what best suits their needs.

I note that this brings forward what I said earlier—namely, the Government believes that people should have a choice as to whether they are an independent contractor and therefore they believe that their financial best interests are served that way, or whether they should be able to be an employee. Since 2011 pay and conditions for persons deemed to be employees have been matters negotiated between the relevant manufacturer and the relevant individual. Industry pay and conditions are not set, or capable of being set, under the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act.

Like those members opposite, in the past the Government has received representations from bread delivery drivers seeking amendments to the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act to remove the exemption for bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers and thereby extend the application of chapter 6 to those classes of owner-drivers. The Government has been considering any possible repeal of section 309 (4) of the Industrial Relations Act and its interaction with section 7 of the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act. Section 7 (2) of the Independent Contractors Act specifically excludes the operation of certain State and Territory laws from its coverage. This means that chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act still validly operates.

However, the Government's view is that expanding the categories of contracts covered by chapter 6 after the enactment of the Independent Contractors Act to include bread, milk and cream owner-drivers, as per the private member's bill, would be inconsistent with the overall intention of the Commonwealth legislation to cover the field. This reminds me of a case I once had on behalf of a worker where we sought to bring wrongful dismissal proceedings. What was raised against us was the fact that the Federal legislation had excluded those provisions and, therefore, that a State-based wrongful dismissal action could not be brought.

Particularly in this area of industrial relations, there is a lot of constitutional case law on inconsistencies between Federal and State industrial relations legislation. If the Federal Act purports to cover the field then any State law will be inconsistent with it, and by reason of section 109 of the Constitution will be invalid. This is not a novel point of law; this is well-ploughed territory. As you would appreciate, Australia has had a very regulated

industrial relations system, both Federal and State, for many years—basically since Federation. There is a lot of case law on this matter. The concerns about the constitutional invalidity of this private member's bill are great, reasonable and well had. Therefore, the private member's bill could be found to be constitutionally invalid and have no effect.

Under the Independent Contractors Act, if a driver has concerns about the terms of their contract and chooses to seek redress they must apply to the Federal Court or the Federal Circuit Court to have a review of their contract, claiming it is harsh or unjust. The member for Campbelltown said there were no protections under the Commonwealth legislation but quite clearly there are. The Independent Contractors Act, the Federal legislation, provides protection in respect of contracts that are harsh, unfair or unconscionable. It is not right to say that by having those workers fall under the Federal legislation they are completely unprotected and can be taken advantage of. That is just not the case; it is not correct in law and it ought not be said in this Parliament.

Despite the legal advice received, the Government will continue to consider the merits of any proposals about the way that particular independent contractors may be effectively regulated in this State, if possible. We will take that under consideration. The New South Wales Government clearly supports any initiatives to improve work health and safety outcomes in the road transport industry, which is recognised as one of the highest-risk industries, both nationally and in New South Wales. While acknowledging that every death and serious injury on New South Wales roads is a matter of serious concern, it is important to note that the clear majority of crashes involving heavy vehicles are not the fault of the truck drivers. That is important to say.

I think I have explained our position on the constitutional inconsistency. I also think I have explained the Government's position with regard to the desire not to have a piecemeal approach. But the Government is open to do what is fair in respect of those categories of workers, if it is justified. It is for those reasons, however, that the Government opposes this private member's bill.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (11:32:40): I support the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2019 introduced in the Legislative Council by my colleague the Hon. Adam Searle. When I say I support the bill, I really mean I speak in support of this bill once again. In May 2018 I contributed to debate on a bill introduced into this place by my colleague the member for Campbelltown. It was called the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018 and was the same as the bill before the House in every respect. I again thank the member for Campbelltown for his ongoing stewardship of this issue, as well as Adam Searle and his colleagues in the Legislative Council for lending their support to the bill.

I also acknowledge the work of the Transport Workers Union and its ongoing passionate advocacy on behalf of its members. It should come as no surprise to anyone in this House that my thoughts on this issue remain unchanged. This is a simple bill that seeks to correct an oversight and a loophole—an oversight that is pushing many of our State's workers past breaking point and a loophole that is leaving one group of workers at the mercy of big companies, and being taken advantage of, without any avenues for recourse. The overview of the bill states:

The object of this Bill is to amend the *Industrial Relations Act 1996* to include contracts for the transportation of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale as contracts of carriage under that Act. As a result, any such contract will be subject to the provisions of Chapter 6 of that Act, including enabling the Industrial Relations Commission to make determinations with respect to the remuneration of the carrier, and any conditions, under the contract and to exercise dispute resolution powers in relation to the contract.

If those words sound familiar to anyone in this House, it is because they are. The exact same overview was used in the other bill almost two years ago. This bill is still common sense. There is a gap in the current legislation, which this amendment will finally fill. Today we have the power to deliver basic rights and protections to a group of workers that has been completely overlooked until now. I note that the member for Ku-ring-gai did not refer to delivering basic rights and protections to any group of workers, which is disappointing but no surprise. I remind the House that chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act currently covers the majority of owner-drivers in this State. It also empowers the NSW Industrial Relations Commission to make and approve contract determinations and contract agreements for those workers, and allows the commission to resolve disputes in the transport industry. What is wrong with that? I do not understand why those opposite will not support the bill.

This bill, like the 2018 version, does not call any of the above into question. It seeks only to extend protections to a group of owner-drivers who are falling through the cracks. This group still includes owner-drivers engaged in a contract "for the carriage of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale". In this State a truck driver transporting bread, milk or cream has fewer rights and protections than a driver transporting other groceries, such as fruit, vegetables, or meat. Right now our bread, milk and cream truck drivers have no legal framework through which to dispute their working conditions. No wonder they are being taken advantage of! Their contracts are in many ways unregulated. They have no recourse: No means for appeal. They are at the mercy of the people in charge. It is completely unacceptable.

In the eyes of the law, they are independent contractors running their own business and it is therefore up to each individual driver to negotiate their contract. If they have an issue with the hours they are working or their pay agreement, they are forced to go directly to their contractor. They have no other real avenues of appeal. It is then within the rights of the contractor to turn to the driver, deny the request and cut their shifts, and then they are out of a job. Like my Labor colleagues in this House, I believe the exclusion of those workers is both cruel and seemingly arbitrary. Every worker in our State deserves to be afforded the same basic industrial rights. The fact that two contracted owner-drivers could be afforded different industrial rights based solely on what is in the back of their truck is just plain wrong and stupid.

Our bread, cream and milk truck drivers need to be able to access the Industrial Relations Commission. It should outrage every member of this House that they cannot do so already. They deserve the same rights and conditions as every other truck driver delivering different kinds of products. There is no reason except political will that the Government will not support the bill. The legislative oversight is having massive flow-on effects for safety in the industry. As the financial strain grows and companies continue to exert a stranglehold over their subcontractors, truck drivers are working more often, and for longer, taking risks and driving run-down or even unroadworthy vehicles—anything to try to make ends meet. But it will never be enough—not without this bill.

The bill will finally give those workers a reprieve from the downward pressure that is grinding down their pay, their working conditions and their lives. The horror stories that we have heard in the lead-up to the bill's introduction should be enough to make anyone's blood boil—delivery drivers working every day for four months, with just two days off the entire time; and a delivery driver diagnosed with cancer and forced to hand over his full wage to a relief driver while he undertakes treatment and tries to stay alive. New South Wales is better than this, the House is better than this and, most of all, our workers deserve better than this. Those delivery drivers deserve the same access to regulation as anyone else in the profession.

The Industrial Relations Commission must be enabled to weigh in, settle disputes and make determinations in regard to, and on behalf of, the relevant parties. Owner-drivers engaged as contractors for the delivery of bread, cream and milk deserve formal recognition and the ability to engage in the industrial relations system. Members opposite parade around this Chamber pretending to care about our State's workers. They should put their money where their mouth is and support the bill. Anyone with a shred of a compassion and human decency would know that the conditions those drivers are working and suffering under at the moment are unacceptable.

The bill should not be politicised. It is intended to right a wrong that currently exists in our State's legislation for no rational reason. I ask members opposite for the second time in two years to please support the bill. It will drastically improve the lives of those workers and improve safety on our roads. I genuinely hope that in the future we will not be discussing this legislation for a third time. The workers have already waited years to be afforded basic rights. They cannot wait any longer—and nor should they have to. I urge every member of this House to support the bill.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (11:40:43): The object of the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2019 is to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to include contracts for the transportation of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale as contracts of carriage under that Act. As a result, any such contracts will be subject to the provisions of chapter 6 of that Act, including enabling the Industrial Relations Commission to make determinations with respect to the remuneration of that carrier and any conditions under the contract to exercise the dispute resolution powers in relation to the contract. The bill was brought before the House by the member for Campbelltown. I will provide a brief history. When introducing the private member's bill, the Hon. Adam Searle remarked:

In all respects, this is the same bill that was introduced into the last Parliament in the other place by Mr Greg Warren, the member for Campbelltown, ...

The bill is identical to the 2018 bill and I can advise that the Government has not changed its position and remains opposed to it. The objective of the Opposition's private member's bill, as I have mentioned, is to extend the application of chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to include contracts for the transportation of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery or delivery for sale as contracts of carriage under that Act. Bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers are currently excluded by section 309 (4) of chapter 6 of the Act. That is a very informative part of the Act. To provide some background information about chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act, it is a unique regulatory regime in Australia that establishes a quasi-industrial framework that applies to contracts of carriage—drivers engaged in transporting goods who own their own vehicle—and of bailment, which is taxidrivers. However, the focus of today's debate is contracts of carriage of milk and bread and cream.

I remember—I am showing my age—going to my grandmother's place in Dubbo, where the bread was delivered by a horse-drawn carriage. The horse was smart enough to stop at the corner so the baker—or the driver as we called him in those days—would run in, drop the bread and run out again. Once again showing my age,

I also remember glass milk bottles being delivered and the rattle of those bottles coming up the driveway at 4.00 a.m.—

Mr Rob Stokes: Had milk been invented then?

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Pittwater. It was a golden era, let's say—we had gold tops, red tops and silver tops. If you left the milk out too long or if the magpies or kookaburras got stuck into it—they would punch through the tops—it was pretty yucky by the afternoon. I can also remember milk being delivered to my primary school. For a while I was elevated to milk monitor and I had to run up the corridors to get the milk bottles. So, in fact, I was delivering milk at an early age. I must have taken too long to deliver it because I was only a milk monitor for a limited period. At the time my father was the school principal, so life was pretty tough. How times have changed for milk delivery. The last milk delivery I had to my house was a number of years ago. I now buy it in plastic containers at the local supermarket, and have done for many years. I buy Norco, which is farmer-owned milk, not those other brands. It is sad that the golden era of rattling milk bottles is over—I will not go into the sanitation man with the can on his shoulder, which was an earlier part of my upbringing.

But I return to the Act, which is a unique regulatory regime in Australia. Owner-drivers under chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act are usually bound to contracting arrangements by exclusive engagement to one principal contractor. Importantly, chapter 6 does not apply to enterprises that engage people to drive as employees. The nature of contractual relations regulated by this chapter, and analogous in some respects, is not the same and is not intended to be treated in the same way as employment relationships. Chapter 6 currently covers owner-drivers within several sectors, including waste collection, recycling, concrete hauling, car carrying services, furniture removal and general freight. While chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act regulates a range of owner-drivers, a number of classes of drivers are exempt. Apart from the carriage of bread, milk and cream, these include the carriage of mail on behalf of Australia Post, the carriage of livestock and the delivery of meals by couriers to homes or other premises. In 1999 it was recognised that chapter 6 could be anti-competitive and contravene part IV of the then Commonwealth Trade Practices Act 1974 regarding restrictive trade practices.

Statutory amendments in late 2001 gave temporary protection to chapter 6 from the anti-competitive provisions of the Trade Practices Act and the Competition Code of New South Wales. In 2002 the University of Newcastle Employment Studies Centre conducted a review of chapter 6 to consider whether it should receive permanent exemption from part IV of the Trade Practices Act. The conclusion of the review was that chapter 6 had not had a substantial impact on the degree of competition in the road transport industry, and that the public benefits of the legislation outweighed the public costs. The report's principal recommendation was that chapter 6 should receive permanent protection against the anti-competitive provisions of the Trade Practices Act and the Competition Code of New South Wales. Legislation to this effect was introduced and passed in 2003.

I will summarise some of the main components of chapter 6. Contract determinations allow the Industrial Relations Commission to determine minimum remuneration and conditions for certain contracts of carriage or bailment and are similar to awards. Contract agreements allow groups of owner-drivers, whether or not they are represented by a union, to enter enterprise-specific arrangements with their principal contractor. These arrangements provide commercial certainty to drivers and principal contractors alike through provisions designed for the enterprise. They also provide administrative ease and, therefore, further cost benefits to principal contractors. Through the reinstatement of contracts of carriage, the Industrial Relations Commission's power runs in parallel with unfair dismissal laws and recognises the significant risk in terms of investment made by owner-drivers. The dispute resolution jurisdiction is a predetermined, cheap, quick and effective conciliation procedure before members of the Industrial Relations Commission, which can assist in preventing industry wide disruptions. [*Extension of time*]

In regards to the recovery of outstanding moneys, under chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act owner-drivers can pursue underpayments for the work they perform through the same streamlined processes as employees. Finally, chapter 6 establishes a Contract of Carriage Tribunal, which is empowered to order the payment of compensation for termination of head contracts of carriage in certain circumstances. In summary, the chapter 6 scheme is a limited form of regulation that offers the protections necessary to ensure the viability of the ongoing contract and prevent its essential elements from being bargained away. It recognises that certain industry minimum standards should be upheld, consistent with viable competition and the normal entrepreneurial assumption of risk entailed in independent contracting arrangements. The chapter 6 regime provides an appropriate balance between the need to address the bargaining position of owner-drivers and the desirability of fostering optimal productivity and efficiency benefits.

However, the Government's view is that expanding the categories of contracts covered by chapter 6 as per the bill would be inconsistent with the overall intention of the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act, therefore it could be found to be constitutionally invalid and have no effect. The New South Wales Government

understands the importance of small business and its contribution to the State's economy. Small businesses keep communities strong and support local schools and charities. People behind small businesses are hardworking, brave, willing to take risks and invest their livelihoods in making sure their businesses work. Though the New South Wales economy is humming, the Government cannot solely rely on the housing market and infrastructure growth. The Government is aware it has to diversify and innovate to maintain economic growth. This is where small business can fill the void and significantly contribute to expanding our economy.

Debate interrupted.

Motions

TAFE NSW

Debate resumed from 27 February 2020.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:53:10): To provide context to my contribution in this debate, my speech has been divided into two parts; members of Parliament thought it wise to give me two bites of the cherry because they were so intrigued by what I was saying. Today I will change tack. If the Government is going to destroy TAFE, force economic hardship on communities, force young people to take on debt before they start their careers and essentially defund TAFE to the point where we have a skills shortage in fire-ravaged communities that cannot rebuild, I will use census data to note the communities that would be most affected by a deconstructed TAFE.

The Government represents 15 of the top 20 electorates in which one out of four constituents hold a trade qualification. They include South Coast, Hawkesbury, Upper Hunter, Wollondilly, Kiama, Myall Lakes, Oxley, Port Macquarie, Clarence, Bega, Camden, Wagga Wagga, Heathcote, Dubbo and Bathurst. Government members represent communities in which one in four adults are trade qualified. They went to fully funded, operational and available TAFEs to acquire their trade skills. Government members are deserting all of those constituents. I will go to the other end of the scale and look at which members of Parliament represent communities that least rely on TAFE. There are two very interesting communities in the top 10.

Ms Robyn Preston: I have tradies everywhere.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: The community of the member for Hawkesbury desperately relies on TAFE. I am talking about the Premier's electorate of Willoughby and the Treasurer's electorate of Epping. That is why this decision has been made about TAFE. It needs to be addressed. [*Time expired.*]

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (11:55:13): By leave: There is no person in this Chamber more passionate than I am about TAFE. As members know, I was a TAFE teacher and my father was a TAFE teacher for his entire life. TAFE is in my family's DNA. Members of the Opposition have told mistruths about TAFE. The Government does not want Labor to perpetuate these mistruths. I have sought leave to contribute to this debate to set the record straight. Let us go through some of those mistruths. The member for Lakemba is a great person and I pay tribute to his passion, but it was very disappointing to hear him call Connected Learning Centre [CLC] teachers "not real teachers". Further, he said that Connected Learning Centres were mere pop-up campuses.

Yesterday the member conceded he supports Connected Learning Centres, which is great news. It is certainly great news that he has changed his mind and flipped his views on Connected Learning Centres, which he now wants throughout the State. The wonderful thing about that is we have already delivered 14 throughout the State and we are delivering another eight more in this term of government. We are very proud of our commitment. It is wonderful that the member for Lakemba now supports our view. The member for Lismore complained that plumbing courses were not offered in her region. At last the member for Lismore has conceded the truth that enrolments are now open for Certificate IV in plumbing at Wollongbar TAFE. Today she has acknowledged that we are delivering for her communities, as we are for communities across the State, which is wonderful to see.

Then of course there is the member for Cessnock. What a fantastic performance he made in his contribution. The outrage that he showed was perfectly confected. He should get a job on stage. It was wonderful to see his concern for apprentices, but he well knows this Government is delivering 100,000 fee-free apprenticeships over the next four years. Further, the member for Cessnock claims that CLCs are merely shopfronts. The member for Lakemba should use his wonderful teaching skills to teach the member for Cessnock that CLCs are great and that they should be encouraged. They are real campuses with real teachers. The member for Coogee claims that a car park at Randwick TAFE is more important than an ambulance station. I wonder how the member for Coogee will explain that she wants to put her community at risk to save half a car park. She will certainly have to make an interesting argument for putting lives at risk to save a car park.

Finally, the member for Swansea tried to perpetuate the myth that we are privatising TAFE. Let me be clear, we are committed to TAFE as a comprehensive public provider of skills and training. My advice is clear: Labor should stop playing games, stop playing politics and start supporting TAFE. TAFE will be the gold standard in vocational education and training. This Government is committed to TAFE, to students and to teachers.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (11:59:36): By leave: I make a contribution on this very important motion moved by the member for Lakemba. For a while I had the role of shadow Minister for Skills during the previous term of Parliament. The sad thing about Government members and their contributions is that they do not understand the structural damage they are doing to TAFE. I was talking to a former TAFE teacher the other day and he said that the Government is dumbing down TAFE. There used to be a requirement that TAFE teachers had a teaching degree as well as a trade so that you got the best of both worlds—someone who was well skilled in teaching and also had a very strong trade background.

The new requirement is that teachers need only have a certificate IV in order to teach TAFE courses. I am not saying that is necessarily a bad thing in all cases but it has lowered the standard. Instead of someone receiving a full year's teaching in how to teach, they can go in and do a six-week course, get a certificate IV and then walk straight into a classroom to teach often very important concepts without having proper teaching knowledge. He described it as a dumbing down of TAFE and, as a teacher, I agree with him. Those opposite also clearly do not understand the issue of the contestable funding model. Contestable funding has put TAFE on a footing where it is in competition with other often for-profit providers.

TAFE has to get the number of students to run a course, which is around 15—I think that is the number the former TAFE teacher told me—otherwise the course cannot run. In regional areas there could be 10 or 12 students but the TAFE would not run the course anymore because it would not get to the threshold of 15 to make it viable under contestable funding. Previously TAFEs could have courses that attracted a large number of students and cross-subsidise some specialist sources with fewer students in order for them to run. Under the contestable model TAFE can no longer do that.

Many regional TAFEs and even some of the city ones now turn students away because they cannot get the numbers up to run courses. That is another really poor outcome for people trying to do TAFE courses. Often if students want to do a particular course they have to travel great distances. The Government's other big myth—and the Minister is no longer in the Chamber—is the scholarships and free courses. Scholarships and fee-free courses are only necessary because those opposite introduced fees—they put the fees on. The courses used to be free.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The member for Wyong does not need the assistance of Opposition members.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Students used to only have to pay an administration fee, which was \$240, but the actual course was free. Now they have to pay \$10,000, \$20,000 or \$30,000. They have to get a loan in order to do the course. And what is the Government doing? It is having a review so it can change the loans from VET FEE-HELP to HECS-HELP. Those opposite are actually not doing anything different at all. If they reduced the cost of doing the courses then more people would be able to access them. Those opposite need to have a really clear look at what they are doing and understand the long-term damage they are doing. [*Time expired.*]

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:03:52): By leave: I speak today because those of us on this side of the Chamber know the importance of TAFE in our State. I commend the Premier and the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education for their unwavering commitment to TAFE and their desire to build on the great work that TAFE already does. This Government has a strong appreciation for how valuable investment in skills is both for the individual and for all of New South Wales. When the Government invests in TAFE it is investing in the future of not just the student but also the State's. The Government acknowledges that TAFE has the ability to innovate and meet changing industry demand.

We must allow TAFE to offer new courses focused on the skills needed in the future while continuing to offer the courses that are required by the current workforce. That is why we should celebrate that the Gonski and Shergold review announced by the Premier last week will focus on driving more industry partnership that will allow our young people to be job ready. The Government's plan to expand and boost funding to TAFE across New South Wales is bold and ambitious. It will include 700,000 free TAFE courses over four years and an additional \$227 million in new funding for TAFE over four years.

I look forward to seeing the results of this investment in the development of skilled and trade industries across New South Wales. The Government is fortunate that its plan is being overseen by the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, Geoff Lee, who has a thorough understanding of and passion for the TAFE system. The Minister's hands-on experience and enthusiasm for skills development is tangible. Locally I was recently joined

by Minister Lee to tour the new \$4.2 million health training facility at St George TAFE in Kogarah. This facility is part of the Government's ongoing investment in capital works projects across the TAFE network, totalling \$179.5 million across 25 projects.

Health and wellbeing are among the fastest growing courses across TAFE New South Wales and this is reflected in my electorate. The new facilities have been built to reflect current industry practice and will deliver a much-needed increase in local training capacity to match growing demand in the St George area. This is another example of the Government recognising employment trends and responding accordingly. As a government with a strong focus on business and the economy, we on this side also understand that equipping students with job-ready skills means equipping businesses with job-ready employees. That is why we are not only investing in capital works projects but have also developed a \$30 million TAFE NSW Skills for Business initiative. It is fantastic that when the Government invests in skills it is also investing in small business and local economies.

Furthermore, this Government acknowledges that the cost of TAFE and tertiary education can be a burden on many individuals and families. In a win for vocational education students across New South Wales the Government is investing \$54.3 million to make government-subsidised traineeships fee-free, which began in January. This is a game changer for small and medium businesses, particularly in my electorate across the St George area, allowing trainees to focus on practical training. This investment, coupled with the \$285 million initiative that has made apprenticeships fee-free, demonstrates that this Government is serious about getting people into work and addressing the skills shortage. With 20 seconds to go, I ask: What is Labor's record? Under 16 years of Labor we saw cuts to TAFE and cuts to education. We saw 90 schools close and 515 classrooms closed with them. That is the record of those opposite when it comes to education. [*Time expired.*]

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:08:03): By leave: I will have to check whether TAFE offers a public speaking course. Out in the real world people are relying on those of us on this side of the House to save TAFE from the clutches of those opposite, who are ideologically obsessed with privatisation. As the member for Wyong says, the structural undermining of TAFE has been happening for years both through the closure of TAFE campuses and through the use of the contestable funding model for the delivery of TAFE courses. Our students, our communities and our teachers are suffering.

First, the Premier hired a new TAFE managing director—the bloke who privatised buses and ferries. She put someone into that top job on an obscene salary. Secondly, the Premier engages two experts for her TAFE review, both with loyal and strong connections to the Liberal Party and one with a penchant for privatisation. Thirdly, under this lot TAFE has been neglected and gutted. The facts are cuts year after year after year, 5,700 fewer teachers, 175,000 fewer students and 33 per cent fewer apprenticeships since 2012. There is obviously nothing to see there!

My contribution will be brief. Communities are looking to the Labor Party to re-establish the strong links that existed between the vocational education sector and the good public education sector. They are scathing of and angry and disgusted with the gutting of TAFE. People talk to us every day about the gutting of TAFE. The Opposition will speak on behalf of the students who cannot undertake the courses they want and on behalf of the communities who talk about the importance of public vocational education and of TAFE. I will speak on behalf of my TAFE and Teachers Federation colleagues who are out there busting their guts each day to save TAFE and are trying to step in and fight against what the Government is doing. They are horrified when those opposite state in this place that they support TAFE. It is rubbish. It is the members on this side of the House who will save TAFE. I thank the member for Lakemba for his work in this area. The Labor Party commits to rebuilding TAFE once it kicks that lot out.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (12:11:04): By leave: I have been listening to the contributions of the Opposition members. I would like to refresh their memory. In *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 31 May 2010 an article under the headline "TAFE loses \$50m to private colleges" states:

NSW TAFE has lost \$50 million in public funding to private providers who have won contracts to deliver adult language, literacy and numeracy programs to job-seekers.

The Federal Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, has awarded contracts previously held by TAFE to private providers including the publicly listed Navitas global education group and Mission Australia, which enjoys tax exemptions as a charity.

I remind Opposition members what short memories they have. I have just pulled that up—31 May 2010, \$50 million in public funding cuts. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that TAFE NSW remains a comprehensive public provider and becomes the gold standard in vocational education and training. I know that both the Premier and Minister Lee want to see more resources on the front line to deliver the world-class training that TAFE provides. I am proud to say that the New South Wales Government is investing in TAFE teachers to ensure students in New South Wales are provided with high-quality education and training.

I am advised that at June 2019 there were 5,827 full-time equivalent teachers, an increase of 6.8 per cent over the previous year.

The New South Wales Government wants the best and brightest in industry to consider becoming a teacher at TAFE NSW so that they can help respond to skills shortages in high demand areas. That is why the Government is removing the barriers for those wanting to give back and train the next generation. I am delighted that the Government is offering \$3.1 million for the TAFE NSW Training and Assessment [TAE] Scholarship Program. The scholarship removes one of the biggest barriers for people wanting to become TAFE teachers. The program offers fully funded TAE scholarships which will support 525 experienced and qualified industry professionals to enter TAFE's teaching workforce. This investment in teaching for the future will open up new opportunities for students to get high-quality, hands-on training from industry experts. It will assist in attracting teachers in hard-to-fill industries so that we can resolve the skills shortages that face our State. As a government, we know the industry is changing and so are the training requirements. We need to ensure that TAFE is able to innovate and be flexible to respond to this demand.

I am pleased that the Premier has announced that Mr David Gonski and Professor Peter Shergold will conduct a review into vocational training in New South Wales. A review is needed. Appallingly, the Opposition has alleged that it is a review of privatisation, which the Premier and Minister have both made clear is absolutely incorrect. This review is to ensure that our education system is prepared to deliver the skills that industry wants and that students need to get a job. Those opposite may not support better outcomes for students but the members on this side of the House always will. We will continue to support a better TAFE for the people of New South Wales.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): I ask members not to shout across the Chamber and to remain silent while other members are speaking. If they wish to have a discussion they should do so outside the Chamber.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:15:29): By leave: I appreciate the Government and Opposition granting leave for me to contribute to this important debate. I have two large TAFEs in my electorate, at Ultimo and Annandale. Annandale TAFE predominantly provides training around the building industry and Ultimo is one of the biggest TAFEs in New South Wales. In the past eight to 10 years we have seen a social experiment in vocational education that has gone tragically wrong. In the Federal arena there has been an unregulated offering of subsidies through the VET FEE-HELP scheme which has led to the emergence of the most disgraceful, bodgie illegal activities. Students were recruited in most unsavoury ways to engage in courses they would not complete in order to fund the private providers. That led to the waste of hundreds of million of dollars at the Federal level.

The experiment allowing government funding for private providers in an unregulated fashion has been pulled back by the Federal Government because they realised it was damaging not only to the education of individuals but also to the reputation of education in Australia. The Federal Government has wiped the debts of a lot of those who were coerced and bribed into undertaking courses that they could not complete. In New South Wales we have a similar venture in the competitive tendering process. It first commenced federally and then occurred in New South Wales. The results are not good. The former skills Minister, now Deputy Premier Barilaro, attempted to wind back some of the worst elements of that process.

A classic example in my electorate was that lower cost courses, such as marketing and finance, were won by private providers. They would pay cheap rent for a floor of a building in Ultimo and get a digital projector and that was all that was required. They would win the tender against TAFE because TAFE paid people proper wages and had the cost of huge institutions and all the other processes of bureaucracy. The winning by private providers of the lower cost courses undermined the scale and critical mass of those TAFEs. As my rural and regional friends will say, they were run out of business by bodgie private providers based on tenders that TAFE could not compete with due to its cost structure. The Government has started to realise that it was not working and introduced the 80 per cent limit.

Our view is that 100 per cent of State government funding for vocational education should be directed to TAFE. It should only be provided to the not-for-profit vocational sector when TAFE is not able to provide the service. It should not go to a for-profit business. Vocational education should be a not-for-profit business. Further, we believe that TAFE funding should be increased significantly. I also identify the privatisation of the prison education system in New South Wales, which has been a tragedy for inmates in New South Wales. There need to be qualified public sector TAFE teachers in prison education. It is a critical pathway to break the cycle of reoffending and it is essential that it is delivered by highly skilled permanent public educators. It is important that TAFE receives not just 80 per cent of the much-reduced funding but an increase in funding by 80 per cent to make sure that TAFE can continue with a full-time workforce who have a rewarding job, a good salary and a secure career in order to provide business and industry with the skilled workers they depend on, second-chance education and an education system we can all be proud of.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (12:19:34): By leave: As members opposite have pointed out, TAFE is contestable. It was made contestable in 2010 by the Gillard Government. Guess who was in office in this State at the time? Labor was the State Government at the time. What did Labor Minister Verity Firth do? Nothing. This Government has reformed TAFE so that it is receiving 80 per cent of the vocational education and training [VET] funding. TAFE is the trainer of choice of students and that is why it is receiving 80 per cent of the contestable funding. People flock to TAFE. In regional New South Wales we love TAFE, as do all the members on this side of the House. The Government recognises the value of TAFE to the regions.

The Government is committed to TAFE as a comprehensive public provider of vocational training and, through TAFE, we are getting on with the job of delivering more for our regions. We are spending \$61.7 million on delivering eight new Connected Learning Centres [CLCs] across rural and regional New South Wales. This builds on the 14 new Connected Learning Centres now operating across New South Wales, including one in my electorate at Yamba. It is the first time TAFE has had a presence in Yamba and it has given young people and students in that village an opportunity to go to TAFE. That is where those young people want to go to be trained so they can take jobs in their local area. We train our workforce in the local area. That is a fundamental role of TAFE and that is why we love TAFE.

Just this semester at Yamba TAFE has added Certificate IV in Ageing Support, Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management, Certificate IV in Leadership and Management and Certificate IV in Property Services (Real Estate). This is providing local training for local people so that they can take up local jobs. But it is not just Yamba that is benefiting. I am happy to advise the House that across the CLCs that have been opened we have seen an increase in courses and enrolments. More people are able to engage in world-class training in our local communities. I was glad to hear the shadow Minister finally spruiking the benefits of the CLC model in his reply speech in the public interest debate yesterday. Labor loves to mislead when it comes to TAFE and, appallingly, Labor tried the same tactics in this place yesterday.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): Order! The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: Labor is desperate to convince people that this Government is privatising TAFE when it is clear we are not. That was even acknowledged by the shadow Minister. Labor is desperate to create a scare campaign about courses and campus closures when the truth is this Government continues—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): Order! I warn the member for Port Stephens to cease interjecting.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: —to invest in new TAFE campuses and add courses to meet industry demand. We are keeping up with industry. We are reforming TAFE, giving a twenty-first century TAFE to students living in the twenty-first century. That is the way they want to study, that is the way they want to learn and they are the staff that our local employers want to employ. Labor is desperate to spread the lie that this Government wants to increase fees when the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is delivering 100,000 fee-free apprenticeships comprising 70,000 fee-free traineeships and 30,000 TAFE scholarships for mature aged workers looking to reskill. Labor is just desperate, full stop. Unlike Labor, this Government believes in TAFE. We want to make TAFE even better. I welcome the Gonski-Shergold review into vocational training. This Government will always focus on what matters and providing better outcomes for our students. I encourage Labor to work with the Government rather than continuing its pathetic attack on TAFE.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:23:52): By leave: I want to reinforce the importance of TAFE to regional communities like the one I represent and also the value that Labor and this side of the House genuinely place on TAFE. In this debate Government members have read scripts and told mistruths about what has happened since they took office. Despite all the pretty words about how much they love TAFE, since this Government came to power there are now 175,000 fewer students in TAFE, 5,500 fewer TAFE teachers and 33 per cent fewer apprenticeships. How can Government members stand in this House and read their scripts and then go home to their communities who know full well that this Government has decimated and gutted TAFE?

My mother was a TAFE teacher. She was part of an institution that supported communities and made communities strong. TAFE has been an important part of regional towns. Under this Government, TAFE teachers lose their jobs, campuses are closed, courses are cut and fees are imposed that students cannot afford to access the courses they need. Coincidentally—it is no coincidence at all—there are now skills shortages across a whole spectrum of employment areas: aged care, childcare and even hospitality. We do not have the workers in the system being trained. Our kids are not being trained for the jobs that are there waiting for them because they cannot afford to go to TAFE anymore. Prior to the election the Premier came up to Port Stephens. She stood in

Nelson Bay and announced that Nelson Bay would get a new TAFE campus. Those were her exact words—a TAFE campus.

Anyone living in regional New South Wales knows what a TAFE campus looks like. It is not one of those pop-up shops the Government calls a Connected Learning Centre. What the Premier did not realise when she made her announcement was that in Nelson Bay we already had a TAFE, which this Government had failed to resource. She did not even realise. Under this Government, the Nelson Bay TAFE did not have the courses. The Government had not provided money for courses that could have been running already on the Tomaree Peninsula. Instead the Premier made an announcement that was intended as a bit of pork-barrelling and for which she was meant to be lauded. That went well! I am still here.

I am still trying to understand with these Connected Learning Centres how kids sitting in front of a computer can learn hairdressing, aged care and child care. How does that happen? We have aged carers and childcare centres in the area that are desperate for trained workers and we have a beautiful Tomaree community college to deliver the training. But it also does not get the funds from this Government to run the courses and to develop the skills so that our kids can get jobs. The Government does not understand that this is about students, the future of our kids and connecting them to the jobs that are in the community. This Government has cut that connection and has decimated TAFE. Only Labor will rebuild it.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (12:28:00): By leave: I acknowledge my good friend Scott Keenan in the public gallery. We worked together in former Treasurer Costa's office. It is good to see Scott here today for this important debate. After nine years in office the Government is once again reviewing TAFE, as a smokescreen. I have a lot of respect for Mr Gonski and Mr Shergold but they are a smokescreen for the Government's proposals. On this side of the House, I acknowledge Labor leader Jodi McKay and the shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE, and shadow Minister for Youth, Jihad Dib, who have been relentless over the last 10 days in holding the Government to account on cuts to TAFE.

Labor is calling on the Government to ensure there are no cuts. Already we have seen 5,700 teachers cut in nine years. I held the shadow disability portfolio when the National Disability Insurance Scheme was being introduced to New South Wales. I acknowledge the work of Minister Constance in looking at a coordinated approach between NDIS and TAFE with TAFE disability support workers so that people with disability can pay taxes and contribute to society, which is what they want. But when the cuts were made to disability support workers at TAFE, that did not eventuate. People with disability on the NDIS have gone backwards because they cannot access TAFE courses.

I cite two examples from my electorate. The first concerns Mrs Minu Kumar who, from 2015 to 2017 was studying TAFE's free English and computer classes at Petersham and Bankstown TAFE campuses. She says that at first there were sufficient teachers and support staff to cater for the large classes. However, due to the budget cuts the ratio became one teacher to 30 students. Students in English classes were at different levels, but the single teacher was unable to give sufficient time to each student, which meant that Mrs Kumar was unable to enhance her English skills. Due to budgetary cuts computer classes were removed from TAFE, which meant that Mrs Kumar could not continue with her TAFE course. This is an example of what many people in my community are experiencing.

A second example is one of our great young people in my electorate, Daniel Osmond, who recently finished his motorbike mechanic apprenticeship at Ultimo TAFE. He has allowed me to state in this House that he is from an Indigenous background and has been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. He needed extra support in class. However, he states that his classes decreased from five days a week to three days a week, with content that should be taught in five days being crammed into three days. He believes that if there were more teachers and support staff as well as more days when his course was taught, he would have learnt a lot more and would have been more confident entering the workforce.

We have seen a massive skills shortage in particular areas. The Government needs to match education and training resources in TAFE to areas in which there are skills shortages. In my electorate there are immense opportunities in the hospitality industry and those opportunities will increase over the next few years, in particular. With changes to the lockout laws, hospitality workers are becoming more professional and they use TAFE as a pathway to learn about finance and administration. Unfortunately, the courses are not available. I urge the Government to not cut courses further. The cuts have inhibited a lot of people, particularly women who wish to re-enter the workforce. TAFE is a pathway for such women. I urge the Government to support TAFE. The Opposition will fight the Government's attitude regarding TAFE every step of the way.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (12:32:13): In reply: I thank the members for Heffron, Lismore, Coogee, Wyong, Oatley, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Balmain, Clarence, Port Stephens, Canterbury and Cessnock, and the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education and member for Parramatta. Given that so many members

contributed to debate on this motion, I think there is one thing on which all members of this House can agree: People value TAFE. That is a common understanding, but I think the big point of difference is ideology underpinning the Government's attitude to TAFE. A lot of speeches that were written by other people have been read and I think the line that Government members were trying to pump out is that this Government is committed to TAFE as a public education provider et cetera.

As I stated yesterday, it is about the public provision of training and education but it is also about committing to the non-privatisation of the courses and ensuring that the revenue earned flows into TAFE as a public provider. A few members referred to Labor somehow creating a scare campaign. What is the scare campaign? Last week we asked the Government to commit to certain things. We did not hear from the Government. We have had a week of questions during question time when Labor could not get straight answers. It seems that every time Opposition members asked a question during question time that required a yes or no answer, the Opposition could not quite get a yes or no response. Even yesterday the Labor Opposition gave the Government an opportunity to debunk the rumours about what Labor apparently is doing, such as creating a scare campaign about privatisation.

Yesterday members spoke passionately during debate on a motion before the House. The Opposition asked Government members who participated in that debate to rule out privatisation, the cutting of courses, the cutting of staff and the sale of assets. The Coalition voted against that motion, so how can Coalition members read their scripts and say that Labor is creating a scare campaign? The Labor Opposition is giving the facts and the facts are, as repeated over and over again, that there are 175,000 fewer students—indisputable; 5,500 fewer teachers—indisputable; 30 per cent fewer apprentices—indisputable.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Disputable.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Not at all disputable. The Labor Opposition then took the Coalition Government to task and urged Coalition members to rule out privatisation. Coalition members say in this House that TAFE will not be privatised and when it was put to a vote, not one Coalition member voted to rule out privatisation. What are Labor members to believe? Are we expected to take the word of those opposite or are we expected to follow the way they vote? The vote shows that the Government will not rule out privatisation of TAFE. The vote shows that the Government will not rule out sales. The vote shows that the Government will not rule out cutting of courses. What does that mean?

There is recognition on all sides of politics that TAFE is important and that we must ensure that there is investment in TAFE. The Labor Opposition urges the Government to commit to not closing any more TAFE campuses, to not cutting courses and to not privatising the delivery of TAFE training and education, but will take on board the importance of using TAFE to create better work outcomes for people. TAFE represents opportunity. TAFE is not about ideology. This debate is about making sure that we use what we can get out of TAFE to try to help our economy, which is the very heart of TAFE.

Last week at Kurri Kurri someone was assessing the value of the TAFE campus land. If the Government is not privatising and not selling, why was somebody checking out the value of the land? The ultimate indication of the Government's intention is the amendment to the motion that was moved by the Government member for Goulburn. The Labor Opposition will not support the Government's amendment and has moved to amend the Government's amendment. For the information of every member who said the Government will not privatise TAFE, every member who said Labor is running a scare campaign and that Labor is spreading mistruths, every single one of those members had the opportunity yesterday to rule out privatisation of TAFE, but did not vote to rule that out. That tells us clearly that the Government has an agenda, the Government does not want to reveal that agenda, and the Government's only comeback is that Labor is running a scare campaign. What Labor is saying is no scare campaign. This is the truth.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the amendment of the member for Coogee to the amendment of the member for Goulburn be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes42
Noes46
Majority.....4

AYES

Aitchison, J
Barr, C
Catley, Y

Atalla, E
Butler, R
Chanthivong, A

Bali, S
Car, P
Cotsis, S

AYES

Crakanthorp, T	Daley, M	Dalton, H
Dib, J	Donato, P	Doyle, T
Finn, J	Harris, D	Harrison, J
Hoenig, R	Hornery, S	Kamper, S
Lalich, N	Leong, J	Lynch, P
McDermott, H	McGirr, J	McKay, J
Mehan, D (teller)	Mihailuk, T	Minns, C
O'Neill, M	Park, R	Parker, J
Piper, G	Saffin, J	Smith, T
Tesch, L	Voltz, L	Warren, G
Washington, K	Watson, A (teller)	Zangari, G

NOES

Anderson, K	Ayres, S	Barilaro, J
Berejiklian, G	Bromhead, S	Clancy, J
Conolly, K	Constance, A	Cooke, S (teller)
Coure, M	Crouch, A (teller)	Davies, T
Dominello, V	Elliott, D	Gibbons, M
Greenwich, A	Griffin, J	Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S	Henskens, A	Johnsen, M
Kean, M	Lee, G	Lindsay, W
Marshall, A	O'Dea, J	Pavey, M
Perrottet, D	Petinos, E	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		

PAIRS

Haylen, J	Hazzard, B
Scully, P	Williams, R

Amendment of the member for Coogee to the amendment of the member for Goulburn negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the amendment of the member for Goulburn be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes47
 Noes41
 Majority.....6

AYES

Anderson, K	Ayres, S	Barilaro, J
Berejiklian, G	Bromhead, S	Clancy, J
Conolly, K	Constance, A	Cooke, S (teller)
Coure, M	Crouch, A (teller)	Davies, T
Dominello, V	Elliott, D	Gibbons, M
Greenwich, A	Griffin, J	Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S	Henskens, A	Johnsen, M
Kean, M	Lee, G	Lindsay, W
Marshall, A	O'Dea, J	Pavey, M
Perrottet, D	Petinos, E	Piper, G
Preston, R	Provest, G	Roberts, A
Saunders, D	Sidgreaves, P	Sidoti, J

AYES

Singh, G
Stokes, R
Tuckerman, W
Williams, L

Smith, N
Taylor, M
Upton, G
Wilson, F

Speakman, M
Toole, P
Ward, G

NOES

Aitchison, J
Barr, C
Catley, Y
Crakanthorp, T
Dib, J
Finn, J
Hoenig, R
Lalich, N
McDermott, H
Mehan, D (teller)
O'Neill, M
Saffin, J
Voltz, L
Watson, A (teller)

Atalla, E
Butler, R
Chanthivong, A
Daley, M
Donato, P
Harris, D
Hornery, S
Leong, J
McGirr, J
Mihailuk, T
Park, R
Smith, T
Warren, G
Zangari, G

Bali, S
Car, P
Cotsis, S
Dalton, H
Doyle, T
Harrison, J
Kamper, S
Lynch, P
McKay, J
Minns, C
Parker, J
Tesch, L
Washington, K

PAIRS

Haylen, J
Scully, P

Hazzard, B
Williams, R

Amendment of the member for Goulburn agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

DUBBO ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY EVENTS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:50:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Commends Dubbo Regional Council, Mid-Western Regional Council, and Narromine Shire Council on their successful Australia Day events.
- (2) Notes Australia Day celebrations are important to communities in the Dubbo electorate as they provide an opportunity for people to come together to celebrate Australia and recognise outstanding achievers.
- (3) Congratulates the Citizens of the Year including Jan Colmer of Narromine, Megan Hamblin of Dubbo, and Jan Pirie of the Mid-Western region.
- (4) Thanks all winners at the Australia Day Awards for their dedication to their communities

I pay tribute to the outstanding achievers who were recognised for their contributions to their local communities as part of the Australia Day festivities in my electorate just a month ago. Our local council staff, as always, played a very important role in organising and hosting the Australia Day events this year. In my electorate the three local government areas of Dubbo Regional Council, Narromine Shire Council and the Mid-Western Regional Council hosted an array of events around the region with a focus on bringing our communities together as one. The theme for this year's Australia Day celebrations was the story of Australia, and what a story we have to tell.

Our ever growing and changing communities truly reflect our brilliant and diverse cultures. I am proud to stand in this place and recognise not only the journey we have been on but also the great future we are forging together as communities in this great State. On Sunday 26 January we gathered together across the region to celebrate our culture, our identity and our communities. It is important that we continue to hold community-based events and occasions that bring us together as we face a seemingly never-ending drought. Despite some recent falls of rain—in fact, rain is falling in my part of the world today—the issue of drought and support for communities and businesses continues to be at the forefront of my mind.

Australia Day gives us a chance to step back and reflect on what is important—namely, a strong sense of community. That is exactly what we did this year. Councils and staff across the State play a key role in organising and hosting our Australia Day events and provide our communities with that sense of togetherness. It is for this reason that I bring to the attention of this House councils across New South Wales and recognise the work that they do for our communities. That work is especially important in regional areas where councils are asked to bring together quite distinct communities, often separated by great distances, and forge some sort of a shared identity.

In the Narromine Shire, which has a population of about 6,500, the council held two Australia Day events—one in Narromine and the other in the smaller town of Trangie. Australia Day awards were presented in both towns in recognition of the contributions residents had made to their local communities. This year I was lucky enough to attend and speak at the Narromine celebrations at Dundas Park, and what a day it was. I will come to the community award winners shortly, but let me say that the Watermelon eating contest is always the highlight. I foolishly took on reigning world champion Anthony "Evvo" Everett. He demolished me. The Temporary Speaker is looking perplexed about the watermelon eating contest. It is not just a wedge of water melon. It is whole watermelon in which you bury your face and try to eat as quickly as you can. I should have been in the novice section. I took on the world champion and he owned me. Well done, Evvo! It was definitely the highlight of the day. Next year I will have another crack at it but with a bit of training under my belt.

The Mid-Western Regional Council does Australia Day a little differently, with not one but four distinct centres—Mudgee, Gulgong, Kandos and Rylstone. The council rotates its celebrations around the local government area and the region comes together as one big community. This cements a regional identity whilst still allowing the host community to put its stamp on the celebrations each year. Dubbo Regional Council held distinct events in Dubbo and Wellington. The starting times were staggered so that community members and officials could attend both, which worked well. Australia Day awards were presented at both events to recognise the distinct contributions made in each community. Australia Day is all about coming together as a community. No-one highlighted that more than Dubbo's Australia Day Ambassador Peter Gibbs.

Peter is a Gamilaroi man and a Dubbo resident. He established the Indigenous Police Recruitment Our Way Delivery Program, which supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to join the NSW Police Force or other justice, emergency and government agencies. In his speech, Peter acknowledged that there were many conversations about Australia Day and changing the date. He urged people to look at Australia from another perspective: that of a new immigrant choosing to call Australia home. He said that no country or community is perfect but in Australia we are all very lucky. He further said that what we have achieved in this country is definitely worth celebrating. Indeed, the evidence of Peter's words could certainly be seen on the faces of those who became Australian citizens on 26 January 2020.

Over the years I have attended many citizenship ceremonies. The one thing they all have in common is the sheer joy on people's faces when they take an oath, receive that certificate and are welcomed as an Australian. They are always thrilled to be able to call themselves Aussies. They see a lot of things to celebrate and so should we. On Australia Day we also celebrate the people who make our communities such incredible places to live. That is exactly what happened across my electorate on 26 January and I will mention as many of the award recipients as I can. Megan Hamblin was named Dubbo's Citizen of the Year. Megan is a volunteer hub leader of Central West New South Wales for St John Ambulance. She has dedicated more than 1000 hours to St John Ambulance in the past two years alone. Jan Pirie was named the Mid-Western's Citizen of the Year Award. Jan is a retired registered nurse and cancer survivor who uses her own experiences to support others along their cancer journey.

Jan Colmer was named Narromine's Citizen of the Year. Jan moved to Narromine 28 years ago and has been involved in many committees, including through the St Augustine's Church parish and diocese, junior soccer, girl guides, senior cricket and Rotary. Aunty Joyce Williams was named the Wellington's Citizen of the Year. Aunty Joyce, a Wiradjuri elder, advocated for Aboriginal people following the 1967 referendum and started the Aboriginal Health Services around New South Wales. At 93 years of age she continues to serve by offering the welcome to country at community and formal events. In fact, I recently ran into Aunty Joyce at the opening of a new community asset in Wellington. She continues to be an absolute gem. Anne Holden, the principal of Trangie Central School, was named the Trangie Citizen of the Year for her continued service to education and the wider community.

We also had Young Citizens of the Year: Liam Miller, Ned Dickson, Ned Kennedy and Molly Croft—who I have spoken about in this place previously and continues to be an inspiration. Senior Citizens of the Year were: Lorraine Callaghan, Shirley Allen and Coral Dennis. Sporting achievement awards went to: Melanie Currey, Haylee Fuller, Karen Granger, Ben McGregor, Ben Harris, Emma Edwards, Tomas Newlands, Adine Hoey, Jock Kater, Angus Dugan and Lily Clarke—who I have also spoken about in this place previously. Other awards went to Shane Dolton, Jojo Joseph, Scott Etherington, Julie Clare Parsons and the We Care Community Shop, the Narromine Jets Social Touch Football Competition and the Trangie Truck and Tractor Show, which was a ripper

of a show in August last year. Communities in my electorate rely on events and celebrations like Australia Day to remind us of our community spirit and to provide an opportunity for all of us to reconnect with friends, families and neighbours. I congratulate everyone who was nominated and everyone who was awarded at this year's Australia Day events. I look forward to next year's celebrations.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:57:10): I congratulate the member for Dubbo on his motion, which commends the Dubbo Regional Council and two others. It notes that Australia Day celebrations are important to communities in the Dubbo electorate as they provide an opportunity for people to come together to celebrate Australia and recognise outstanding achievers. It also congratulates the good people in his electorate who contribute so much to the region and thanks all award winners for their dedication to community. In our society Australia Day is iconic. It is an important date in our calendar that means so many different things to different people. I acknowledge those important matters. However, I would be remiss not to acknowledge some things that have occurred in Dubbo that have been deeply disappointing particularly for its Aboriginal community.

I know the member for Dubbo does not concur with the racist comments that have been made or with the behaviour of a certain Dubbo councillor. It is important for this House to call this out for what it is—the racist remarks made towards the First Nation people of Dubbo are nothing short of a disappointing outrage. The member for Dubbo deeply cares and is passionate about his community. He works side by side with his constituents in the Dubbo electorate and in its broader ranging areas. There has been much commentary around what Australia Day means to our First Nation people. When we heard those comments spread out publicly and I was contacted about them, you could have knocked me over with a feather. I simply did not believe that any public representative at any level of government would make such insulting remarks to another human being, particularly to our own First Nation Aboriginal people, and particularly in his own electorate.

We know that Dubbo, like many other places in Australia and New South Wales, has a long and proud Aboriginal history. Wiradjuri people will continue to walk the lands as traditional owners for thousands of thousands of years. I put on record the disgust and disgrace that members on this side of the House felt when we saw those derogatory, insulting and racist comments from that elected representative in Dubbo. I conclude by thanking the member for Dubbo for bringing this motion before the House. I again acknowledge his passion for the people whom he represents and the support that he has given to those who contribute so much to the people of Dubbo.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (13:00:53): I thank the member for Dubbo for bringing this motion before the House and commend him for his words about his community. It shows how strongly he feels about the Dubbo community and gives members a chance to speak about what Australia Day means to them. Australia Day means many things to many people. It celebrates the story of Australia; the story of an extraordinary nation. Our story began about 60,000 years ago, with new chapters written every day. On Australia Day we reflect on our history—its highs and its lows—and we respect the stories of others. We celebrate our nation, its achievements and, most of all, its people. We are all part of that story—a message that came through loud and clear at Coffs Harbour on Australia Day 2020. Big crowds gathered at the North Coast Regional Botanic Garden on the 26 January to celebrate our Australia Day award winners and the 60 new Aussies from 19 countries who proudly received their Australian citizenship. Those new citizens will fondly remember the warm summer day they were welcomed into the Australian family. Their excitement and enthusiasm was inspiring.

I congratulate all those who received their citizenship this year. I also congratulate our Citizen of the Year, Jean Vickery; Young Citizen of the Year, Emma Millie Serisier; Sportsperson of the Year, Olissa Onley; and the Event of the Year, Sawtell Fun Day. I also congratulate others who were nominated for awards, including Barbara Haigh, Dean Evers, Michael Bourne, Nora Brooks, Teo Ross, Kaleb Darbin, Nathan Stry-Wynn and Heather Orme. Serving their community with distinction sits well with many residents of the Coffs Coast. 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 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. Before entering this place I was lucky enough to join Tom, his family and friends on the sixty-fifth anniversary of their business. It was a well-attended event, with a few hundred people celebrating at the Bonville Golf Resort.

He was 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 Christian Rehabilitation Centre at Glenreagh, where people seek help for their struggles with addiction. This important work has saved many lives. The HQB Australia Day Fun Run was also held with two-kilometre, five-kilometre and 10-kilometre runs for anyone to enter, starting and finishing in front of the surf club. The winners of the two-kilometre event were Finn Klinkers, aged 14, and Abbey Lawler, aged 11. The winners of the five-kilometre event were Grant Nelson and Sarah Bailey, and the winners of the ten-kilometre event were Nick Murray and

Lilli Smyth. I congratulate all those winners and everyone who took part in the event on the day. I once again thank the member for Dubbo for bringing this motion before the House.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:04:27): I also thank the member for Dubbo for bringing this motion before the House today and congratulate him on the great work that he is doing in the Dubbo electorate. The people of Dubbo are very lucky to have him representing them. Australia Day is a proud and patriotic occasion for Australians. This is certainly the case on the Central Coast, where we celebrate with citizenship ceremonies, public events and spending time with friends and families at the beach and at home. Every Australia Day I urge my community to use the Australia Day long weekend as an opportunity to reflect, celebrate what we have achieved together and to remember that we are lucky to live in this fantastic country. It is disappointing that some left-wing councillors have been trying to ban Australia Day celebrations and events, but that is not the case on the Central Coast.

The motion of the member for Dubbo mentions Dubbo Regional Council, Mid-Western Regional Council and Narromine Shire Council. I take this opportunity to mention my local council, Central Coast Council. On Australia Day Central Coast Council hosted a number of events across our region. First, the annual Australia Day citizenship ceremony was held at Mingara Recreation Club. Hundreds of people attended, with 88 becoming citizens. From Azerbaijan to Zahir, we had the alphabet covered. It was a fantastic morning and one of the highlights of Australia Day is seeing people become Australian citizens. There is nothing better than when they sing the national anthem after being sworn in as Australian citizens. I know that the Temporary Speaker enjoys a good citizenship ceremony as much as the rest of us. They are uplifting experiences. Another fantastic initiative from council is the public event at Woy Woy. This year there were performances by Mitch Gardner, The Campervan Dancers, Gem and Lachie, Steve Edmonds Band and the INXS Tribute Show. As well as official proceedings, including a speech by the fantastic Rural Fire Service Superintendent Viki Campbell, who was the Central Coast Citizen of the Year, there was also a lantern parade and an eight-minute firework show later in the evening.

I also thank my good friend Barry "BJ" Duncan, who gave the welcome to country at Woy Woy. There is no more stirring tribute to the Aboriginal community on the Central Coast than by BJ, who is an outstanding leader in his community and an outstanding member of our community. It was a very good welcome to country. He said that Australia Day is about us coming together to celebrate the greatness of this nation rather than dividing. It brings us all together. I congratulate the council for engaging our community through those successful events. One of my favourite things about Australia Day each year is the Wagstaffe to Killcare Community Association's flag-raising ceremony. It starts at 8.00 a.m. sharp and features poetry reading, singing and a huge community breakfast. This year the funds raised went, quite rightly, to the Rural Fire Service.

Well done to Aunty Robyn Reid for the acknowledgement of country, the Pretty Beach Public School captains for the flag raising and Ken Tough for his incredible poetry reading, which he does every year. Ken is an amazing local poet and great all-round guy. I also congratulate Anne Jackson for the Australia Day address, and a cappella group Loco Femme and Niamh Watson for their fantastic musical items that provided a great start to a wonderful day on the Central Coast. Again, Australia Day is one of the most proud and patriotic days on the Central Coast. I thank the member for Dubbo for bringing this motion before the House. It is a great opportunity for us to acknowledge all the volunteers who take the time to make sure that the Australia Day celebrations are ones that we can be incredibly proud of. I commend the member for Dubbo.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:08:30): In reply: I thank members who contributed to debate on this motion today, particularly the member for Terrigal. It sounded as though he had a fantastic Australia Day celebration in his part of the world. On 26 January this year the member for Coffs Harbour, like all members, recognised the special people in his community. The member for Campbelltown contributed to the Australia Day motion by sledging an email from a councillor, though he did recognise that I had nothing to do with it. Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. Not long ago a former Leader of the Opposition made comments about certain races of people with PhDs. On a positive note, the member for Campbelltown recognised the effort I put into the community, but this was not the most appropriate time for sledging. However, I do appreciate that he took the time to be here.

Australia Day is meant to bring people together, which is certainly what we heard this morning from the member for Terrigal and the member for Coffs Harbour. In their communities, and certainly across my electorate of Dubbo, people take the opportunity to celebrate and recognise what brings us together. Sometimes we need a little prod, particularly in regional areas. We are not always good at coming together for no particular reason. We need that push to come along and be part of something. I mentioned the watermelon-eating contest, which we may instigate in The Nats party room or the Whip's Office. It may be a good way to bond. We had the largest Australia Day cake I have ever seen. As members can see from my svelte figure, I indulged in a few pieces of that.

Australia Day is a great chance for community members to come together in a way that distinct sports, arts, farming or town groups do not always do. Australia Day certainly gives the opportunity to make sure that these disparate groups come together and recognise they are all part of the same community. My community spans around 20,000 square kilometres and there are people with different interests and abilities who connect on different levels. Staff from Dubbo Regional Council, Mid-Western Regional Council and Narromine Shire Council put in a huge amount of effort to make sure that Australia Day ran smoothly. There is always great food and community activities. I congratulate those who got involved and I thank councils around the State for ensuring this day was everything it could be. I look forward to another great Australia Day in my region next year.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

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

Members

MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER

MEMBER FOR BARWON

The SPEAKER: I wish the member for Upper Hunter and the member for Barwon all the best for their upcoming birthdays. I hope they have wonderful celebrations planned.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to students and teachers from St Paul's College, Kempsey, guests of the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, and member for Oxley. I also welcome to the Chamber Cassandra McLaren, the Upper Hunter electorate 2019 Local Woman of the Year and founder of the online movement One Day Closer to Rain, and her husband, Peter McLaren, guests of the member for Upper Hunter. I acknowledge guests from Lake Macquarie U3A, Clare Murphy, Narelle De Losa, Lisa McKendry and Martina Bowen. I also acknowledge Australian motorsport champion Colin Bond and his wife, Robyn Bond, who are celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary—congratulations. They are guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. Finally, I acknowledge Paul Noack, the New South Wales Assistant Branch Secretary of the Australian Workers' Union, guest of the member for Blacktown.

Announcements

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The SPEAKER (14:55:00): This week we celebrate International Women's Day, and give special attention to women and their contributions to our society. Around Parliament House this week and next week there will be a number of events to mark the occasion. This morning many members attended the NSW Women of the Year Awards ceremony at the International Convention Centre Sydney, recognising women and their incredible efforts in our communities. On Monday at 10.00 a.m. Parliament House is hosting a talk from keynote speaker Ita Buttrose in the Theatre, and on Tuesday the Australasian Study of Parliament Group will host a presentation in the McKell Room by Professor Lee Ann Banaszak entitled, "How women got the vote on the State level: NSW in a comparative context".

I recognise all the women who do a wonderful job in and around our community, including those who support me on a regular basis—members of my family and my passionate staffers, most of whom are women, Ellie Laing, Georgia Luk, Samantha McFarlane, Koharig Boulghourjian, Sarah Ingram and Annie Rinaudo. I also acknowledge in this Chamber our female Clerk, Helen Minnican, who does a great job, as well as all 33 female members of this Parliament sitting in the Chamber today. In particular, this House has the honour of having two outstanding women lead each side of the Chamber in the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition.

Question Time

COVID-19

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:16:54): My question is directed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation. What steps is the Minister taking to protect consumers from price gouging of medicine and essential household items due to fears about the coronavirus?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:17:36): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. I simply say: Let's let common sense prevail. Let's let

common sense prevail not only in the city of Sydney but across the length and breadth of New South Wales. We are in the middle of a serious crisis. We need people to stay calm and go about their normal business. As the health Minister—who has been updating the people of New South Wales on a daily basis regarding the seriousness of this situation—has said, we are asking the people of New South Wales to be calm, go about their normal daily business and continue with their personal hygiene routines. There is no need—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. This is an important question for consumers and residents in New South Wales. The question is specifically about price gouging of medicine and household items.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has been making relevant introductory remarks.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Again, I reassure the people of New South Wales that this Government and the Federal Government are doing everything they can to reassure the people of not only New South Wales but also Australia that they need to remain calm. There is no need to panic buy. In relation to the dwindling supplies due to people panic buying, they will be replenished. The Federal Government made an announcement about that today. The State Government is continuing to monitor the situation on an hourly basis. Stay calm, maintain personal hygiene, wash your hands, take care of each other and we will get through this.

LOCAL SCHOOLS, LOCAL DECISIONS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (14:19:42): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on what new strategies the Government has to improve results in the classroom?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:19:54): I thank the member for Miranda for her question. I know she is a passionate advocate of education not just in her electorate but across the State—as, understandably, are many colleagues in this place. It is no secret that our Government has been focused on every measure it can undertake in order to improve results in the classroom. It is one thing for the Government to build record numbers of new schools and upgrade schools across the State; it is also important for the Government to make sure that it is lifting standards in our classrooms. That is why today both the education Minister and I said that we are going to focus on the policy area of Local Schools, Local Decisions. I stress that this policy came in in 2012, before the record amounts of Gonski funding had hit all our schools.

Until this point, principals and school communities had full liberty to spend money in their school without having to have any targets or results against them. I thank the education Minister, who has spoken to the peak principals' body and stakeholders to make sure there will be full consultation on this policy. We want to make sure that their right to autonomy and their right to spend money as they wish is linked to getting better results in the classroom. We think that is a fair way to move forward in this policy area. We welcome decentralisation and the freedom of school communities to have input into where that money is allocated, but we also need to ensure that there are enhanced results—especially in those schools that we know can do more. This comes off the back of record funding in our schools. In fact, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government was the first government to sign up to Gonski. Not only was it the first government to sign up to Gonski but also it was the first government to—

The SPEAKER: The member for Londonderry and the member for Canterbury will stop muttering.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Not only was this the first government to sign up to Gonski, this was also the first government to lock in record levels of Gonski funding till 2027. That is something this Government is incredibly proud of. I also stress that the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy adjustments will be done in consultation with our peak bodies and our education community.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It will ensure that we manage resources and we engage with the local school community. Also, most importantly, one of the bugbears for many principals is the amount of red tape and administrative burden. So during this process—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —over a number of years we have ensured that we have reduced the red tape. But we want to do more in making sure that happens.

Mr David Harris: You can't even go and buy a sausage without having to fill out 50 forms.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I also stress how pleased I am that this additional reform comes off the back of a number of previous announcements we have made in relation to decluttering the curriculum and

improving results. Yesterday I spoke about the strike force of expert teachers who will be imparting their knowledge and expertise to other—

[Opposition members interjected.]

I do not know about those opposite, but we on this side support teachers. We are the party for teachers. We have employed more than 4,500 teachers since we came to government and we will be employing another 4,500 over the next four years. We are very pleased also to ensure that, whether it is our priorities in relation to bumping up our NAPLAN results or HSC results or about ensuring that we have more focus on our core competencies and science, technology, engineering and mathematics, the Government is absolutely focused on the education task force.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite closed schools when in government. Not only are we building new schools but we are also ensuring that we improve results. Those opposite can continue to live in the dark ages but we are the Government for students, teachers and education.

EDUCATION

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:24:46): I direct my question to the Premier. New South Wales has the fastest falling school results in the world—worse than Poland, Estonia and New Zealand. Will the Premier inform the House whether she will reverse the 1,800 jobs her Government cut from education eight years ago, cuts which have failed an entire generation of schoolchildren?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:25:12): I am not sure where the shadow Minister for Education got her information from because, as I said, since we have been in government we have employed over 5,000 teachers. And, over the next four years, we will be employing another 4,500.

Ms Prue Car: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What is her point of order?

Ms Prue Car: My point of order is Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms Prue Car: It is the professor leading your own curriculum review who says the decline is almost unmatched anywhere in the world.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Let me make it clear that when those opposite get the facts wrong they jump up on a point of order. All of the cuts were made by the Labor Government. It cut staff and it closed schools and hospitals—the list goes on. I was pleased that in term one of 2020, 24 brand-new or upgraded schools were opened across the State—across the city and across the regions.

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question was about the 1,800 jobs. The Premier is not answering the question.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It took a Liberal-Nationals Government to commit to Gonski, to make record funding of the operation side and capital side. Since we came to government we have had to play catch-up for the former government's abysmal management of education.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question was about 1,800 jobs cut under this Premier. Is she going to reverse those job cuts? That is the question.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being generally relevant.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Labor cannot handle that we have more teachers than ever before because we are hiring them.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I ask the Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party: What do you have against public education? You closed down the high school I went to. You closed down 90 schools when in government. We are proudly the Government that knows that equality—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are the Government that has record staffing numbers, record new schools and record funding.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say to those opposite: Don't you dare try to make up history. We have record funding and record schools.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. As I have said, I am happy to give a little leeway when an attack is being made, but I still need to be able to hear the Premier. There is too much noise in the Chamber. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the second time. The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We know it is not just about the number of teachers that we employ; it is also about resourcing them properly and giving them proper standards in order to lift results in the classroom. The former Labor Government closed schools and cut funding in education, but we are the party for education. We have increased funding for the day-to-day operations and to build schools. We have increased the number of teachers. Those opposite should hang their heads in shame.

The Government is proudly making difficult decisions to ensure record funding and education because we believe inherently in the principle that every child, no matter where they live or their circumstances, should have the opportunity to be their best. Whether they live in the bush or the city, irrespective of their post code or personal circumstances, hard work and passion should be the only two criteria for success. That is why we have record funding. That is why we have a record number of teachers. That is why we are the party for students, education and for the future of New South Wales.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:30:46): I address my question to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on regional projects that are ahead of schedule?

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:31:35): I thank the member for Clarence for his question. He knows that we are powering ahead with our plans to deliver infrastructure that improves connectivity and creates opportunity for people in the bush. We are building projects that are going to make a big difference to the way people travel. They will ensure our roads are safer and more reliable. Those projects will unlock efficiency for freight operators and bring regional businesses closer to their customers.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Gosford to order for the third time. The member has been particularly badly behaved today.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: In this financial year alone we will invest more than \$6 billion in infrastructure that delivers on our vision for roads and infrastructure in the bush. It is creating benefits right across the State. Labor talks a big game of focusing on the regions, but when the Opposition leader has some time to kill I will tell members what she does: She spends it going down to George Street, hopping on the light rail and putting baffling social videos together.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129, relevance. The Minister is not being relevant. We want to hear about the regional roads that the Government has committed to but not delivered. Why does the Minister not talk about what he has not delivered?

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Last week those opposite were trying to tell me Canterbury and Campbelltown are regional. They have no idea where the regions are. I am a helpful guy. As a helpful guy I will tell members about some of those great projects so that next time the Leader of the Opposition is out in the regions she can go and look at some of them. In the Far West we are sealing hundreds of kilometres of the Silver City and Cobb highways. It is on track to be finished by 2022, six months ahead of schedule. Those highways are absolutely crucial links to the communities in those areas. In the past we have seen them closed up to 12 times a year, sometimes for

weeks on end, due to rain. We welcome some of the rain we are seeing in the west at the moment, but the Silver City and Cobb highways are both closed in both directions. The Silver City Highway is closed between Tibooburra and the Queensland border and the Cobb Highway is closed from Wilcannia to Ivanhoe. The investment that we are making will ensure that when it rains in future that important highway for those communities will remain open.

Last weekend I was in the Upper Hunter with the local member to check out the Scone bypass, one of three that we are delivering on the New England Highway for the Hunter. The people of Scone are excited about this project because they know it will take heavy vehicles out of the centre of town. There will be a five-kilometre bypass around Scone. We had a community walkover on that bypass. Thousands of people turned up to see the new investment that this Government has made in that area. The member for Upper Hunter is also excited because more than a third of the town turned up.

The Leader of the Opposition can drive the bypass when it opens to traffic next week—months ahead of schedule—or she can drive the Newell Highway, where this week we marked the opening of two new overtaking lanes south of Forbes. This is part of the Government's \$500 million investment, improving safety and travel times for people who use the Newell Highway, which is the freight backbone of this State. We have opened seven overtaking lanes on that road in the last 12 months and another five are under construction. With more in planning, I expect we will be over halfway to our target of 30 lanes either complete or under construction by the middle of this year.

We are also investing in bridges across the State, like the new Gunnedah Bridge, which will provide a huge boost to freight efficiency. We said that it would be completed by the middle of 2021 and we are on track to better that. Our project at the new Charleyong Bridge on the road between Braidwood and Nowra was scheduled to be completed by June. But after damage to the old bridge that meant a 35-minute detour, we pulled out all the stops to fast-track that project. It is now restoring connectivity critical for those communities impacted by bushfires. It opened to traffic last week, making life just a little bit easier for the local community. On this side of the House, we will continue to provide good outcomes for people in the bush. [*Extension of time*]

It is not often that I agree with Anthony Albanese, but he made a good point in his opening comments at the Country Labor Conference when he said, "When you're on a good thing, stick to it." The people of New South Wales know that they are on a good thing because they stuck with us in 2015, they stuck with us in 2019 and they will stick with us in 2023. The Government is investing in the bush and delivering game-changing infrastructure. I refer to projects like the Princes Highway duplication and the Pacific Highway duplication. We are putting \$543 million into the regions through our Fixing Country Roads program—

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: —driving freight efficiencies. Some \$500 million will shortly start rolling out through our Fixing Local Roads program. The people of regional New South Wales have tuned out to Labor's nonsense. I clicked onto the livestream of the Country Labor Conference at Singleton at the weekend to see what the Leader of the Opposition's vision for the bush was. Do you know how many people were watching? Just 17—and I was one of them! And I am never going to vote for any of those opposite. Perhaps they should have played their light rail video with their music instead. While Labor wants to invest in social media, the Government will continue to invest in infrastructure projects that are delivering for regional New South Wales because we are the party that delivers for the people in the bush.

The SPEAKER: The member for Canterbury will remain silent.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:38:51): My question is directed to the Chair of the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members on both sides of the Chamber are making too much noise. I call the Deputy Premier to order for the first time.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

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

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: Given that Nuclear for Climate Australia has identified the Albury region as an area of interest, does the member think there should be a nuclear industry in Albury?

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order: Standing Order 127 stipulates that the Chair can be asked a question, but it must relate to a matter before the committee, which that question does not do.

Mr Ryan Park: To the point of order: On 18 June 2019 the House passed the resolution establishing this committee. Point one of that resolution listed the portfolio responsibilities of the committee which, among others, included regional New South Wales and industry and trade. The question specifically asked if the member thinks there should be a nuclear industry in a particular part of regional New South Wales.

Mr Andrew Constance: To the point of order: Nuclear power is not a matter before that committee so the question needs to be ruled out of order.

The SPEAKER: I am happy for the question to be redrafted, as I am not satisfied that it meets the standing order. The question must relate to a matter concerning the affairs of the committee. The question relates to a nuclear industry in Albury. I do not see that as relevant to the member's role as the chair of a committee: I see it as relevant to his electorate. The fact that the question includes the word "industry" is not sufficient to bring it within the remit of the standing order. I am sure the member can redraft the question.

Mr Ryan Park: It is the nuclear industry in regional New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: The member for Tweed has the call.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (14:43:51): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will he update the House on the economic benefits of the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government's record infrastructure investment for New South Wales?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:44:07): I thank the member for Tweed for his question. I will begin by welcoming the guest of the member for Blacktown Mr Paul Noack, who is the New South Wales Assistant Secretary of the Australian Workers' Union [AWU]. Last month I was reading in the great *Australian Financial Review* an article written by the AWU Secretary, Mr Daniel Walton, "Why Labor must embrace nuclear power". I ask the member for Blacktown: Did you rule out a nuclear reactor in the electorate of Blacktown? We know who Paul Noack is a mate of—the member for Kogarah. Paul Noack is here to draft the nuclear policy for the Labor Party. Welcome, Paul. Thank you for attending. Which seat are you running for?

Ms Jo Haylen: Which seat are you running for?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Well, that is a good question, Jo. Who knows? It is a big redistribution. Who knows where I will land.

Mr John Barilaro: Summer Hill.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: They are coming for you, Jo. It is a known fact that no government in our State's history has built more than the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government and that has translated into real economic dividends for our State. We saw that illustrated in the release yesterday of the national accounts for the December quarter, which showed an annual increase in growth from 1.7 per cent to 2.2 per cent. The Federal Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg, said that this is a strong result that defied the critics and showed that our economy is standing strong. He is right but he was remiss in not going State by State. So let us do a bit of a look around in respect of growth: Western Australia, negative 2 per cent; South Australia, negative 2 per cent; Victoria, negative 1 per cent; Queensland, plus 0.2 per cent; and New South Wales, plus 0.5 per cent. Once again New South Wales shows the strongest economic growth in the country.

Mr Chris Minns: What about Victoria?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Victoria is negative 0.1 per cent. Why does the member for Kogarah keep talking our State down? Critical Chris—so negative all the time. Mate, you are so negative. You are none from two, mate. You couldn't beat Michael. You couldn't beat Jodi. You're none from two, mate. You haven't even got a batting average. You haven't scored a run. You've done nothing. He has done absolutely nothing and yet he comes in here all the time and talks our State down. Unbelievable! We love New South Wales. What is driving the State's economic growth?

Mr Michael Daley: This is a stunt.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Did the member for Maroubra like the question? What is driving our economic growth? Mr Speaker, I will tell you. It is our public investment in infrastructure, which would not exist under Labor. I can say for the first time in this House that the total investment in infrastructure since 2011 by this Government has been \$225 billion in metros, museums, motorways, schools, hospitals and stadiums. Let us compare that \$225 billion to what Labor invested—I keep telling them as the asset base of the State is growing—in the same period. Was it \$200 billion, \$180 billion, \$170 billion, \$160 billion, \$150 billion? No, it was just a tick over \$100 billion. We are twice as good, with double Labor's rate of investment and double the fun.

What has made our record investment possible? Asset recycling—the policy that dares not speak its name in Labor. Labor opposes asset recycling every step of the way. The member for Strathfield, the member for Kogarah and the shadow Treasurer in the other place opposed it. Labor campaigned against it at two elections in a row and was rejected two elections in a row. Labor has to stop denying the science. Economic deniers are on the Labor side of the House. They should stop denying it because they went to the last election and cancelled project after project after project. [*Extension of time*]

Just imagine the New South Wales economy if Labor were still running it—no projects, no jobs, no growth, nothing. We know that right across the State—people in Sydney and regional New South Wales, everyone in the gallery, including Paul Noack—people love this Government's infrastructure projects. That includes the Leader of the Opposition. How bad are you going when you put out a video to try to attack the Government on light rail and you end up promoting it? There was the Leader of the Opposition, a nice smooth ride, no crowd, no screaming kids, a clean carriage, digital screens, Opal card in check—tap on, tap off. It was fantastic. Were you in television before?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Leader of the Opposition was fantastic. Do you have an agent? Andrew Constance says, "We'll get you out there—Sydney Metro North West, WestConnex." The Leader of the Opposition is going to be the face of the Government's 2023 campaign—in more ways than one. For most videos, there are always critics. I was on Twitter and this is what they said: "It looked nice?", "Jodi this is a great ad for the light rail. Was this supposed to be an attack?", "Michael Daley seems like a competent Opposition leader now", "Please be better, we need you to be better."

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Treasurer was asked about the economics of the State.

The SPEAKER: I am exercising discretion. I will be happy for the Treasurer to wrap up.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: This is the people's Parliament and this is what people are saying: "What exactly is the angle here?", "Labor shouldn't knock public transport", "You had time to kill? How about formulating some coherent policies?", "This video sucks and you should feel bad and your staffers who made it should feel even worse"—well done, guys—"Jodi you're not supposed to do the Curb theme meme on yourself." Well done, Jodi. Thank you.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE AND POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:51:19): Thank you for the sideshow and filling in for me, Treasurer.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: You asked a committee chair a question during question time. How bad are you going?

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: I will do that again. I want to go for a roll on Standing Order 127.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will remain silent, including Government members. The member for Prospect has the call.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Is this still a question without notice or has it got so much notice now it doesn't matter?

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: Yes, it is still a question to the Chair of the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development. For the benefit of those who do not know the member to whom I refer, it is the member for Albury.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Chair, will you actually put nuclear into Prospect?

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakehurst will cease interjecting.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: Chair, given your committee is conducting an inquiry into expanding support for drought-affected communities, do you and your committee support the Premier's plan to spend \$1.5 billion relocating the Powerhouse Museum instead of on drought relief?

The SPEAKER: Members will remain silent.

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 128 (3), which does not allow a question to seek an expression of opinion, and also to Standing Order 127, which is an interesting point given the committee is not examining the Powerhouse Museum.

Mr Ryan Park: To the point of order: The committee is looking at drought relief, which is a component of the question. If we disallowed questions seeking an expression of opinion none of the questions asked by the Opposition would ever be allowed.

The SPEAKER: Standing Order 127 refers to "... the chair of a committee may be asked a question relating to the affairs of the committee." I am satisfied that drought relief is within the purview of the committee. I am not satisfied with the way the question was asked, "Do you" as opposed to, "Does your committee".

Ms Jodi McKay: He said "the committee".

The SPEAKER: He said "Do you and your committee". The reference to "you" strikes it out under Standing Order 128 (3). I advised the member of that when he approached me. I will give him one more chance to rephrase the question, but not now. He can come back and ask the question again. In the meantime, I will take a question from the member for Lismore.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:54:33): My question is directed to the Minister for Local Government. Yesterday the Minister said that she would not support uranium mining or a nuclear plant on the South Coast. May I ask her, as local government Minister, which local government area she thinks should have a nuclear power plant?

The SPEAKER: The Minister will wait until the House is silent.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (14:55:28): We have not really talked about locations for nuclear reactors or anything else, even though in the sixties there was a plan for a nuclear reactor in Jervis Bay. It was ruled out by a Liberal Prime Minister, I must say, so it is never coming back. I do not think we have even got close to looking at locations, except that I would certainly rule out my electorate ever in the future being the location for a nuclear reactor.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE AND POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

The SPEAKER: The member for Prospect has the call. I warn the member that this is his third and final take.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:56:14): Thank you for your advice, Mr Speaker, and for helping me write this question. No doubt it should be in order because you wrote it.

The SPEAKER: No, I told you what not to say.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: My question is directed to the Chair of the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development. Given the committee is conducting an inquiry into expanding support for drought-affected communities, does it support the Premier's plans to spend \$1.5 billion relocating the Powerhouse Museum instead of on drought relief?

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 127. Whilst the committee is inquiring into drought relief, it is not inquiring into the Powerhouse Museum, which is in metropolitan Sydney. The question relates specifically to whether the chair of the committee supports the Premier's plan in relation to the Powerhouse, not drought relief. Given that there is no reference before the committee in relation to the Powerhouse Museum, the question is out of order.

The SPEAKER: I rule that the question is in order. If the Powerhouse Museum has not been raised in the context of the drought relief committee, the committee's chair can easily make that very clear. The House will come to order.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (14:58:17): I thank the member for Prospect for his question. I welcome his question and the opportunity to speak as Chair of the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development.

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

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY: We have this beautiful rain across our State today and due to a leaking roof at Parliament House we have a lot of drips on level 10. Despite the rain, it is important that we maintain a focus on

drought across our State. I thank the members of my committee. It is a bipartisan committee and its members welcome the fact that there is a collegial fashion to it.

Ms Jodi McKay: What do you think of the Powerhouse?

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY: We already travelled across to Orange at the end of last year. I thank the member for Orange for hosting us. Despite the comments about the Powerhouse Museum, this committee does important work. We went out to Manildra and saw how desperate the drought has been there. I have had conversations with local farmers who say that despite the rain the impacts of the drought still carry through—and the people will carry through. It is no time to trivialise. Our committee is working hard on an inquiry at the moment.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Point of order—

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY: There will be hearings at Armidale and we are travelling to Yass as well. We look forward to hearing from the communities.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about the \$1.5 billion not going to drought relief. It was not about the rain or about the member's committee and his friends. It was about the fact that the Premier's policy—

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

Dr Hugh McDermott: —is \$1.5 billion not going to regional drought relief.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY: It seems that the member for Prospect is uncomfortable that members on this side of the Chamber are the powerhouse and that the museum is on the other side of the Chamber. The committee will conduct its inquiry and we will submit our recommendations. We look forward to the keenness of the member for Prospect to look into those recommendations.

The SPEAKER: The member for Manly has the call. The next member to interject will be called to order.

COVID-19

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:01:24): My question is addressed to the health Minister. Will the Minister update the House on COVID-19, also known as coronavirus, in New South Wales?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (15:01:35): I thank my colleague and good friend the member for Manly, who does an incredible job for his electorate. He works very hard for the people, of all political persuasions, throughout his entire electorate. He is a fantastic local MP. Sadly for the northern beaches, we have now joined the COVID-19 circumstances. Just yesterday a patient was diagnosed at the Northern Beaches Hospital. The COVID-19, or novel coronavirus, continues to insert itself into our community. That should come as no surprise to the community. Most people are now well aware of its insertion across the world. The insertion here is occurring but I am happy to say it is occurring nowhere near as quickly or as broadly as is happening in many overseas jurisdictions.

To that extent, I want to thank members of the community for listening to the messages about trying to keep themselves safe by washing their hands and appropriately protecting themselves, as they would with flu. We now know that we can take a lot of steps ourselves. If you are going to cough or sneeze do so into your elbow; do not cough into your hands. If you do cough into your hands or even if you put your hands on surfaces in public places, make sure you wash regularly and wash well or use an alcohol-based substance if it is available. If it is not available you can use soap and water; just make sure that you do it for about 20 seconds.

Yesterday I reported to the House and the community about the progression of this virus. By late last night the health staff in a number of different facilities had had confirmation through the processes of pathology that another six people had been confirmed with the COVID-19, or novel coronavirus. I thank our NSW Health staff generally and the pathology staff in particular for all the work they are doing. Staff are working into the wee small hours. I know that because they are often calling me at 11 o'clock or 12 o'clock in the evening.

I thank them, particularly Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant who is doing an extraordinary job. I thank her for her guidance and leadership. I note that today the Federal Government has made some changes to the containment situation. Previously we told people from China and Iran that they could not come to Australia unless they spent at least 14 days outside of those jurisdictions and today we have added South Korea. That is because each of those jurisdictions is effectively a hotspot. I thank the Federal Government for that decision.

I also note that of the 22 people who were announced late last night, it is most concerning that seven of them have been infected within our borders, on New South Wales soil, which makes it really difficult. We have to try to work out exactly how they contracted that infection. I think I told the House that a 52-year-old doctor who works at Ryde Hospital had tested positive for COVID-19. He is now in a stable condition. We do not know

whether the transmission of the virus came from his workplace or within his social circle. Health continues to work to try to determine that. I thank Baptist Care management for its work. Yesterday at Dorothy Henderson Lodge, part of Baptist Care, an assistant in nursing who works in a pod of 13 patients had symptoms that she did not recognise as COVID-19. She continued to work, which, unfortunately, may have had some impact on residents. We cannot be 100 per cent certain as to the exact impact, but it would seem on the face of it that it is likely. She is a much-loved staff member, very committed to the residents. She is now off work and is recovering. *[Extension of time.]*

Very sadly a 95-year-old lady passed away. Obviously she had other health issues, as one might expect at that age. Tests were done post her death and we know she did have COVID-19, but whether there is a direct connection between her passing away and the virus we cannot be absolutely certain, but it would seem likely. An 82-year-old gentleman who is in the same pod, or group of 13 people, that the staff member was looking after has the virus and is now in hospital in a stable condition. The health department is testing people in that residential aged care facility and the results have come back that a 70-year-old gentleman also has the virus, which sounds like it was contracted on site. The lady and gentleman involved had not been travelling, as they were living in a residential aged care facility.

Unfortunately, a young registrar at Liverpool Hospital has contracted the virus who, together with about 70 others, attended a conference on radiology. The 53-year-old doctor from Ryde to whom I first referred also attended that same conference. The question is whether there was a connection and the passing on of the virus. We do not know. That is being worked through. The seventh person to whom I referred earlier was the sister of a gentleman who had come in from Iran. Reports and rumours are rife today of a group of young children from the Banksia childcare centre at Macquarie Park who visited the aged care facility where the 95-year-old lady passed away. It is great to have young children visit aged care centres and provide life, support and vigour that elderly people love.

Unfortunately today, in consultation with the Chief Health Officer, a decision was made for the foreseeable future to ask—indeed it may well become a direction—that there be no visits by childcare centres to aged care facilities during this coronavirus outbreak. I apologise, but a precautionary principle is what the community would expect. The good news is that since last night no more cases have been reported, but we will see how we go this afternoon. I will report back to the House in due course.

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge in the public gallery Paul Hackett, OAM, who is a guest of the Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections.

REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:09:38): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that statistical comparisons of New South Wales local health districts indicate that in rural and regional New South Wales there is a significantly higher rate of suicide per 100,000 persons than in metropolitan areas, what will the Premier now do in addition to any current initiatives to address suicide in country areas where access to services is limited?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:10:01): I thank the member for Orange for his question and commend him for raising this very important and timely issue, given the ongoing devastating impact of drought and bushfires that has increased awareness of mental health, especially in our regional communities. It has also focused attention on what government can do to support our communities not only in our remote areas especially, but also communities that have been doubly impacted and has had a cumulative effect. I am talking about some communities that have been suffering for years and others, on top of that, have had to deal with the devastating bushfires that have impacted on mental health issues.

I stress to the member for Orange that in 2018 we took the first step. Never before had we had a reducing suicide strategy in New South Wales, which former Minister Davies and I announced. I commend her work. I also commend the work of the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, Bronnie Taylor, and acknowledge her ongoing work. As she is from the regions she has had a special focus on rural and regional mental health. Of course, the Minister for Health and Medical Research has already been involved in these strategies.

As we have a Towards Zero for road deaths, New South Wales thought it appropriate to have a Towards Zero for suicide, which we have never had before. This four-year-plan was introduced in 2018 to reduce the rate of suicide. Since 2017, to support people in the regions and their mental health, the Government has provided a drought package, which has included over \$18 million specifically for rural mental health programs. This includes programs to improve access to and delivery of services, whether it is direct mental health care or supporting community-based health care. The Government has new funding for an additional five rural adversity mental

health program co-ordinators. In addition to the 14 co-ordinators based across New South Wales who link rural and remote residents to services the Government has also included new positions in places like the Southern Highlands, Tamworth, Mudgee and the Central Tablelands.

In relation to the question asked by the member for Orange, following the recent horrific bushfire season the Government has injected an additional \$14 million alongside the Federal Government to support mental health services on the ground. A couple of weeks ago the Minister for Transport and Roads attended a Lifeline event where New South Wales committed \$500,000 to a specific line to support rural and regional communities dedicated to those impacted by the bushfires. We have continued to support communities with extra teams of mental health clinicians. We have also been very sensitive to recognising the way in which people in the regions seek mental health services. We know that where acute services are concerned our Government tends to do well. It is where the community-based mental health support is required that is more challenging for us and we are adjusting our resources to make sure we provide sufficient support so that people do not just rely on the private system, but also have access to publicly funded mental health support, which is a priority for this Government.

I am also pleased to say that we are considering the access to services. For example, we know that people value anonymity and privacy and therefore we treat very sensitively the way in which people can access those services. As many in this place have indicated, there is no doubt that the next few months will be challenging for people in the regions. We are concerned about what that might mean in terms of mental health and that is why extra resources have been put in place. We are also ensuring that we coordinate our investments with the Federal Government's activities as well to make sure there is a coordinated response. We have made sure that when people come through our various channels, whether it is Service NSW or other agencies, there are opportunities for people to ask and get information about services available as well on a purely anonymous and respectful way.

The member's question is extremely timely. As we know, following the Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria there was unfortunately a huge increase in a number of cases of suicide. We want to make sure that we prevent that as much as possible in New South Wales. Again, as the member indicated in his question, it is a cumulative impact. It is not only the bushfires but also the cumulative effect of the drought. I also stressed that when it came to drought relief and mental health, we knew that any way we could support families would ease the tension within households. [*Extension of time*]

I recall one announcement that the then early education Minister, Minister Mitchell, and I made. We thought, "How can we reduce the pressure on families in the regions?" Because sometimes people do not put their hand up for a handout; people do not put their hand up for support. For example, we provided support to preschools by saying, "If you notice any children being taken out of preschool because the families may not be able to afford it, we will fill in that cost." I raise that example because, as a Government, we considered every option we could to reduce the pressure on families and to support them with their mental health needs, as well as direct financial needs. We are open to any members making suggestions in that vein.

In fact, many local members have come forward with suggestions that we have pursued and adopted. Mental health is not always about direct mental health services; it is about supporting communities. Perhaps the best example of that was on the weekend when the member for Bega and I attended a national rugby league match with 5,000 mainly locals, but some Sydneysiders turned up as well. Ensuring community events and peer-to-peer support is a good way to support communities. When people come together and share their experiences that aids in mental health. Yes, the direct funding and the direct resources are very important, but so are government initiatives and working with other organisations to provide and generate that peer-to-peer support.

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:16:30): My question is addressed to the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is working to improve access to education for vulnerable young people, specifically in relation to arts and culture?

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (15:16:50): I thank the outstanding member for Ku-ring-gai for his question. He is a very cultured member and I was delighted to see him last night at Bell Shakespeare's production of *Hamlet*, along with his son. Indeed, many members of the House were at the production of *Hamlet* last night—not only many members from this side of the House, but it also seems many Opposition members enjoy a tragedy by day and a tragedy at night. Not to suggest for one moment that those members were seeking to shuffle the Leader of the Opposition from her mortal coil, but I noticed that there was one budding thespian from the front bench who was not present, who smiles and smiles, but is a villain. Act I, scene V: The member for Kogarah.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Paul Lynch: The point of order is that I am trying to put the Minister out of his misery but, more importantly, it is Standing Order 129. *Hamlet* has nothing to do with the question that was asked.

Mr GARETH WARD: There is something rotten in the state of Sussex Street.

The SPEAKER: I remind the House that I give a greater degree of latitude on the last question on a Thursday.

Mr GARETH WARD: I can see the member for Kogarah now, practising into the mirror that great Sussex Street soliloquy, "To be, or not to be, leadership is the question." I say to my friend the Leader of the Opposition, when we see him at *Macbeth*, we will let her know.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Bring back Robbo.

Mr GARETH WARD: Calm down. The lady doth protest too much. They are very excited—it was a great night. I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for an excellent question. I know that all members of the House feel very strongly about ensuring that vulnerable children get a good education. It is important to me and to all members. I update the House on some of the things that the Government is doing. The Education Pathway for Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care is very important because it ensures that we review the plans of young people who have been brought into out-of-home care to make sure that young people who have gone through often very traumatic and difficult times get the support that they need so that they can realise their full potential. It is critical to our education system to ensure our kids in out-of-home care get a fair deal.

One of the more sobering things that I have to do as Minister is sign young people's leaving care letters. For every one of those letters, I always look at the leaving care plan summary, and the goals and objectives of young people. Often they are around education, which is incredibly important. We can extend our supports through the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act to up to 25 years of age for young people who have aspirations to do more and to receive the support that they need. In a few weeks' time I will be in a position to release the scholarships for young people who have applied through the NSW Department of Communities and Justice for a \$1,000 scholarship to help with things such as textbooks, tools and laptops, so that they continue their education from year 10 and above, as well as people who are entering TAFE or going onto future studies. That is a way that we can practically support young people who need assistance. Of course, there are a variety of other measures. My friend the skills Minister would agree with me that the fee-free scholarships for people from social housing, particularly people in out-of-home care, are absolutely vital.

Not every young person will have the best job, the best house or the best car. But everyone deserves the same shot at it. That is what the Government is about—providing that equity of opportunity for young people to achieve their full potential. Not to raise the floor, but to remove the roof and encourage young people to achieve their full potential. It might interest members to know that in Youth Justice, vulnerable children inside our correction centres also go to school the same way that other young people do. I commend the teachers in those environments, who are often working under very difficult circumstances to train young people, and often give them the opportunity to complete their HSC and undertake other significant courses. Children with disability is something I feel very strongly about, having been a young person with a disability going through a public system. It might interest members to know that 97 per cent of young children with disability are educated in mainstream schools and 80 per cent of those young people are in mainstream classes, which is a testament to the fact that we want young people with disabilities— [*Extension of time*]

We want young people with disabilities to have the same opportunities as other students, and for other students to experience studying alongside people with disabilities, so that they can realise the true value and contribution that people with disabilities can make. Hasn't the system come a long way? I remember having to go to the library during my class time to enlarge notes so that I could participate in classes whilst not being able to be there. Gonski and the investments of governments over the years have created the opportunity for young people to realise their full potential, particularly young people with disabilities. Recently I was delighted to see one of our important programs coming out of the ground from a social housing perspective at Redfern—a partnership with St George Community Housing. I commend Scott Langford and the chair David Thrift for their work in providing a Foyer model, where young people who are transitioning out of out-of-home care have the opportunity to move into independent living while receiving the wraparound and supports they need to sustain tenancies, do not fall into homelessness and get the opportunity to realise their potential.

I mention some other programs that the Government has pioneered. I commend the former roads Minister, Melinda Pavey, for working with me to establish the Infrastructure Skills Legacy hub at Bomaderry, which gives the young people the opportunity to work on major infrastructure projects in this State. It is often the first job they may have had the opportunity to do as part of their apprenticeship. We have also seen that with partnerships with community housing providers and homelessness services. A great example of that is in the electorate of the

member for South Coast, where her community housing provider, along with CareSouth, built a home for people who were at risk of homelessness using young Aboriginal boys, who had the opportunity to undertake their first project as part of their apprenticeship and provide a home for people who needed it. I commend both the Council to Homeless Persons and that particular specialist homelessness service. I thank all members for their support of vulnerable young people in ensuring that everyone across the State—no matter their background, no matter their belief—gets the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Government Response

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 6/56 of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Review of the 2016-17 Annual Reports of the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption*, received 4 March 2020 and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY

Inquiry

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Committee on Law and Safety has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the physical health of police and emergency service workers, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

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

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**.

Caravan Tolls

Petition calling on the Minister for Transport and Roads to restore the classification of Class A to vehicles towing a caravan, trailer or boat in relation to toll rates, received from **Mr Philip Donato**.

Business of the House

MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:25:21): By leave: I move:

That the Code of Conduct for Members, as adopted on 7 May 2019, be amended to read as follows:

That this House adopt, for the purposes of section 9 of the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*, the following Code of Conduct—

PREAMBLE

Members of Parliament acknowledge their responsibility to maintain the public trust placed in them by performing their duties with honesty and integrity, respecting the law and the institution and conventions of Parliament, and using their influence to advance the common good of the people of New South Wales.

THE CODE

1 Purpose of the Code

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist all Members in the discharge of their parliamentary duties and obligations to the House, their electorates and the people of NSW.

The Code applies to Members in all aspects of their public life.

In complying with this Code, Members shall base their conduct on a consideration of the public interest, avoiding conflict between personal interest and their duties as a Member of Parliament. It does not apply to Members in their purely private and personal lives.

Members will not act dishonestly for their own personal gain, or that of another person.

It is recognised that some members are non-aligned and others belong to political parties. Organised political parties are a fundamental part of the democratic process. Participation in the activities of organised political parties is within the legitimate activities of Members of Parliament.

PROPER EXERCISE OF POWER

2 Improper influence

- (a) No member shall act as a paid advocate in any proceeding of the House or its committees.
- (b) A Member must not knowingly and improperly promote any matter, vote on any bill or resolution or ask any question in the Parliament or its Committees in return for any remuneration, fee, payment, reward or benefit in kind, of a private nature, which any of the following persons has received, is receiving or expects to receive as a consequence:
 - (i) The Member;
 - (ii) A member of the Member's family;
 - (iii) A business associate of the Member; or
 - (iv) Any other person or entity from whom the Member expects to receive a financial benefit.
- (c) A Member must not knowingly and improperly use his or her influence as a Member to seek to affect a decision by a public official including a Minister, public sector employee, statutory officer or officer of a public body, to further, directly or indirectly, the private interests of the Member, a member of the Member's family, or a business associate of the Member.

3 Use of public resources

The use of public resources should not knowingly confer any undue private benefit on the Member or, on any other person, or entity.

Members must take reasonable steps to apply the public resources to which they are granted access according to any guidelines or rules about the use of those resources.

Commentary

There is a range of information available to Members to assist them in determining the accurate and appropriate use of resources including:

- *The Legislative Assembly Members' Guide;*
- *The Legislative Council Members' Guide;*
- *The Department of Parliamentary Services Members' Entitlements Handbook; and*
- *The Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal's Annual Report and Determination of Additional Entitlements for Members of the Parliament of New South Wales.*

In addition it is open to any Member to seek advice on these matters from the Clerks of the House, Senior Parliamentary Officers, or the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser.

4 Use of confidential information

Information which Members receive in confidence in the course of their parliamentary duties should be used only in connection with those duties. It must never be knowingly and improperly used for the private benefit of themselves or any other person or persons.

5 Limitation on breach of Code

This code is not breached by reason of a benefit or interest that could be or was advanced or received by the persons set out in 2(b)(i) - (iv) by reason of them being a member of the public or a member of a broad class.

OPENNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

6 Disclosure of interests

Members shall fulfil conscientiously the requirements of the House in respect of the Register of Disclosures by Members.

Commentary

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (the Regulation) requires that Members lodge regular returns, disclosing certain interests such as real property, interests and positions in corporations, income, debts and gifts.

The Regulation also requires that each Clerk compile and maintain a Register of Disclosures for their respective Houses. The purpose of the Register of Disclosures is to promote greater transparency, openness, and accountability in the parliamentary process.

Members' attention is drawn to the following sources of information and advice on compliance with the requirements of the Regulation:

- *Schedule 1 of the Regulation outlines the requirements for each type of interest to be disclosed, and gives examples as to how to make entries on the return;*
- *The respective guides for Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council explain the requirements of the pecuniary interest disclosure regime in plain language, with examples where possible; and*
- *It is also open to any Member to seek advice on these matters from the Clerks of the House or the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser.*

In conjunction with the Regulation and this code, the following Standing Orders apply in relation to personal or pecuniary interests:

- *Legislative Assembly Standing Orders 176-7 and Legislative Council Standing Order 113(2) on voting in divisions; and*
- *Legislative Assembly Standing Order 276 and Legislative Council Standing Order 210(10) on participating in committee inquiries.*

7 Conflicts of interest

Members must take reasonable steps to avoid, resolve or disclose any conflict between their private interests and the public interest. The public interest is always to be favoured over any private interest of the Member.

Members shall take reasonable steps to draw attention to any conflicts between their private interests and the public interest in any proceeding of the House or its Committees, and in any communications with Ministers, Members, public officials or public office holders.

A conflict of interest does not exist where the Member is only affected as a member of the public or a member of a broad class.

Commentary

Members should be aware of the important distinction between disclosing an interest and having a conflict of interest.

There are certain pecuniary interests that must be disclosed on the Register of Disclosures although these may never come into conflict with a Members' duties. There are also interests that are not required to be disclosed on the Register of Disclosures but which could give rise to a conflict of interest if they are not managed appropriately.

It is open to any Member to seek advice on these matters from the Clerks of the House or the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser.

8 Gifts

- (a) Members must take reasonable steps to disclose all gifts and benefits received in connection with their official duties, in accordance with the requirements for the disclosure of pecuniary interests.
- (b) Members must not knowingly accept gifts that could reasonably be expected to give rise to a conflict of interest or could reasonably be perceived as an attempt to improperly influence the Member in the exercise of his or her duties.
- (c) Nothing in this Code precludes the giving or accepting of political donations in accordance with the *Electoral Funding Act 2018*.

Commentary

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (the Regulation) requires that Members lodge regular returns, disclosing certain interests such as real property, interests and positions in corporations, income, debts and gifts.

The Regulation also requires that each Clerk compile and maintain a Register of Disclosures for their respective Houses. The purpose of the Register of Disclosures is to promote greater transparency, openness, and accountability in the parliamentary process.

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- *Schedule 1 of the Regulation outlines the requirements for each type of interest to be disclosed, and gives examples as to how to make entries on the return;*
- *The respective guides for Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council explain the requirements of the pecuniary interest disclosure regime in plain language, with examples where possible; and*
- *It is also open to any Member to seek advice on these matters from the Clerks of the House or the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser.*

UPHOLDING THE CODE

9 Upholding the Code

Members have a duty to cooperate fully with any processes established under the authority of the House concerning compliance with this Code.

Breaches of this Code may result in action being taken by the House in relation to a Member. A substantial breach of the Code may constitute corrupt conduct for the purposes of the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*.

This resolution has continuing effect unless and until amended or rescinded by resolution of the House.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:26:13): As Chair of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics it is a pleasure to speak on the motion to amend the Code of Conduct for Members. I will not speak to the detail of the code. I refer members to the take-note speech given on 9 August 2018 by my predecessor, the member for Seven Hills, Mr Mark Taylor, now Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Justice. The code is the outcome of careful and extensive consultation over a number of years. In the course of its preparation the committee has heard from members and former members, as well as the Parliamentary Ethics Advisor, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Audit Office of NSW. The committee has also worked closely with the Privileges Committee from the other place. I thank the Hon. Peter Primrose and his membership for their collaborative approach. The draft is not only the view of a cross-party committee from this House, but it has also been the subject of support from members of a cross-party committee in the upper House. I believe this represents a good balance of principle, prescription and practicality. I commend the code to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

INTERNATIONAL GITA MAHOTSAV

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:27:59): In this the oldest Parliament of Australia I warmly welcome the Chief Minister of Haryana, the Hon. Manohar Lal Khattar, who will be visiting Australia as part of the International Gita Mahotsav. Mahotsav is a Hindi word that means a big festivity, which is exactly what is planned. The four-day festival, from Friday 21 March to Tuesday 24 March, will study and celebrate the *Bhagavad Gita*, a sacred Hindu religious text of peace, harmony and fellowship. The conference will include seminars, exhibitions and cultural performances and will play host to both international and domestic visitors. The State of New South Wales is home to a significant Hindu community, many of whom I am privileged to represent in my electorate of Strathfield. I recognise my colleague the Hon. Daniel Moohkey, Labor's shadow Minister for Finance and Small Business, the first Australian MP to be sworn into office on the *Bhagavad Gita* in 2015. This was a significant and historic moment for Hindus across Australia.

This event is possible because of the partnership between the Haryana Government, the Kurukshetra Development Board and the Association of Haryanvis in Australia. It is important to acknowledge the city of Kurukshetra and the northern Indian state of Haryana. It is believed Kurukshetra is the Land of the *Bhagavad Gita*, where the great war of the Mahabharata was fought and where Lord Krishna delivered the *Gita* to Arjuna. I thank the Chief Minister of Haryana, Swami Gyananand Ji Maharaj from the Kurukshetra Development Board, and the Governor of Haryana, Mr Satyadev Narayan Arya, for their advocacy and tireless efforts in not only promoting this event but also spreading the message of the *Gita*. I look forward to meeting the Chief Minister at the festivities and presenting him with a copy of this speech.

The Chief Minister and the Governor will formally present a copy of the *Bhagavad Gita* to the New South Wales and Federal parliaments. I also congratulate the Association of Haryanvis in Australia, specifically the association president Sewa Singh, Arunesh Seth and the board members of the association, many of whom are seated in the gallery today. I thank them for their tireless work in organising this four-day event. I was delighted to launch the Association of Haryanvis in Australia, along with my colleague the member for Granville, Julia Finn, in the New South Wales Parliament in 2018. An estimated 25,000 Haryanvis call Australia home and the association was formed to support this community and preserve the rich Haryanvis culture. All members of the association should be proud of what they have been able to achieve in a very short time.

The conference will give us an important opportunity to reflect on the universal principles outlined in the *Bhagavad Gita* and how they have positively influenced individuals and societies. Again, I congratulate and commend everyone who has made this conference possible. As Leader of the Opposition and leader of the Labor Party in New South Wales, I offer a warm welcome to all those visiting Sydney and New South Wales. You are very welcome in our State.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I welcome our guests in the gallery today.

COFFS COAST SPORTING FACILITIES

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:31:59): Coffs Coast sporting facilities and our local sporting clubs are the birthplace of outstanding achievements by local sportspeople of all ages. Every day on sporting fields across my electorate boys and girls, and men and women, train and play with energy and enthusiasm, determined to do their best, to do themselves and their families proud, and to compete at the highest

possible level. When it comes to superb and stunning sporting facilities in my electorate, I think of the many great golf courses with which we are blessed. Bonville Golf Resort certainly knows how to turn it on. Not only is it one of the world's most beautiful golf courses, it is also home to the Geoff King Motors Australian Ladies Classic. This prestigious event continues to attract the globe's best golfers and gives Coffs Harbour another reason to shine on the international stage.

The successful staging of a golf tournament requires tremendous care and teamwork, and the 2020 classic was no different. I acknowledge the following people for their leadership in bringing another successful classic to the Coffs Coast: Bonville Golf Resort chairman Peter Montgomery; Bonville Golf Resort executive general manager Brad Daymond; Bonville Golf Resort course superintendent Aaron Banks, and his team; Geoff King from Geoff King Motors—the naming rights sponsor; Australian Ladies Professional Golf CEO Karen Lunn; Golf NSW; and Coffs Harbour City Council. The winner, 19-year-old Sydney amateur Stephanie Kyriacou, won by 11 strokes. During the second round she shot a course record 63 playing off the men's tees. I was thrilled to recently be at Sawtell's famous Richardson Park, home of the Sawtell Toormina Saints, which now offers safer facilities with lights that illuminate the entire field. The ability to train, watch and play games at any time of day or night is a huge win for local football. The flexibility supports families with increasingly busy lifestyles and encourages more people to stay active, particularly during the winter months.

Founded in 1985, the Saints have a long history of success. The 2018 addition of a premiership-winning women's senior team to the local competition and these upgrades will help attract even more players to the club. Richardson Park is not just about footy. It is a vibrant sporting hub for the broader community, bringing together players, families and local businesses each week to enjoy local sport. These upgrades will benefit not only the footy club but also the local cricket club, schools and community groups across the district. It was a proud occasion for the Sawtell-Toormina AFL Saints seniors and juniors and the Sawtell Cricket Club juniors and seniors. I commend the fantastic committees who run these outstanding organisations, led by Matthew Flynn, Alex Pearson and Felicity Myles.

Hockey is another sport which continues to produce shining stars on the Coffs Coast. Local juniors Josh Perry and Breah Fischer will represent New South Wales at the under-15s national championships in Bathurst from 17 April to 23 April. Their path to the elite stage has involved early morning fitness work and skills sessions under Hockey NSW's Centre of Development Program. Their journey started with the under-15s State championships, where an initial squad was chosen to attend three development camps in Sydney. There the athletes were put through their paces before the initial squad was whittled down to a State team and a blues team representing New South Wales at the national championships.

Breah Fischer, 14, is a student at Coffs Harbour High School and plays locally for Beaches Hockey Club. She took up the game at the age of five and developed through the junior ranks. Josh Perry is widely recognised as one of Urunga Hockey Club's most talented athletes. He is a standout in the local junior competition and plays senior men's hockey with the Jetty Jets in the Grafton Premier League. Both are considered future stars of their sport. There is a crop of young players coming through the ranks at Coffs Harbour. They include Levi Fischer, Fyn Harrison, Molly Williams, Oliver Rodgers, Hannah Dickson, Maddison Osland, Lucy Rodgers and plenty more who are playing outstanding hockey.

The Coffs Harbour Cycle Club is where champions live. Two of them in particular have their sights on national glory. Laurelea Moss and Kerry Westwood raced superbly at the Queensland State Masters Track Championships at Brisbane's Anna Meares Velodrome on the Australia Day weekend. Kerry brought home three gold and three silver medals, while Laurelea claimed five gold and four silver medals. They had raced together in the team sprint to win gold as well as achieving a Queensland State record. Laurelea and Kerry also competed at the NSW Masters Track Championships held from 13 February to 16 February at Sydney's Dunc Gray Velodrome. Kerry came away with three gold medals, one silver medal and a bronze medal, while Laurelea achieved two gold medals and two silver medals. The national championships will be held in Brisbane from 12 March to 15 March. We wish them well as they proudly represent the Coffs Coast.

Members of Coffs Harbour's Pink Silks Trust are great sports and do so much for our local community. Achieving its \$1 million fundraising milestone in 2020, the trust committee has announced the projects to benefit from funds raised from the recent Pink Silks race day and charity golf day. Beneficiaries include Coffs Harbour Health Campus [CHHC] emergency department, \$20,000; CHHC operating theatres, \$40,000; CHHC maternity department, \$20,000; CHHC gynaecological department, \$20,000; CASPA, \$10,000 to outfit an education room; Coffs Harbour Cancer Council, \$3,000; the RFS, \$10,000; and the Lung Foundation, \$10,000. I thank members of the committee for all their hard work.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:37:36): Domestic violence is a topic that I believe is important to many in my electorate and right across New South Wales. This is an issue that is unfortunately all too common in our communities and has again been brought to the forefront of our minds by the murder of Hannah Clarke and her three children in Brisbane just last month. I wish to pay my respects and condolences to her family. Unfortunately in Australia one woman is killed every week, on average, by domestic violence. This is one of the reasons why I believe the Premier has made one of her Premier's Priorities to reduce the number of domestic violence reoffenders by 25 per cent by 2023. My electorate of Holsworthy is covered by Liverpool and Sutherland Shire local government areas. According to the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR], from January 2019 until December 2019, the Liverpool area saw 399.5 domestic assaults per 100,000 people and the Sutherland Shire saw 297.1 domestic assaults per 100,000 people, which is way too high. I am hopeful that the priority the Premier has placed on this issue combined with the support provided by the New South Wales Government will see these numbers decrease.

Some wonderful organisations do some great work locally in addressing domestic and family violence. I acknowledge Sutherland Shire Family Services for the work it does across both local government areas in my electorate, especially through its Defence Family Worker Support program. This program provides a family support worker to strengthen a family's supportive and social networks as well as enhancing the parent/child relationship. It is targeted towards specific defence circumstances, including domestic violence. Family support workers help advocate on behalf of their clients to government departments and other local services and support them with issues unique to military life. I thank the South West Sydney Legal Centre, located in Liverpool, which provides assistance to those facing domestic and family violence in the Holsworthy electorate. With services including case coordination and case management, the family and domestic violence teams at South West Sydney Legal Centre provide much-needed support to those who are seeking assistance. They also provide free telephone advice sessions, outreach advice, representation and mediation services.

I also thank our local police at Liverpool City Police Area Command and Sutherland Shire Police Area Command for the work they do in supporting survivors of domestic and family violence. It is not an easy job, day in and day out, but I am grateful for the work they do. While domestic violence primarily affects women, it is also an issue that affects men—it is a genderless problem within our community. A school friend of mine Jeffery Lindsell unfortunately passed away not very long ago. It is alleged that his then girlfriend set fire to his home while he was asleep inside. It has come to light that he suffered from domestic violence for about two years before that horrific night. I wish we knew. I wish more support had been available to him. My heart bleeds for his family. I offer support from all my schoolfriends to his family and friends for what they have gone through. I specifically thank Senior Constable Daniel Fordyce and Constable Caitlin McNaughton for pouring water over Jeffery to help with his burns until the ambulances arrived and for taking the time to comfort him and his family members after this horrible event. I note that they were both awarded the Police Area Commander's Certificate of Commendation for their actions.

I also highlight and thank the State's first and now former Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Pru Goward, and the current Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Mark Speakman, for the passion they have both put into addressing this issue. The New South Wales Government has committed \$431 million over four years for specialist initiatives, including Start Safely, to help people escaping violence move into stable housing through the private rental market; and Safer Pathway, which is a coordinated response that provides victims the support they need. The Government has put \$14.7 million into reducing reoffending in 2019-20 and supporting the reduction of reoffending and re-victimisation. There is \$11 million this year for the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services to support victims at 29 locations, supporting 117 courts across New South Wales. The Staying Home Leaving Violence program supports women and their children to remain safely at home. The list goes on but as I have said, domestic violence is an issue that affects both women and men. I will continue to stand up against this issue and urge all those in the House to continue to do so too.

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:42:47): I advise the House of issues of concern to my constituents connected with Liverpool City Council. The entirety of the electorate that I represent is contained within the Liverpool council area. A cohesive and functional council is essential for the wellbeing of the constituents I represent. This council is a very serious undertaking. The local government area has 42 suburbs and its population is expected to reach 320,000 over the next 20 years. It is often described as one of the fastest growing regions in Sydney. Historically it is a council that has certainly had its challenges. Over the decades it has been sacked twice, the most recent instance being in 2004 when it was sacked by a Labor government. Additionally, in the 2012-16 term it was frequently in the news for all the wrong reasons.

The council had four CEOs in eight years. The CEO before the current one is in jail in Queensland, having left his position in 2016. Pre-2016 police were called to council meetings and industrial unrest reached unprecedented levels. The council was raided by ICAC, as was the then mayor's home. Council meetings were a shambles. The council was a basket case. Those bad days of an embarrassing and dysfunctional council were consigned to history with the appointment of Kiersten Fishburn as CEO and the election of Mayor Waller at the 2016 council election. Liverpool is emerging as Sydney's third CBD with significant growth, reform and development that would have been not just unthinkable but indeed laughable pre-2016. Ms Fishburn and her senior staff have been leaders in the discussion about the Western Sydney Airport and, more significantly, the development around it. There are impressive developments and projects around the Liverpool Innovation Precinct and Fifteenth Avenue smart transit plans. Liverpool council is still fairly frequently in the news but this time for the right reasons.

[Interruption from the gallery]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I ask those in the public gallery to keep the noise to zero. We are dealing with other business before the petition. I ask for your patience.

Mr PAUL LYNCH: This is due in no small part to Ms Fishburn and her senior staff. The council has won the Committee for Sydney Smart City Award three years running. Council meetings do not now have the police called to them and the Independent Commission Against Corruption has not raided the council since 2016. Industrial issues are now settled by mature adults in a reasonable way. The adults are back in control. The good news story, however, is now at risk. A group of opportunistic and cynical councillors have calculated they can gain political benefit by reverting to the chaos and dysfunction of several years ago. Some of them were, in fact, involved in the creation of that chaos and dysfunction in previous years. Presumably this group of recalcitrant councillors think they can gain benefit from causing chaos on the council.

They chose several weeks ago not to endorse or renew the employment contract of Chief Executive Officer Kiersten Fishburn. The contract is scheduled to expire at the end of the year. The decision means the end of Ms Fishburn's employment with the council. On any view, this was a stupid decision that will only harm Liverpool and bring disadvantages to the constituents whom the councillors are supposed to represent. I know of one State Minister who has been appalled by this decision, and likewise one Federal Minister. I make the obvious point that those Ministers are not members of the party to which I belong but we all agree that the current CEO is doing a good job and it is plain stupid for her to be removed.

If Kiersten Fishburn goes, it is expected there will be an exodus of senior staff. I have spoken to several of them and they have made it clear that they will be going too. This will create more destabilisation and dysfunction. Pretty obviously the calibre of any further applicants to replace them will be questionable. Who would want to work somewhere where you get ditched when you are doing a good job? The group that refused to extend the current chief executive officer's contract includes those who appointed the previous chief executive officer—the guy who went to jail for corrupt behaviour at Ipswich council. They are the mob who appointed a bankrupt developer as an executive director of planning in breach of the rules and now they are trying to rerun that same tawdry, grubby behaviour.

Granted that a council election is due in September this year, the only logical hypothesis can be that those behind this move believe chaos and dysfunction in the council will suit their political design. Clearing out the top leadership of an organisation like a large Sydney council will always be disruptive; doing it for no good, substantive reason is unforgivable. This low cabal of councillors want to take Liverpool council back to the bad old days. Self-interest is being put ahead of the public good. These councillors are putting their own private political interest ahead of public interest. Two of them are not residents of the Liverpool council area. They are a disgrace.

KIAMA ELECTORATE ROADS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (15:47:16): One of the most important articles of faith between me and my community with this Government is the delivery of important infrastructure that makes a real difference in people's lives. Anyone who is familiar with my beautiful electorate of Kiama will know one of the things that has confronted us in recent years is the travesties on regional roads and local people losing their lives on regional roads. As the local member, I am incredibly proud that when I have made a promise we have always got it done. The Gerringong upgrade will make, and has made, a real difference to the lives of locals. Indeed, the Berry bypass has halved travel times and made a great difference in terms of road safety.

At the moment, the Albion Park Rail bypass is underway. It will bypass up to 16 intersections and get rid of the only sets of traffic lights between Bomaderry and Heathcote. The Berry to Bomaderry upgrade is important

for the highway duplication. Once this work is completed I will have duplicated the Princes Highway throughout my entire electorate. There is one piece of work that we will be inspecting tomorrow with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. It is a project that the member for South Coast and I are incredibly passionate about: replacing the Shoalhaven River bridge. The current bridge is almost 140 years old and has reached the end of its serviceable life.

It would not be tolerable to reduce the people of Nowra and Bomaderry to having just one bridge. So we have partnered with the Commonwealth to provide more than \$340 million to construct a replacement bridge over the Shoalhaven River. In coming weeks, homes along Illaroo Road will be removed. The properties have been bought by transport authorities to make way for a dedicated left-hand turning lane out of Illaroo Road, which is a renowned intersection in my community. Rather than stopping on red and being able to turn left, using a dedicated turning lane will make a huge difference for traffic congestion in that area. We will also be getting rid of a set of traffic lights at Pleasant Way. The improvements at intersections will make a difference.

I simply say to community members who claim we need a bypass that certainly one day a Nowra bypass will be necessary. But we cannot reduce the people of Nowra-Bomaderry to having just one bridge. The old bridge was built as a railway bridge; it was never intended to withstand the 55,000 vehicles on average that cross it daily. There is no capacity to maintain that bridge in perpetuity. For that reason, we are going to construct a replacement bridge and maintain the old bridge for pedestrian access and for its heritage value. I single out the wonderful work of Lynne Allen from the Shoalhaven Historical Society. She is a former teacher of mine at Bomaderry High School and a passionate advocate for history and its preservation.

There is no doubt that there are mixed views about preserving the old bridge. I know that members in the Chamber will have had similar experiences with projects undertaken in their electorates. But that is the overwhelming view of our community and for that reason the old bridge will remain. The contract has been awarded to Fulton Hogan and it is expected that construction work will take around three years. There will be disruption to traffic during that time but we will do everything we can to mitigate the impact of traffic on locals who travel on roads through the area. I go into Nowra often to do my shopping and to attend meetings and events and I know it is often the traffic coming into Nowra that causes traffic congestion. Although traffic congests the middle of Nowra during peak holiday periods, the failure of Shoalhaven City Council to address the needs of the local road network is a major factor in congestion.

For quite some time it has been suggested that roads such as the East Nowra Sub Arterial would reduce congestion and improve the Nowra road network, which would take the pressure off local roads. But because we have a mayor in the Shoalhaven who does not seem interested in applying for grants from the Government and is more interested in other things, we have not seen the amendments, changes or upgrades that would make the Nowra road network work more effectively. Certainly the Government can play its part. The New South Wales Government has invested around \$2 billion in upgrades to the highway, which will save lives. We also need collaboration with local government to make things better, to make communities work more effectively and to ensure that people receive the reductions in congestion they deserve. I look forward to joining my colleague and friend the member for South Coast to see the Shoalhaven River bridge—the new replacement bridge—become a reality.

NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:52:17): On 12 February I was delighted to officially open the NSW Seniors Festival at Tweed Heads Civic Centre. Running from 12 to 23 February this year, the NSW Seniors Festival is an annual New South Wales Government event presented by the Department of Communities and Justice and is the largest celebration for people aged over 60 in the Southern Hemisphere. This year the theme was "Love to Celebrate". The 2020 NSW Seniors Festival provides hundreds of free and heavily discounted events, workshops and performances for seniors across the State. Your electorate is similar to mine, Madam Deputy Speaker. Approximately 28 per cent of Tweed residents are over the age of 65. Along with Port Macquarie and Myall Lakes, we have more people over the age of 65 than any other area.

Thank goodness we have them. Seniors in this State are like Eveready batteries: They keep giving and giving. I was amazed to talk to my seniors. They are members of the hospital auxiliary, the Red Cross, Meals on Wheels and other voluntary organisations. The festival encourages seniors to actively participate in the community and gives them the opportunity to remain active, healthy and independent, and to learn, develop and educate themselves at any age. At one of our community centres I had the pleasure of awarding an information technology proficiency certificate to a gentleman who is 101 years old. He has just discovered the internet at the age of 99. He is quite proficient and can now talk to his great-great-great-grandchildren, sending them emails et cetera. It also shares our seniors' wealth of wisdom.

Too often, we overlook the wisdom of our local seniors. They have experienced the hard times in Australia and they have experienced the good times. It is similar to my local Indigenous people—we praise their elders and the traditional owners of the lands upon which we walk. We learn from their wisdom, and it is the same with our culture. We can never underestimate our seniors' wisdom. The regional seniors travel card is recognition of seniors' contributions in my electorate. It is a great success. Unlike in metropolitan areas, where there are many public transport options, many of our regions have no bus services. Labor took away our train—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Coogee will resume her seat.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: The Treasurer of the day was Mr Costa. Thank you, Mr Costa. He took away our train. The regional seniors travel card is very popular—thousands of people have signed up for it. I received a text message from a representative of our local taxi provider, Tweed Taxis, who said the cards have been used more and more often in the past couple of weeks. He thanked The Nationals and the Liberal Party for introducing it. It is a good idea, and the uptake continues to grow. Service NSW told me that last Thursday it signed up 1,000 applicants and 900 applicants on Friday.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Twelve senior citizens were nominated for achievement awards. They are: Carol Vimpani, Ruth Clark, Carol Purnell, Shirley Gill, Bill Brodie, Michael Ryan, Les Hardy, David Cranwell, Phil Connor, Lee Swindells, Shirley Jarvis-McCann and Neville Williams. Those people have made amazing contributions to our community. I see a lot of them on a regular basis. One of the things that amazes me is that they come from multiple organisations and turn up to help their fellow citizens. That is the true Australian spirit. Soon we will be honouring our heroes at Anzac Day memorials across this State. We often say that mateship was born on the beaches at Gallipoli. But mateship is alive and well in our local communities. We are honoured to know those great volunteers. As I said, the seniors of the Tweed are just like an Eveready battery: They keep giving and giving.

Business interrupted.

Petitions

SYDNEY BUS SERVICES

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Private members' statements are now interrupted for the consideration of a petition signed by 10,000 persons listed on the *Business Paper* regarding bus privatisation lodged by the member for Kogarah. I welcome all visitors to the public gallery. Thank you for joining us for the debate this afternoon. Before we commence the debate, and for the benefit of those in the public gallery, I take this opportunity to explain the process and the rationale behind this unique debate. It is unique because it enables the public to bring their concerns directly to the attention of the House.

The procedure is that the petition debate will start with a speech from the member who lodged the petition, who will be followed by up to four other members. A Minister will then respond and, to conclude the debate, the first speaker will speak in reply. After all members have spoken, the House will vote on the question that the House take note of the petition. This question will, in most cases, be determined on the voices and be passed. However, if this is challenged by a member it may proceed to a division, where the bells are rung and members vote on the question to take note of the petition by sitting on the appropriate sides of the House.

Before I call the member for Kogarah, I remind members that a number of them are on three calls to order. The member for Londonderry, the member for Gosford and the member for Canterbury are on three calls, and the member for Shellharbour, the member for Swansea and the member for Keira are on two calls. I will not hesitate to remove members from the Chamber if they do not abide by the standing order that states members with the call will be heard in silence.

The question is that the House take note of the petition.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:59:22): There are scores of bus drivers in the gallery today who are angry. They are blamed for late services that they are not responsible for, scapegoated for a transport system that is comprehensively letting down the people of this State, and lied to by a government that no doubt many of them trusted and some of them even voted for. As we approached the last election they saw the Premier solemnly tell the people of New South Wales that she would cease all future privatisations. When asked about privatisation, she said, "No, we are not, and if we were we would have told you upfront."

Every other industrialised country in the world is investing in publicly owned transport. This Government is selling ours off. It will not say the word "privatisation"—the Liberals refuse to say it. They call it the "golden key". They call it "franchising". They call it "asset recycling". They call it "outbound private involvement". They

call it "public-private horizontal investment". They call it anything but it is: selling off our assets. We know what it means: fewer services, higher prices and more delays. I draw the House's attention to the new owners of region 6, which was formerly owned by the taxpayer and privatised by the Berejiklian Government in February 2018.

Transit Systems, the winning bidder, sold the company after securing the contract in January 2020. Transit Systems' Sydney bus routes generated about 27 per cent of the company's revenue—nearly one-third. After selling its stake in January, the original owner made \$151 million in market value terms. The second founder made \$107 million and the third founder made \$41 million, according to filings submitted to the Australian Stock Exchange. I am not knocking them. No flies on those guys: If they were smart enough to buy it, that was up to them. But who was dumb enough to sell it? It was the Liberal Party of New South Wales. That is the situation.

Our transport system has been in chaos over the past few months but I report to the House that the Minister for Transport and Roads has developed an ingenious way of ensuring on-time running: He is stopping, cancelling and closing bus stops in Croydon, Arncliffe, the Princes Highway, Belrose, Canterbury, Dulwich Hill and many more. Here is the evidence. The Government says, through its own paraphernalia, that the bus stops are going to "contribute to the New South Wales Government's target of 95 per cent on-time running of bus services". It could apply this wonderful rationale to all sorts of government departments. NAPLAN results are down, so close the schools; emergency departments are full, close the hospitals. We can see the transport Minister getting up one day and saying, "We've got a great way of making the trains run on time; they're not going to stop at any stations." It is an ingenious idea. If you were on the train you could get a seat.

Why are we in this situation? We are in this situation because of chaos and mismanagement of the Transport portfolio. That is the situation. The Government is disastrously trying to claw back some cash from the assets that it owns. Listen to this litany. Two weeks ago we found out that the Sydney Metro project had blown out by \$4 billion. The Sydney Metro West project has been effectively cancelled. Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 has been scrapped. The North South Aerotropolis Metro is soon to be cancelled and the Sydney Light Rail is \$1 billion over budget, one year late and moves slower than a horse and cart. That is the record of the transport Minister. When asked by journalists about the suggestion that there had been a \$4 billion blowout on the Sydney Metro, the Minister said, "Yes, the metro is over budget." One journalist asked by how much and the Minister said, "Well, between \$2 and \$3 billion."

This is the party of fiscal responsibility! The Minister lost \$1 billion in one sentence. It is no wonder net debt in this State is the highest of any jurisdiction in the Commonwealth—\$42 billion by the end of this term. So what have we got? We have got chaos, mismanagement, poor oversight, bungled projects, blown-out time lines, the biggest debt in the State's history and deceitful reporting practices. That has all led us to this point. And what is the transport Minister's response to this appalling record? It is the fault of the bus drivers—not a senior manager, not a politician, no-one else. We will not stand for bus drivers being blamed for the chaos and ineptitude of this Liberal Government. We will hold the Government to account on their behalf.

[Interruption from the gallery]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am aware that there are strongly held views on the matter being debated today. Parliamentary debate allows those with opposing views to express themselves freely without interference. I therefore ask that people in the gallery to refrain from clapping or distracting debate in any way, including verbally or visually.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (16:05:09): I acknowledge our visitors in the gallery. For those of you who are bus drivers in our public transport system, I genuinely thank you for your efforts. You make a difference to the people who are my constituents in my electorate. I thank you and respect you for the job that you do. We all want the best public transport system for our communities. As a local member, I want that. I think even members of the Opposition would agree with that statement. The question is: How do we get there? How do we achieve that? That is where this Government disagrees with the Labor Opposition. This Government takes very seriously our responsibility to find better transport models so that we have a world-class transport system. We all want that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: The Government says, "Let us have a look at new opportunities. Let us have a look at ways to improve our transport that you can share in with us", and that includes being smart and at times getting out of the way and letting in other people who are part of delivering our transport services.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Mount Druitt to order for the first time. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I say to you that the Government has a responsibility to do that. We will not apologise for it. It is our duty.

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Can I just say that the vast majority of our bus and ferry services already are operated by the private sector with oversight, which is the franchise model run by Transport for NSW.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the second time. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: In fact, 11 out of the 14 metropolitan bus service contracts are operated by the private sector. What has happened as a result of that? There is a stronger record of safe, reliable and efficient services meeting and exceeding transport and performance targets.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Mount Druitt to order for the second time.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I say this: Shame on you, Labor, for standing in the way of better bus services for our community. Let me tell you why.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Vaucluse will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time. I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the third time.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I say, "Just have a look at the Sydney ferry network." It was franchised in 2012. It has been a romping success in my electorate. My community loves it. They are the most efficient, scenic and relaxing way to get across our harbour and into the city. It is my electorate's transport mode of choice. I have 126 new ferry services on Sydney Harbour and six new ferries on those routes. As the local member I have \$6.3 million invested into a new ferry wharf upgrade.

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Service performance has improved. There is on-time running. My constituents have a high level of satisfaction with those services and that did not come by accident. The franchising contracts have performance metrics in them.

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Reliability averaged 99.8 per cent and I say, "Let's go higher with those ferry services." As a local member, I say that the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. With my experience of franchising of the Sydney ferry network—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Blue Mountains that she is on three calls to order.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: —I am optimistic, based on good evidence and reason, about the franchising of our buses.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Under Standing Order 249A I direct that the member for Blue Mountains remove herself from the Chamber until the conclusion of the debate on the petition signed by 10,000 or more persons.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Blue Mountains left the Chamber at 16:13.]

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am really disappointed. I am trying to get my point across and have my five minutes, but I have to say a lot of what I wanted to say has been interrupted by the appalling performance of Labor members. I say that we will have Transport for NSW running the services. On OpalCard People's Day there will be on-demand services and more turn-up-and-go buses.

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: We will have innovation in our transport sector.

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Our drivers can share in a part of that. They are the benefits I want for my community and I believe we will get to them through the franchising of our bus services.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: Madam Deputy Speaker—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Coffs Harbour.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:10:16): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Ms Jodi McKay: Why would you call the member for Coffs Harbour?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Newcastle will resume his seat. I gave the call from the first member who sought the call, as that is what happens.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: He did.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: I did.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: He jumped before.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: I jumped before him.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Are Opposition members questioning my ruling? The member for Newcastle will resume his seat. I gave the call to the first member who sought the call, which was clearly the member for Coffs Harbour. Under Standing Order 249A I direct that the member for Mount Druitt remove himself from the Chamber until the conclusion of the debate on the petition signed by 10,000 or more persons.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Mount Druitt left the Chamber at 16:14.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Canterbury to order. I direct the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Canterbury from the Chamber under Standing Order 249 for the remainder of this sitting day.

[The member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 16.14 accompanied by the Serjeant-at-Arms.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour has the call. He will be heard in silence. I do not want to remove the Leader of the Opposition from the Chamber, but I will not hesitate to do so if she continues to interject. The member for Coffs Harbour has the right to be heard in silence.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: I begin by acknowledging the attendance of people in the gallery today, especially in this weather. I note that the petition is about bus services. Typically people in the regions do not enjoy the same standards of public transport as exists in Sydney. I note that this petition calls for better bus services so this gives me a perfect opportunity to update the House and people in the gallery on an exciting development that is being trialled in Coffs Harbour. The eight-week trial of a driverless bus called the BusBot began a year ago. It is a six-seat bus about the size of the table in the centre of the Chamber and it ran along the north wall of the Coffs Harbour Jetty for about half a kilometre. The purpose of the trial was for the driverless bus to learn how to handle obstacles. During the eight weeks over the Christmas holidays the BusBot had thousands of passengers, most of whom were very satisfied with it.

Phase two of the BusBot trial was in the Marian Grove Retirement Village. This phase was trialling an automated on-demand service whereby people in the retirement village could ask for a bus to arrive on demand and it would take them to various places around the village. Phase three of the BusBot was launched at the North Coast Regional Botanic Garden, which I attended in the company of my parliamentary colleague the member for Myall Lakes and Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Transport. Phase three will explore different challenges for this driverless bus. The botanic garden has poor global positioning system reception and, due to the shadows and the narrow nature of the path, will require the BusBot to have much more programming and much more software to improve its automation. You might ask what this has to do with buses in Sydney. I think this BusBot trial that is happening in Coffs Harbour and a few other places in New South Wales is—

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

Mr GURMESH SINGH: —showcasing the automation that is happening right now. These days most new cars that we drive out of a dealer will come with some level of automation. Some cars, especially at the top end, can drive themselves but are held back by regulation in this country. Automation is definitely the future, especially in regional New South Wales.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Cessnock will come to order.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: I think that within this decade, and certainly within the next two decades, we will see automated transport as the norm in New South Wales. Automation will bring better bus services, especially in places such as Coffs Harbour. With regards to the other topics in the petition, franchising has become the standard approach for delivery of contracted transport services across New South Wales. This is because the New South Wales Government recognises the benefits that experienced world-class private sector operators can bring to our transport networks to improve services for customers.

The private sector has been operating buses in metropolitan Sydney and across New South Wales for decades in places such as Coffs Harbour, with a strong track record of safe, reliable and efficient services meeting or exceeding contracted performance targets. Some 11 out of 14 Sydney metropolitan bus service contracts are already operated by the private sector. All regional, rural and outer metropolitan bus services in New South Wales are privately operated, with 600 individual bus contracts in place across New South Wales. Tendering of Sydney metropolitan bus services has delivered improved service, on-time running and a 9 per cent improvement in customer satisfaction as per annual surveys.

The New South Wales Government announced public transport reforms in October 2019 that will see the remaining three State Transit Authority bus service contracts franchised as part of the broader retendering of bus contracts across Greater Sydney over the coming three years. The aim of this process is to transform the current one-size-fits-all model of service delivery to one that gives our customers more choice and more services. We want to provide additional bus services across the city, deliver innovative new service options for customers and a fleet of new electric buses that will reduce air and noise pollution for our communities. Under this approach the New South Wales Government retains ownership of all assets as part of the franchising process and continues to control service levels and fares.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (16:17:10): You know, I am not too happy that I have to stand up here for another petition debate—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I warn the member for Swansea for the last time. If she continues to interject I will remove her from the Chamber. That applies to other members who are on three calls to order, including the member for Gosford. The member for Newcastle has the call.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP: As I was saying, I am not too happy that I have to stand up here for another petition debate to tell those members opposite what an abject failure the privatisation of buses in this State is. I should not have to. As the member for Newcastle I have contributed to two previous debates with other members from Hunter electorates, representing over 20,000 people in the Hunter who signed a petition against the privatisation of buses in this State. The member for Vaucluse stated that members on both sides of the Chamber have very different views on privatisation—yes, that is true! The view of members on this side of the House is that privatisation of the public bus network is an absolute dud. The former Premier stood in Civic Park in Newcastle and guaranteed the people of Newcastle and the Hunter that we would have a world-class public transport system. What have we got? We have schoolchildren being left by the side of the road.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Newcastle will direct his comments through the Chair. The member will be heard in silence.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP: We have teenagers who have had to leave home at the crack of dawn so they could get to school on time. We have bus stops closed, blowouts in journey times and multiple transfers placed into what used to be a single bus trip. We have people with illnesses such as cancer missing vital appointments, workers being forced back into their cars and elderly people abandoned and isolated. We even had people with impaired vision buy houses on bus routes so they could maintain their independence, only to have their bus stop and transport taken away. Can members imagine for one moment how that would feel and what that would do to them? We are two years down the road and have things improved? No!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Swansea from the Chamber under Standing Order 249 for the remainder of the day.

[The member for Swansea left the Chamber at 16:22 accompanied by the Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP: I am still hearing about problems with this network. On 27 January Richard wrote to me about the number 21 bus, the only service that travels from the east to the former train terminus. Some 20 per cent of Newcastle East's population is over 65 years old. It is their only bus service and does not take them near a shopping centre or to the health services hub of Newcastle West. On 17 February 2020 Tobias had a problem with the frequency of his service, the number 47. It starts too late in the day and finishes too early in the night. On 18 February 2020 Amanda stated that—well, she had given up altogether. She wrote, "Since Keolis Downer took over I have abandoned the use of public transport to get from Belmont North to Honeysuckle. Since then I have been driving, because even with a 10 to 15 minute walk it is still half the time of the bus".

Since coming to Parliament I have fought for the basic tenets of social justice and equity. I can tell you that Newcastle's decimated bus network fails to achieve those values. It is an attack on some of our community's most vulnerable people, people who rely on it the most. A government that cannot care for its vulnerable is not just letting itself down but is letting down our whole society. I thank everyone in the public gallery for coming here to the Chamber and showing your commitment to keeping those buses in public hands. I thank the union movement, especially the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, for its strong support.

The bus privatisation failure in Newcastle is just another arrogant act from a government that is grossly out of touch. It sold off our buses and the service got worse. It sold off our electricity network and the reliability got worse. It sold off the Northern Beaches Hospital and the committee has recommended that it never privatise a hospital ever again. These are just some of the items on the list of dodgy, dodgy deals undertaken by this Government as it carries on its privatisation blitz. Members should not forget the sale of Vales Point Power Station in November 2015 for \$1 million; it was later revalued by the new owner at \$730 million. Great deal, guys! Privatisation does not work and yet the Government does it over and over and over again. When will it learn? When will it learn that it is here to make things better for the people of New South Wales, not worse? When will it listen?

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:22:42): I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this debate. I note that more than five Liberal members of Parliament have not even bothered to turn up to the Chamber and stand here and defend what is happening to their community—

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

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: Those members are not able to stand here and defend what their Government is doing to the people in their communities who signed this petition. I stand here and support the thousands and thousands of community members who have turned up and signed our petition. They oppose the privatisation of our great public buses in Sydney. On 24 October the transport Minister announced the privatisation of regions 7, 8 and 9, which includes the eastern suburbs bus services in my electorate. This is despite the fact that the Premier said on 20 March 2019 that there would be no further privatisation. We know this is a lie. She has outright lied to the people of New South Wales. When asked about this in question time on 24 October 2019 her response was, "Wakey-wakey, New South Wales—we have been doing it for eight years!" What disdain the Premier has for the people of New South Wales. What arrogance.

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

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: Since that announcement more than 20,000 people have signed our petition to reverse that decision, many of whom are from my community. The signatures continue to come in. My office has received thousands of emails, letters and phone calls from local residents, small business owners and disability advocacy groups—all furious about losing their buses.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for North Shore will come to order.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: I thank the thousands of community members who have signed this petition and are out there advocating for these public services. They include the Rail, Tram and Bus Union and Unions NSW. I thank them for the great work they have been doing in fighting to save these vital bus services. Many of the members are here today. The reason why Labor and the community oppose this decision is because we know when public assets are privatised it always ends up worse for the community—and privatisation of the last remaining public buses will be no different. We know the moment public assets are privatised profits come before people—shareholders trump passengers. We know this because it is embedded into the Corporations Act. We on this side of the Chamber believe that public services are for the public good and that not all public services exist to make money. That is why we have things like cross-subsidisation. I ask that the Treasurer become familiar with that. We know that when services are privatised it always ends up worse for the community. As the member for Newcastle said, Newcastle has seen a 19 per cent reduction in services.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Newcastle has had an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: In the inner west there has been the removal of 53 bus stops since privatisation and the private service has never once met on-time running targets.

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

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: If the public want further proof about the implications of privatisation they should look to the other side of the House at the members representing the electorates of Drummoyne, Wakehurst and Pittwater. I note that the member for Drummoyne in a private member's statement last week clearly voiced his concerns and articulated all of the problems he and his community are experiencing as a result of the privatisation of ferries. The Minister for Health and Medical Research, the member for Wakehurst, and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the member for Pittwater, are well known for their advocacy of public buses. The member for Wakehurst was quoted in a local newspaper as saying "generally the local bus system and drivers were doing a good job" and that he was "completely opposed to tossing the baby out with the bath water".

What those Government members and all the Opposition members know is that it will be the local routes, taken by everyday people, that will be really under threat. These are the bus services that take people to the doctors,

supermarkets, libraries and hospitals. Privatisation puts at risk these essential, much-loved and important services. One of the greatest tragedies for us in the east is that, in addition to the implications of privatisation, the Liberals are committed to further cuts to services when the final part of its light rail opens. Documents from Transport for NSW leaked earlier this week show the proposed changes to bus services as a result of the light rail.

The Government plan is to cut 16 bus routes: 302, 314, 317, 373, 376, 377, 393 394, 395, 397, 399, L98, M10, M50, 891 and 893. There is not a person in my electorate who is not impacted by those cuts. Why is the Government doing this? It is doing it to force people onto the light rail—another privatised public transport operator that is failing to meet community expectation and needs—and to streamline region 9 before it sells it off to the highest bidder. The eastern suburbs once had the best bus services in New South Wales but the services have been slowly decimated by those ideologues on the other side. I said it when I was made the candidate for Coogee and I will reaffirm it now: I am committed to fight to ensure my community and all communities have access to the public services they need. *[Time expired.]*

[Interruption from the gallery]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for North Shore to order for the first time. The member for Londonderry has already been called to order for the third time. I warn visitors in the gallery that if they interrupt the debate I will have them removed from the gallery. The Minister for Transport and Roads has the call. He will be heard in silence.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (16:28:36): I am going to do something unusual as a Liberal Minister and actually thank the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] for negotiating some important outcomes for its members.

Ms Anna Watson: We can't hear you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: If members remain quiet they may hear the Minister.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I said I was going to do something unusual and—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will reset the clock to three minutes.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I just indicated that I am going to do something unusual and actually thank the RTBU for what it has been doing to secure a number of key benefits for drivers including—

[Interruption from the gallery]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The visitors in the gallery will remain seated. The Clerk will stop the clock. If the visitors do not wish to sit down they can leave the gallery. The member for Drummoyne will remain silent. If members of the public do not wish to listen to the debate they can leave the gallery. That is my last warning. The Clerk will reset the clock to three minutes. The Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is fine; I have spoken for 20 seconds. It is all very well to say that this is some sort of ideological debate. With due respect to the member for Kogarah, his buses are served by the Punchbowl Bus Company.

Mr Chris Minns: No, they are not.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Kogarah will come to order.

Mr Chris Minns: He is addressing me directly, Madam Speaker.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Through you, Madam Speaker, the member for Kogarah—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Kogarah is being disorderly.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The point I am making about the union is that it sought a two-year job guarantee, the protection of travel passes and entitlements and the provision of more drivers. I point to region 6 where the Government has provided an additional 156 staff and has grown services by 270. Sydney's transport system is highly taxpayer subsidised. It is not paid for through fares and the money has to come from somewhere. When you want to electrify the State's bus fleet and grow services, when you want to grow union membership and increase the number of bus drivers, some calls have to be made. The reality is out of this it is not just three contract regions going out, it is all 13. If those opposite believe in nationalising the bus network I ask that they say so. In this city 80 per cent of the bus services are already provided by the private sector and 100 per cent of the bus services outside of Sydney are provided by the private sector. I ask all members to try to work out how we can grow services when in the past six years there has been a 40 per cent increase in the number of people catching buses in this city. No-one has ever seen that growth before. Even in Newcastle—

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: It has been a failure.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I know your view—

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: It is a fact.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —but if it has been such a failure, why has there been an 18 per cent increase in patronage? For the five years beforehand—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

Mr Clayton Barr: You broke a single trip into four trips and you count it as—

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: For the five years beforehand the bus patronage actually dropped away by 11 per cent.

Ms Kate Washington: You ran it down.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That is interesting because a lot of that patronage drop was under the last government. The union has secured a lot of guarantees. We are going to get world-class operators. We expect more on-demand, more services, more drivers. We are not selling the buses or the depots and we will reinvest in bus services in the way that we should.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Shellharbour will remain silent. Members will be silent.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: In reply: What a bizarre response from the Minister. It needs to be called out for what it is. His suggestion to the House is that there is exponential growth in the transport sector, therefore we need to privatise it. Why is every other industrialised city in the world going the exact opposite route? If this were the situation for transport, why are the rail lines not all being privatised? Why is the Government not going through them route by route and getting rid of them? This is an argument that the transport Minister is making to squeeze into a very narrow argument, that is, he blames bus drivers for his own chaos, ineptitude and mismanagement. This is what he said in the Parliament about bus drivers: They have not been doing that because the on-time running is lousy, the reliability of the services is poor and, quite frankly, they have been sloppy. That is the Minister for Transport and Roads blaming the guys at the end of the line, the people at the coalface. He is not blaming senior public managers—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Newcastle will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: —not senior bureaucrats, not Treasury officials and certainly not politicians. He is blaming bus drivers on \$57,000 a year. The Minister earns \$350,000 a year and the Premier earns \$450,000 a year. I think, this is my view, that she is a snob. I will say it. She runs around in a chauffeur-driven car—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Terrigal, the member for Goulburn and the member for Holsworthy will come to order. I cannot hear the member for Kogarah.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: —and she blames the poor buggers who are battling Sydney's traffic day in and day out—

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: —as if it is their fault that they do not have magic buses that jump over crowded intersections. Who is responsible for the chaos and congestion on the roads? The New South Wales Government. Who do they blame? The bus drivers and then they privatise all their jobs. I know those opposite do not care about it. If anyone touched a hair on any of their entitlements they would jump up at a moment's notice and defend their rights. But when the bus drivers attempt to do it they are called bludgers.

Ms Melanie Gibbons: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Melanie Gibbons: The member is addressing those on this side of the House directly and not through you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: What a devastating point of order!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Kogarah will continue.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The bottom line is bus drivers deserve better than this Government. They have been sold down the river on a busted ideology and we are fighting and standing up against it. [*Time expired.*]

[Interruption from gallery]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: On a number of occasions I have asked members of the public in the gallery to remain silent. Pursuant to Standing Order 260, the visitors in the public gallery will be removed.

Petition noted.

Private Members' Statements

FEDERAL ROADS FUNDING

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:39:00): Tonight I support my Federal Parliament colleague Emma McBride, the member for Dobell, who has called out what the northern part of the Central Coast is calling the "roads rorts scandal". We have had the sports rorts scandal in the Federal Parliament and now we have the roads rorts scandal. We were quite buoyed during the Federal election when the Federal Government promised a \$70 million roads package for the Central Coast. It sounded like good news. But when the details came out it turned out that over 90 per cent of that money—\$63.4 million—would be spent in the Robertson electorate. There are three electorates on the Central Coast—Robertson, Dobell and Shortland—and over 90 per cent is going to one electorate. Guess who was under pressure in the last Federal election? It was, of course, the Liberal Party in the Robertson electorate.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: If members do not come to order they will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The largest amount of growth on the Central Coast is in the northern part where the population is exploding. It is great to see the former planning Minister in the Chamber because he knows about all the work that is going on in the northern part of the Central Coast. He was a good supporter of the Scentre Group's development at Tuggerah. Unfortunately, since he left that portfolio we have not heard much about it. We would love to have him back because he was a big supporter of the Central Coast. We have been left with a situation where of the \$70 million package only \$6.4 million will go to the Dobell electorate.

The NRMA has said on the record a number of times that the roads in the northern part of the Central Coast are some of the worst in the State. The Pacific Highway travels right through the middle of my electorate of Wyong. We built what is called Tuggerah Straight and in 2009 we started planning the road through Wyong to alleviate the daily traffic jams. After 10 years and \$35 million spent on planning, not one sod of soil has been turned. I know that the State Government is looking at it. The very eminent Hon. Taylor Martin from the other place has given me an assurance that when the M1 upgrade finishes the Government will start putting money towards the project. He is an honest young man and he will keep his promise. If he does not, I will let him know about it.

We are not getting any support from the Federal Government even though the Central Coast, particularly the northern part, could greatly help to alleviate population issues in Sydney. There are new housing estates and there is the potential for commercial and industrial development. All of that land is available but the road system is a joke. Local businesspeople, existing residents, have told me that they may have to move out of the area because the traffic issues are so bad. When the member for Dobell says that one end of the Central Coast is receiving 90 per cent of the funding and the other end receives only 9.2 per cent, there is something wrong. Even fair-minded people in the southern part of the Central Coast would say that it is unfair that most of that funding is going to projects in that area. I am not saying that those projects are not important but when we compare the roads and the volume of traffic travelling on them, it begs the question why some roads were given priority over roads in the northern part of the Central Coast.

Governments at any level and of any persuasion have to look at the issues that are affecting communities and allocate the money fairly. That is all people ask. No matter where we live we all pay taxes and we want a fair return on our taxes. When the member for Dobell rang me and told me the figures, you could have knocked me over with a feather. I could not believe there was that much bias in the funding of projects. It is not as though one huge project took all the money. The fact is that a whole lot of small projects in the south were given priority over projects in the north.

PAUL HACKETT, OAM

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (16:44:18): I am privileged and glad to pay tribute to one of Lane Cove's finest sons and one of my dearest friends, Mr Paul Hackett. Recently awarded the Order of Australia Medal, I take this opportunity to second this honour and explain the depth of his multifaceted civic duty. Mr Hackett, OAM, has donated blood over 100 times. According to the Red Cross, every blood donation can save three lives, which makes Paul a veritable superhero. I jest. However this donation of blood, plasma and platelets truly gives people a second chance. Whether it is an

emergency or a battle against serious illness and disease, donors like Paul maintain our hospitals' crucial blood supply.

The time came when Paul required assistance himself. After his 101st donation, the Red Cross alerted Paul to an anomaly. His doctor let him know he had contracted a rare form of leukaemia that often strikes men in their 60s. Rather than letting it get him down, Paul, as was his typical approach, decided he would beat it with a healthy diet, a positive attitude and plenty of rowing. Indeed, Paul paddles his kayak for around 50 kilometres a week—not bad for a young man in his 70s. In truth, Paul attributes his success in beating prostate cancer to its detection in the early stages. This early detection is a very fortunate effect of regular blood donation.

Paul's work in the community is extensive. He initiated a group that supported Out of Work Youth and Paul ran Pops at Parramatta Gaol, which saw broken toys delivered to prisoners for repair before they were given to underprivileged children at Christmas. He campaigned to rebuild Greenwich Senior Citizens' Centre and Greenwich Library. Using his gift for public relations, he initiated a committee to raise funds for Microsearch pioneer Dr Earl Owens. While listening to commercial radio, Paul had an idea and formed a committee that led to Australian customs handing over seized goods to charity.

Paul also worked with Lane Cove Lions Club on a project to fully refurbish a house near St Vincent's Hospital that provides a place to stay for family members of people who are hospitalised. When he was paddling around our beautiful Sydney Harbour, Paul became concerned for the number of fishermen, mostly of a Chinese or Korean background, who risked being swept off the rocks because they are not aware of the dangers of an incoming tide. He campaigned to have warning signs erected in appropriate places, written in Chinese and Korean. On behalf of the House, I am so pleased that Mr Hackett has received his Order of Australia Medal at the most recent Australia Day awards. It is a wonderful indication of our community's appreciation for Paul.

Paul is a dear friend and mentor of mine and he has been a mentor to many members of Parliament. I have no doubt that he will continue to mentor those who come through the Liberal Party and who look to serve their constituencies. I look forward to many more years of service with Mr Hackett, OAM, on behalf of the people of Lane Cove and New South Wales. I thank Paul for joining us today in the gallery and I thank his family especially for allowing him to give up so much time to provide this wonderful community work.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:48:00): I add my vote of thanks to Mr Paul Hackett, OAM, for his 100-plus blood donations, which is a wonderful effort. Every year as we come into winter, the flu season causes difficulties for blood banks in finding sufficient healthy donors. Coronavirus is an extra challenge this year, which means a number of regular donors may not be able to donate during that time. I encourage whoever is listening to this debate, if they are fit, healthy and eligible to donate, to contact Australian Red Cross Lifeblood and make an appointment to donate blood so that the community has sufficient supplies of blood during this challenging season ahead.

CABRAMATTA FIRE STATION

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:48:54): Recently I visited the Cabramatta Fire Station to meet with the amazing team of local firefighters who have spent countless hours over the past few months assisting with the bushfire fighting efforts all over New South Wales. Some also volunteered their time outside work to fight fires abroad. I also had the opportunity to sit down with them to have some tea and chat about their lives as firefighters. When those brave souls are not fighting fires, they assist with other disaster relief efforts; and when they are not doing that, they are out educating the community on fire safety.

I recognise the members of the Cabramatta Fire Brigade. They include: from platoon A, Station Officer David Myers, Station Officer Brett Wood, and firefighters Graeme Spencer, Emma Cobb, Sally Andrews and Colin Green; from platoon B, Station Officer Carl Franklin and firefighters Michael Nguyen, Matthew Garrett, Mitchell Nesbit and Peter Nicholson; from platoon C, Station Officer Allan Roberts and firefighters Thomas Wilson, Paul Linnenlucke, Jay Kendrick and Joshua McIlvenny; and from platoon D, Station Officer Robert Mason, Leading Station Officer Jonathan Moore, and firefighters Trent Morgan, Jye Doyle, Philip Eddey and Brett Payne.

Words cannot describe how grateful we are to all our firefighters, whether they are near or far. Indeed, our communities would be in a dark place if it was not for them. I end by thanking Acting Superintendent Craig Easy of Fire and Rescue NSW for allowing me to visit the station on such short notice, as well as the team at the Cabramatta Fire Station for their hospitality. I look forward to catching up with them soon. Although I have recognised Cabramatta Fire Station specifically, I also recognise the fire stations, the Rural Fire Service, the volunteers and the police officers throughout New South Wales and Queensland who were involved in the terrible fires that went on for nearly six months. They went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the community was as safe as they could make it. I thank them all very much. God bless every one of them.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I thank the member for Cabramatta. I also acknowledge the fire stations in the electorate of the member for Cabramatta, which have no doubt done an outstanding job.

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:51:57): I recognise residents of New South Wales who were recognised in the Australia Day 2020 Honours List, announced by the Governor-General and Chancellor of the Order of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd). In my capacity as veterans Parliamentary Secretary, I recognise those members of the Australian Defence Force who received a range of awards for gallantry and distinguished service. Importantly, those awards are not restricted by rank, but are determined by the quality of the action or service performed by the service man or woman. Those men and women have shown distinguished service to our nation and, as they are residents of New South Wales, I believe it is proper that we recognise them in the State's Parliament.

The Bar to the Distinguished Service Cross award recipients were Colonel Michael Andrew Say, for distinguished command and leadership in warlike operations while deployed as the Commander of Task Group Taji VII in Iraq during 2018; and Colonel Stuart Nicholas Kenny, CSC, for distinguished leadership in warlike operations as the Chief of Plans for Train, Advise, Assist Command—South, Operation Resolute Support, in Afghanistan from January 2018 to January 2019.

The Commendation for Distinguished Service award recipients were: Captain Sands Niall Skinner, Royal Australia Navy, for distinguished performance of duties in warlike operations as the Aircraft Maintenance and Engineering Branch Chief within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Resolute Support for Train Advise Assist Command—Air whilst assigned to Operation Highroad from July 2018 to February 2019; Brigadier Peter James Connor, AM, for distinguished performance of duties in warlike operations as the Commander of Task Group Afghanistan while deployed on Operation Highroad from November 2017 to September 2018; and Corporal Lachlan Thomas Mitchell for distinguished performance of duties in warlike operations as a Force Protection Section Commander for Train Advise Assist Command—Air, Afghanistan, whilst assigned to Operation Highroad from February to August 2018. The Conspicuous Service Cross award recipients were Lieutenant Colonel Glen Alan Billington, for outstanding achievement as the Commanding Officer and Chief Engineer of the 19th Chief Engineer Works; and Sergeant Benjamin John Mason, for outstanding achievement in E-7A Wedgetail aircraft communications information systems and security support for the Australian Defence Force.

The Conspicuous Service Medal recipients were Petty Officer Victoria Ann Clarke, for meritorious devotion to duty in the field of Navy workforce management; Lieutenant Commander Bernard Roy Dobson, RAN, for meritorious devotion to duty during the introduction into service of HMAS *Hobart*; Chief Petty Officer Melita Leigh English, for meritorious achievement in the performance of duty as the Fleet Legal Assistant; Commander Lindsay Ridgway Gordon, RAN, for meritorious achievement as the Deputy Director Submarines—Platform; Warrant Officer Class One Brad James Millen, for meritorious achievement as the Intelligence Warrant Officer of the 51st Battalion, the Far North Queensland Regiment, and the Regional Force Surveillance Group Liaison Officer to the Australian Maritime Border Operations Centre from 2017 to 2018; Lieutenant Colonel John Charles Sayers, for meritorious achievement as Commanding Officer of the 2nd Force Support Battalion; and Corporal Lachlan Walker O'Kane, for meritorious achievement as the Surveillance Technician in Air Task Group 630.1.4 whilst deployed on Operation OKRA from August 2018 to February 2019.

It is my great honour as the veterans Parliamentary Secretary to recognise those great Australians and residents of New South Wales in the Legislative Assembly. In my electorate of Manly, work continues to host this year's service commemorating the attack on Sydney Harbour, to be held at the end of May at the Defence of Sydney Monument on North Head. I look forward to welcoming current and former service men and women, from all conflicts for this important commemoration. I thank the House.

WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:55:53): Imagine waking up and picking up the paper to read that there was now a big red line around your house and your neighbours' houses—a line that you are on the wrong side of, a line that supposedly says which properties are contaminated and which are not. This happened in my community in September 2015. Since then people's lives have been turned upside down. People started realising that their family's unusual health history and high prevalence of cancer may not be a coincidence, wondering if their own children's health had been affected by their decision to live in the area. Then they realised they could not get out—their property values had plummeted.

Commercial fishers in the area lost their livelihoods for 12 months. The uncertainty of health impacts, future health impacts and financial constraints hit the hardest. There was uncertainty from the outset because

no-one knew what the truth was. No-one felt they could rely on the advice being given by any level of government because every level of government had known about the contamination long before the community. The betrayal was real and, thanks to the appalling and disrespectful way in which the State and Federal governments conveyed information and advice to residents over the past five years, that sense of betrayal has never left. Information and advice frequently changed, local knowledge was ignored, and everything was shrouded in secrecy and denial. This denial was despite the very obvious fact that the pollution was caused by the Department of Defence and the people impacted were entirely faultless.

Over the past five years the red line was expanded twice, there have been two senate inquiries, there has been a battle against a sand mine, children were born, children were raised and grandchildren no longer visited. Life went on with the constant stress of uncertainty mixed with anger, frustration and sheer desperation. It has been far too hard. But in the face of those challenges the community rose up. It got organised and held its nerve. From the outset community members knew they had been duded and rightly assumed the Government would not assist unless it was made to, so they got advice and built a class action from the ground.

To the absolute credit of community leaders, this was the first PFAS class action in Australia, and led the way for the communities of Oakey and Katherine to do the same. All this time, the Government underestimated them. Thanks to local Hunter media, the *Newcastle Herald* and NBN News in particular, residents' stories were heard and their battles were followed. I make special mention of Donna Sharpe, Matthew Kelly and Joanne McCarthy at the *Newcastle Herald*; Carrie Feliner, who is now with *The Sydney Morning Herald*; and Michael McGowan, who is now with *The Guardian*. I make special mention of David Threlfo at NBN, who, as a cameraman, was so moved by the residents' plight that he made his own documentary that ran nationally on two occasions.

Thankfully, almost five years since people were told of the contamination in their lives, a positive outcome has been achieved for those 400 Williamstown residents involved. But this result is only due to the fierce determination, hard work and commitment of people whose lives had been turned upside down and who still fought for justice for themselves and their neighbours. Since I was elected and since Meryl Swanson, my friend and Federal member for Paterson, was elected this issue has been the most involved, complex and time-consuming for us. But we are elected representatives—that is our job.

Out of this tragedy, community leaders stepped up. It was not their job to step up, but they did. For their fierce determination and hard work I thank residents Rhianna and Cain Gorfine from the Williamstown & Surrounds Residents Action Group; Lindsay and Ann Clout, Justin Hamilton and Sue Walker from the Fullerton Cove Residents Action Group; Kim and Gavin Smith, and Nick and Mel Marshall from the Salt Ash Community First group; and the many other residents who pushed so hard for a fair outcome from their government, with special mention to Jenny and Terry Robinson and Kim-Leanne King, who have all made me cry more than once.

Many lessons must be learned from this by governments of all persuasions. Hopefully the State and Federal governments and all of their agencies have learned what not to do when their government has caused harm to the very people they are meant to be serving and protecting. But important lessons can also be learned from this by communities about working together, taking advice, drawing on other experiences and expertise, getting organised and persevering for a just outcome. I do not know what is in the settlement and I know not everyone was signed up.

The settlement does not address people's health issues—I understand it is purely an economic loss and nuisance claim. But for many residents it is the first real sign of hope in five years. It allows the possibility of moving on, moving out and planning for their futures once again. The last thing we want out of this success is an us versus them situation. We want everyone to be able to move on with their lives. I urge the New South Wales Government to step up and put pressure on its Federal colleagues to resolve all claims and do the right thing by those who have suffered for so long.

NSW WOMEN'S WEEK

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:01:04): Today amongst our colleagues we celebrate International Women's Day and I speak about NSW Women's Week. This week has been established as a centrepiece to support the New South Wales Government's commitment to improve the lives of women across the State. Through a series of events and activities, it celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women and promotes gender equality. As I said, the week coincides with International Women's Day as well as the NSW Women of the Year Awards, which we celebrated this morning.

Now in its ninth year the NSW Women of the Year Awards recognises and celebrates the outstanding contribution made by women across New South Wales to industry, communities and society. North Shore had two exceptional women nominated for the NSW Business Woman of the Year. Anneke van den Broek is a driven,

successful entrepreneur with a genuine desire to make a difference. Anneke launched her own pet care brand, Rufus & Coco Australia, in 2008, which is now Australia's most awarded pet brand. Anneke is also a speaker, giving up her time to speak out on female entrepreneurship, animal welfare and pet owners' rights. I congratulate Anneke on being awarded the NSW Business Woman of the Year award this morning at the NSW Women of the Year Awards ceremony.

Our other North Shore nominee was Sue Ismiel, who is a founder, director and global brand ambassador for Nad's. In addition to her commitment to business, Sue is passionate about creating better futures for migrant and refugee communities. She volunteers at several organisations that provide support and business projects to the community and she supports a number of initiatives that support women to better understand and advocate for their own needs. Members of this place know that we recognise one local woman of the year from every electorate across the State and this year Pam Longstaff was recognised as the North Shore Woman of the Year. Pam was awarded to recognise her outstanding contribution to the North Shore community as the founder and organiser of the Prince Albert Street Christmas Lights Party. The event is well known in my electorate at Christmas time, and draws almost 10,000 people together to raise money for charities during the festive season.

The Prince Albert Christmas street light party brings together Mosman residents including local businesses and community groups like Four Frogs Creperie, Mosman Lions Club, St Clement's Anglican Church, Mosman Netball Club, Mosman Hockey Club and a number of our school P&Cs. In the five years since the event has been run by Pam, the community has raised over \$110,000 for charities including the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and the Garvan Institute. I was very pleased to join with Pam and her daughter, Jessica, this morning to recognise her contribution to our community. What she initiated by starting the Prince Albert Street Christmas Lights Party not only brings together our community every year and creates phenomenal community spirit but it also shows people that we can make a difference, not only having our enjoyment of Christmas time and community, but also ensuring we are raising significant funds to help other people in need.

I note particularly at Christmas time that what people crave is the idea of giving something back. It has always been a great pleasure of mine to join in the Prince Albert Street Christmas lights party. Last year it was a little harder with a small baby. The previous year, when I was heavily pregnant, I did sample all the wares from the food stalls and particularly the baked goods from the children at Blessed Sacrament School. They were quite delicious. I was very disappointed that the Mosman Lions Club let me down by running out of sausages at their sausage sizzle, which I always remind them about. Hopefully they will be stocked up this year for the Christmas street party. As we acknowledge NSW Women's Week and International Women's Day I note how incredibly proud I am to work alongside the first elected female Premier of New South Wales, Gladys Berejiklian. Everyone in this place knows that the Premier is a long-time advocate for women in our community and continues to advocate strongly for women in this Parliament.

I thank the Premier for her leadership of this Government and as a role model for all young women across the State. I reflect at this point on the scourge of domestic violence that affects the community. With the murders of Hannah Clarke and her children Aaliyah, Laianah, and Trey in Brisbane recently we were keenly reminded of something that we know happens each day in the community. Our homes are a treasured safe haven that the majority of us hold dear, but sadly for thousands of families that sanctuary does not exist. The statistics concerning domestic and family violence are appalling, and the rate of under-reporting is of serious concern. Our Government has invested a record \$431 million over four years to combat domestic and family violence, but there is always more to be done. During Women's Week it is something we need to focus on. Happy International Women's Day and Women's Week, and congratulations to Pam Longstaff.

M6 EXTENSION

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:06:10): I will address Sutherland Shire Council's report on the M6 extension as reported in *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* earlier this week. I was surprised to see on Monday morning that *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* had published an article titled "M6 extension through shire to result in 'significant losses' of parks and sporting fields", based on an unfounded report by council. I am advised that not only is this an old report, but that council's conclusions are questionable, given that it conceded it was "unable to obtain strategic design options from Transport for NSW". I make the following clear: The community can be assured that the Government is committed to protecting our beautiful local parks and sporting fields in the Sutherland Shire.

Further, I have stated previously in this place that I will fight to protect Miranda Park, located in the heart of my electorate. The article cites a council document, not a Transport for NSW strategy. There is no chosen route, time line or planning approval for further stages of the M6. With this in mind, council's report is effectively a creative writing exercise and unnecessarily alarms local residents. Even if there were a confirmed route for these future stages, it is incredibly misleading to suggest there will be "significant losses" of green space, particularly when there is no indication as to where the corridor could go below ground.

Furthermore, any decision would require a State significant infrastructure application, environmental impact statement development and exhibition and planning approvals which would be considered by experts and our community. Consider the evidence of how the Government is delivering stage one, a game changer for commuters, reducing travel time and easing congestion. The Government is investing around \$20 million for new and upgraded local sporting and recreational facilities in the area to minimise construction impacts. Following consultation with Bayside Council, sporting groups and the local community, we have progressed plans to upgrade existing facilities and to build new facilities at Ador Park and McCarthy Reserve at Rockdale and Brighton Memorial Playing Fields at Brighton-Le-Sands.

These new and upgraded facilities will include the creation of new grass and synthetic playing fields, a new skate park and play areas. We will stage the construction of facility upgrades to minimise impact to the existing facilities and the soccer season. An urban design and landscape management plan will be developed as part of the detailed design for the project, in consultation with Bayside Council, the community and key stakeholders. This will include the urban design and landscaping for the reinstatement of Rockdale Bicentennial Park. I highlight that the M6 Stage 1 project includes a four kilometre twin tunnel motorway between the new M5 at Arncliffe to President Avenue at Kogarah, the widening and upgrade of President Avenue and upgrades to community recreational facilities.

This project will ensure that motorists spend less time sitting in traffic and more time doing the things they love. Motorists travelling from the south will have better access to the Sydney motorway network connecting with the new M5 Motorway and access to the M4 Motorway, WestConnex and the proposed Western Harbour Tunnel Northern Beaches Link. Stage one of the M6 Motorway project will bypass up to 23 sets of traffic lights on the Princes Highway between St Peters and Kogarah; reduce the number of heavy vehicles on surface roads by up to 2,000 per day and provide an active transport corridor to encourage walking and cycling; and provide an alternative transport option for people taking short trips in the project area. I make it clear that this council report is not reflective of the impacts of the M6 Motorway project; it is merely its hypothesis.

The report is based on a road corridor through the shire that is nearly 70 years old. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces only approved the M6 stage 1 project in December 2019 following community consultation which began in October 2017. A project update was released in June 2018 outlining further details about the design of the M6 stage 1 to give the community time to consider the information and provide important feedback before the environmental phase began. Council's assessment of future works through the shire are simply speculative. The community will be kept informed on any progress regarding the M6 and further stages and, as always, will be given the opportunity to provide feedback when the time comes.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CARLENE YORK

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:10:46): This evening I recognise former Assistant Commissioner Carlene York. I take note of the outstanding contribution she has provided to my local community in her former role as Northern Region Commander, NSW Police Force. Raised in Wagga Wagga in a small family, Carlene always aspired to be a police officer. In 1980 she joined the force and since then she has not looked back. In fact, Carlene has been a trailblazer for women in policing. Rising through the ranks, she has held various roles including general duties; police prosecutor; staff officer, forensic services; commander, criminal identification specialist branch; and director, forensic services. Just to name a few.

Carlene graduated from the Federal Bureau of Investigation Law Enforcement Executive Development Program and has led important reform in forensics. Carlene introduced robotics to enhance DNA analysis and a mobile forensic laboratory for crime scene use and mobile fingerprinting devices and has applied new technology to cold cases. Carlene exemplifies women working in male-dominated workplaces. As a spokesperson for Women in Policing and a founding member of the National Commissioners' Advisory Committee on Women in Policing, I know she has positively motivated and encouraged many women in policing roles. She was also the first officer to take part-time maternity leave. While she is an amazing mentor for females in policing, she is also an inspiration for all women who face the often challenging role of juggling family responsibilities and career demands. It is for this reason that I invited Carlene to be guest speaker at my International Women's Day breakfast. Those in attendance were delighted with her impressive speech.

As the Northern Region Commander, Carlene was responsible for the delivery of policing services in my electorate of Port Macquarie. In 2012 she led the strike force that successfully captured Australia's most wanted offender, convicted killer and fugitive Malcolm Naden. I commend Carlene for her focus on early intervention of post-traumatic stress disorder during her time as Commander, Human Resources, NSW Police Force. I am sure that the task of managing the health and wellbeing of our police was often challenging and sometimes very difficult due to the nature of police work. In my conversations with Carlene it is very clear to me that she was passionate about introducing preventive measures to ensure our police do not experience a decline in their mental health.

On behalf of my community, I thank Carlene for her dedication to policing in what has been most certainly very challenging conditions. I applaud her success in managing a good work/life balance while being a working mother and wife. Whilst I am sure that her departure from the NSW Police Force will be tremendously felt, I am positive the State Emergency Service and volunteers are overjoyed with the wealth of experience the organisation has gained by Carlene's appointment as SES Commissioner. I am confident that with her decorated policing career and experience in emergency response, Carlene is the best candidate to lead our amazing SES volunteers. I know other members of this House will join me in wishing Carlene every success in her new role. No doubt the responsibility of getting communities back on their feet will be just as challenging and rewarding as her previous roles. She has certainly had a busy start, contending with the aftermath of bushfires and floods and the impact they have had on our local communities. On behalf of this House and my community, I thank Carlene for her exceptional leadership and her commitment to keeping our community safe.

TRIBUTE TO DOUGLAS JAMES SHEDDEN

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:14:49): It is with a heavy heart that I notify the House of the recent passing of Mr Douglas "Doug" James Shedden, aged 82, who passed away on 13 January 2020. Doug, formerly the State member for Bankstown from 1987 to 1999, was an "old school" politician who believed in grassroots politics. He was engaging and friendly and would always offer a handshake or a peck on the cheek. His gentle demeanour, humble beginnings and good nature made him a joy to be around. It is a privilege to represent the great electorate of Bankstown. For me, it is an even greater honour to have followed in the footsteps of Doug Shedden, a devoted family man who had a deep commitment to public service and who devoted his life to our local community.

Doug was born in Casino. He met and married Pat before settling in Greenacre in 1961. Like many new families who came to Bankstown at the time, Doug and Pat came in search of better employment opportunities and prospects. In 1966 Pat and Doug welcomed their daughter Leanne, whom they adored and loved dearly. Doug was a prominent member of the Labor Party and served as the president of the Greenacre branch for 20 years. He served a long tenure in public service for the Bankstown community, initially as an East ward councillor with Bankstown City Council from 1979 to 1988 and as deputy mayor between 1980 and 1983.

In 1987 Doug was elected the member for Bankstown, a position he held until his retirement from politics in 1999. Community was everything to Doug. He worked tirelessly to represent his constituents and improve the quality of life of the people of Bankstown. One of his greatest achievements was the rebuilding in 1988 of the Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital and ensuring over the years that the hospital would provide a full spectrum of services. Most deservedly, Doug Shedden will be remembered fondly by the Bankstown community for his long-term commitment to local charitable causes, the registered club movement, service clubs, sport and volunteering. Doug for many years served post-retirement as a director of Bankstown Sports Club and Bankstown City Aged Care and as a patron of many local organisations.

Doug Shedden was a hardworking local member and a great mentor of mine. He was the member as I was growing up in Bankstown and I met him as a teenager on joining the Bankstown Labor branch. Upon hearing the devastating news of Doug's passing, I was speechless and at a loss for words. Doug attended my and Alex's wedding and my daughter's christening. My mother and my husband are also deeply saddened by his loss. He was always so encouraging and supportive, a well-respected and much-loved gentleman. It was second nature for Doug to give a helping hand to the aged and the sick and many in the Bankstown community have been recipients of his kindness and generosity. I acknowledge the outstanding eulogies provided for Doug by Mr Richard Amery and Bankstown Sports Club director Mr Vern Falconer.

I also acknowledge the attendance at Doug's memorial of former Premier Barrie Unsworth, former Speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly John Murray, former Clerk of the Legislative Assembly Russell Grove, the Hon. Laurie Brereton, Brian Langton, John Mills, Kayee Griffin, Tony Stewart and Jason Clare amongst former local government and club representatives. It was a sombre but beautiful memorial service and a terrific testament to Doug's legacy. The public outpouring of grief following his passing and at his memorial is a testament to the high esteem in which Doug was held not only by his family, friends and colleagues but within the local area and the wider community. A thoughtful and touching eulogy was delivered by, among others, Mr Vernon Falconer. I would like to quote from his speech:

Douglas Shedden, a man of devotion, principle and unquestioned integrity in every facet of his life, family, public life, community, sport and club. He gained respect from all those who came into contact with him.

The people of Bankstown will forever remember Doug's lifelong commitment to charitable and community causes, his genuine interest in supporting the vulnerable and needy and his gentle and warm nature. Doug's passing is a great loss to us all and marks the end of an era for Bankstown. I take this opportunity to offer my deepest condolences to Doug's daughter Leanne, his extended family and his dear friends. I hope that in this time of grief

they may find solace in the knowledge that Doug's life work and legacy will always be treasured and remembered by the community of Bankstown. He will be greatly missed. Vale, Doug Shedden.

MULGOA ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (17:19:41): On Sunday 26 January families and friends all across the country came together in celebration of Australia Day. A day to reflect on what it means to be an Australian, to celebrate our diverse society, to acknowledge our history and to be grateful for the democratic and free nation that we are. What makes an Australian is not how one might look, the clothes we wear or the language we speak but rather how one lends a hand to their neighbour in need and that one uses this opportunity of being an Aussie to make our nation ever greater.

On Wednesday 22 January at the Penrith Civic Centre, Penrith City Council recognised five outstanding locals and two organisations at the Australia Day awards dinner who throughout the years, if not decades, have made an enormous contribution of time and effort in serving our local community. I acknowledge those who received awards at this wonderful event. Congratulations to Malcolm Robar, who received the Penrith Citizen of the Year award. Malcolm has dedicated his life to helping those in need through his career in the Australian Federal Police and as a volunteer for several emergency service organisations, including the NSW State Emergency Service, the NSW Rural Fire Service and Marine Rescue NSW.

Malcolm began working in his community in 1985 when he joined the Australian Federal Police and worked in areas such as fraud and general crime, drug operations, organised crime branch and international affairs. For 10 years Malcolm coordinated responses to ensure people receive the help they needed during natural disasters, including hail storms, floods, bushfires and other major events. On top of this, he has been an active member of local sporting clubs supporting softball and junior rugby league players as a coach and manager for teams in Penrith and he also recently visited the remote Kimberley region in Western Australia to work with the Indigenous community, teaching basic computer skills. Malcolm has clearly demonstrated what it means to be an Australian and is most deserving to be named Penrith Citizen of the Year. Congratulations, Malcolm.

Mr Jose Relunia, from my electorate, received the Penrith Local Appreciation Award for his services to the Penrith and Greater Sydney Filipino community. Jose is a trusted, respected and recognised leader who has devoted his life to helping others by sharing his culture with the wider community. Jose has various roles throughout his local community, including president of the Western Sydney Fil-Oz Association, the Philippine Australian Society for Senior Citizens, the Philippine Community Council of NSW and Australian Devotees of Our Lady of Penafrancia. Through these many roles Jose has a wide reach in his community, where he lives out his passion of helping other people. I congratulate him on receiving this award and recognition.

Penrith local group Mama Lana's Community Foundation were awarded the Penrith Community Group Award for their outstanding work in the Penrith community since 2013. With a focus on providing for the homeless, they have cared for and fed thousands of individuals across the Penrith region. All of this is possible thanks to the 180 volunteers who assist the organisation in serving the community, including Glenmore Park resident Michelle Grice who has played a significant role in the Glenmore Park and Penrith community for many years. Together with Mama Lana's Community Foundation, the Penrith Giants Kickability team was also awarded the Penrith Community Group Award. The Penrith Giants Kickability team was recognised for its work with children on the autism spectrum or those with intellectual, communication and attention deficit syndrome, helping them participate in Aussie rules football.

Among the two Penrith Local Appreciation Award recipients were Ian West, who received the award for his 20 years of service to the Emu Plains Lions Club; Robert Rigby, who was recognised for more than ten years' service as a respected cubs leader for the 1st South Penrith Scouting Group; and Cherise Terry-Jongejans, who was awarded for her years of volunteering as a youth cadet leader for St John Ambulance Penrith division every Friday night. Congratulations to all of these outstanding recipients who have led by example in what it means to be an Australian and how to lend a hand to a neighbour. Thank you to those involved in the success of the 2020 Penrith Local Council Australia Day awards.

More broadly I pay tribute to two significant Australia Day Honours recipients, who were recognised for distinguished service to the people and to the Parliament of New South Wales. I particularly honour Ms Marie Ficarra, OAM, and the Hon. Barry O'Farrell, AO, who was recognised for his service as Premier of New South Wales. Congratulations to everyone from the Penrith community on their Australia Day awards. I look forward to next year's event when we will hear again how great our wider Penrith region truly is.

WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:24:42): Today I will address an important issue in my electorate and call the attention of the House to the imminent threat to Sydney Harbour's marine health and marine life that

is posed by the Government's Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link project. Sydney boasts remarkable marine biodiversity that is rarely matched elsewhere. Almost 600 species of fish have been recorded in our harbour, which is more than the species of fish in United Kingdom waters or the whole of the Mediterranean Sea. Our harbour is home to green sea turtles, little penguins, weedy seadragons, moray eels, pineapple fish, the Australian fur seal and blue groper. Australian Museum records dating back to 1850 indicate the existence of over 2,473 species of polychaetes, crustaceans, molluscs and echinoderms.

This marine life has survived despite our disgusting treatment of our harbour. Since its early days as a cesspit for the colony, at various times Sydney Harbour has been subject to a stream of sewage, rubbish, industrial effluent and pollution-laden stormwater. Today the harbour has some of the highest concentrations of heavy metals and dioxins in the world as well as being contaminated by organochlorine pesticides—for example, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, or DDT—and other toxic chemicals and microplastics. While many of the practices that disposed of these pollutants into the harbour have ceased, there remains a legacy of sediment contamination that will take centuries to dissipate.

The Government is now proposing to upset that sediment by dredging 904,500 cubic metres of sediment from the harbour floor for its proposed Western Harbour Tunnel. Remarkably, most of that sediment will be dumped offshore under a Commonwealth permit. But we know that at least 142,500 cubic metres of that sediment is so toxic it cannot be dumped in the ocean. The environmental impact statement discloses that the sediment is contaminated with dioxins, tributyltin and heavy metals. Dredging threatens to contaminate harbour waters by creating a toxic plume that will be difficult to contain. That is because the Government is proposing not to build a traditional tunnel but to dig a trench and then submerge tubes into the harbour that will become the pathway along which vehicles will travel.

While the Government is proposing some minimisation measures, such as shallow floating silt curtains, those measures may not be sufficient to prevent plumes of contaminated sediment escaping into the harbour. The result is that our harbour inevitably will become contaminated by this toxic sediment, which will impact on water quality, pollution levels and eventually our marine life. The ABC has estimated that 70 threatened species are at risk, including fragile seagrasses that support 20 species of endangered seahorses and dragons. It is important to note that of the 50 species of seahorses found worldwide, Australia is home to 17. There are many projects underway to support and nurture our seahorses in the context of massive habitat loss.

The University of Sydney recently placed seahorse hotels, as it calls them, to help reverse the decline in populations, and they are having success. But the tunnel project threatens to undo all that good work by returning pollution to our harbour to levels not seen in decades. And it is not just our biodiversity that is at risk from this project—a project that could be better undertaken by building a conventional tunnel. So many local sporting clubs in my electorate of Balmain rely on a clean, healthy harbour. They include the Balmain Rowing Club, the Balmain Sailing Club, the Glebe Rowing Club and the Blackwattle Bay Dragon Boat Club. In addition, our historical Dawn Fraser Baths, which is home to Australia's oldest swimming club, is at risk if this project proceeds. The tidal waters of our "Dawny" are just metres from the site where this sediment is proposed to be dredged.

It makes me wonder how many members of this Government would be happy to take a dip down at Dawny when over 140,000 cubic metres of toxic sediment is being dredged and work is fully underway. This Government has a responsibility to protect our harbour, which is one of the defining features of Sydney. It also has a responsibility to protect our marine life and human health and safety. I call on the Government to rethink this dangerous proposal. I also call on the Government to work with the community to find other options that will not lead to the significant impact that I have highlighted to everyone in the House today.

TRIBUTE TO ALEX FULCHER, OAM, MBE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:29:18): It is with great sadness that I advise the House of the recent passing of a much-loved and respected member of the Bankstown community, Mr Alex Fulcher, OAM, MBE, who sadly passed away on 11 January 2020 at the age of 84. Alex's dedication to the local community was unwavering, particularly his lifelong commitment to cycling, in which he had a distinguished career as a cycling competitor and an elite athlete as well as serving the sport in coaching and managerial roles, and as an office bearer and volunteer at all levels.

Alex began cycling in 1949 at the age of 15 with the League of Wheelman in Sydney. It quickly became clear that he had talent as a cyclist, winning the New South Wales under 16 Track Championship as well as the Ice Speed Skating Championship in his first year. Alex continued to excel as a cyclist and went on to achieve great success in a wide variety of amateur and professional track and road cycling competitions over many years at local, State and national levels. In the 1960s Alex retired from racing and continued his involvement in coaching and in administrative roles for over five decades, helping countless other cyclists excel and succeed and making an extensive contribution to the administration of the sport.

Alex managed and coached multiple Olympic and Commonwealth Games track and road teams, including at the Edinburgh 1987 Commonwealth Games, the Brisbane 1982 Commonwealth Games and the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games, as well as serving as a member of the cycling committee that prepared for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games at the local Dunc Gray Velodrome at Bass Hill. Over the years Alex personally coached two world champions and many other cyclists who went on to win more than 70 State and over 50 national championships. He has also served in various official positions, including as President of the then NSW Cycling Federation for 16 years, Vice-President of Cycling Australia and delegate on the NSW Olympic Council for 16 years, while playing an instrumental role in the formation of the Australian Cycling Federation Coaching Commission where he was appointed as its inaugural national coaching director.

In addition, Alex was cycling delegate to Commonwealth Games NSW from 1984 to 2000, division vice-president from 2000 to 2013 and Commonwealth Games NSW president from 2013 as well as patron of the Bankstown Cycling Club until the time of his passing. Alex's dedication to cycling and his contribution to the sport as an elite athlete, coach, manager and volunteer earned him numerous, well-deserved accolades and awards. He received orders of merit from Cycling Australia, Cycling NSW and the NSW Olympic Council as well as life membership of Cycling Australia, Cycling NSW and Commonwealth Games NSW. In addition, Alex was awarded the Australian Sports Medal by the Commonwealth Government and a volunteer award from the world cycling body, the Union Cycliste Internationale [UCI].

His tremendous contribution to cycling was recognised at the highest levels when he was awarded a Member of the British Empire honour in 1982 and the Order of Australia Medal in 2013. Alex was also a successful businessman, establishing a car and caravan dealership as well as one of Sydney's largest bicycle stores in Chipping Norton. In 2006 he was elected a director of the board of the Bankstown Sports Club, where he served as a director for 14 years. All the board's directors attended Alex's funeral. Alex's many years of business experience and his strong passion for sport allowed him to play an integral role in the continued success of the Bankstown Sports Club, where he was awarded life membership in 2016.

The Bankstown Sports Club Chairman, Mr John Murray, paid tribute to Alex. I would like to quote part of Mr Murray's tribute to Alex. He said, "Alex was well respected for his dedicated contribution to the club, the community, and both elite and grassroots sport. He will be sorely missed and fondly remembered by all." Alex's passing is a great loss to Bankstown and the wider community and an even greater loss to his loved ones, particularly his wife, Janet, whom he married at the age of 21 and shared a lifetime with. I offer my most sincere and heartfelt condolences to Janet as well as to Rik, Mark, Jacqueline and the rest of the Fulcher family. We have you in our thoughts and prayers as we pay tribute to Alex Fulcher. Vale, Alex Fulcher, OAM, MBE.

NATIVE FOREST LOGGING

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:34:01): Protecting the planet's biodiversity is vital to human life regardless of where people live because it is essential to clean air, clean water, agriculture and pollination. This bushfire season wreaked havoc on the State's biodiversity and a large number of my constituents have contacted me calling for an end to any further native bushland destruction from logging. Over five million hectares of land burned in New South Wales alone, including two million hectares, or 41 per cent, of the national park estate and 875,000 hectares, or 40 per cent, of State forests. Over a billion animals and hundreds of billions of insects were killed. At least 5,000 koalas died in this State alone, with around 28 per cent of their habitat in northern New South Wales and 21 per cent in southern New South Wales burnt. Some critically endangered species have likely become extinct.

The fires have reduced, fragmented and isolated native flora and fauna habitat but much can recover if we protect what is left to give wildlife access to natural refuges. Protecting all native forests that survived after the fires is critical to ensuring wildlife and habitat can recover. But logging operations have already commenced or are planned in rare unburnt habitat for threatened species impacted by the fires. Previous assessments that approved current logging operations are no longer relevant. We need to reassess the consequences of logging after considering the full impact of the fires on the State's threatened species and ecological communities.

The Natural Resources Commission's process of remapping and rezoning old-growth forests in north-east New South Wales to open them up to forestry operations began before the fires and must cease now. Some 29,000 hectares of previously protected old-growth forests on privately owned land have already been opened up to logging and if these rules are applied to public forests at least another 14,600 hectares could follow. These old-growth forests were previously off limits to logging because of their ecological, Aboriginal, aesthetic and research significance. They are especially important following fires because old-growth tree hollows provide much-needed refuges for species to nest and breed in. These hollows take decades, if not centuries, to establish.

The forestry industry wants to go even further and log native forests burnt in the wildfires. This would prevent tree regrowth and kill any new flora shoots that start to appear from the ash. The movement of ash-laden

soil from logging operations and machinery would pollute rivers and streams, potentially killing fish en masse. Scientists also tell us that when forests already damaged by fire are logged they become more prone to fire for decades. Logging increases the risks by opening the canopy and drying out the forest floor, making it easier for fires to travel and burn through landscape more intensely. Logging also increases the fuel load by leaving debris such as branches, stumps, leaves and small abandoned logs that dry out. Furthermore, young trees burn more easily than older trees.

It is unfathomable that the State can take a business-as-usual approach to logging after this devastating bushfire season. Native forest logging is destructive and our environment will survive the aftermath of the fires only if it is given the chance to recover without disturbance. We need to halt native forest logging while an independent comprehensive scientific assessment is undertaken on the impact of these fires across the entire network of native forests, threatened species and ecological communities. The focus of the assessment must be to ensure the environment has the best chance of recovery.

Native forest logging is unsustainable and provides little community benefit. Indeed, most cleared trees are used for woodchip. Propping up the industry with government support will not help anyone. Plantations are more sustainable and economically viable, and we should fast-track transitioning the industry in this direction. There is no justification for opening currently protected areas to logging. This is not environmentally sustainable and it is not economic. I understand the cost involved in remapping currently protected old-growth forests actually exceeds the value of buying out wood supply contracts.

The transition must coincide with support for forestry workers, including to guarantee sustainable, well-paid jobs in their communities. We know that forest conservation and national parks bring tourism and the Government could also promote industries like oyster farming. A good, creative government can find solutions that protect forestry communities. We must protect the remaining native flora, fauna and ecosystems for future generations. The best road to biodiversity recovery and the adaptation to an environment with more frequent ferocious wildfires is to expand wilderness areas. I call on the Government to put a moratorium on native forest logging, commit to permanently withdrawing operations in old-growth forests on both private and public land and refuse applications to log forests that have burned.

OATLEY ELECTORATE ROADS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:39:26): I inform the House of local road projects currently being undertaken across the electorate of Oatley. This investment in our road transport network will ensure residents across New South Wales are spending less time commuting and more time with their family and friends. Across my electorate we are seeing investment in the widening of King Georges Road, a project that has been talked about for generations—for 40 years, in fact. For too long motorists have experienced significant congestion along this road corridor, particularly during weekday peak periods. Our Government has recognised this and acted. The proposed improvements are designed to deliver a faster and more reliable journey. King Georges Road will receive a \$40 million injection for its widening between Stoney Creek Road, Beverly Hills and Forest Road, Hurstville. Thousands of motorists each and every day are set to benefit from the widening of 1.5 kilometres of King Georges Road to three lanes in each direction, which will significantly reduce congestion along this corridor.

Furthermore, the M6 extension, which has been talked about for centuries, will also ease congestion across our network, connecting President Avenue at Kogarah to the new M5 motorway at Arncliffe. This project will remove over 2,000 trucks a day—I repeat, 2,000 trucks a day—from surface roads, returning local streets to local communities. It is about creating an integrated transport solution across our State. As part of an integrated transport solution, this four kilometre underground motorway will ease congestion, allowing users to bypass up to 23 sets of traffic lights on the Princes Highway between St Peters and Kogarah. It will contribute to a more accessible, more livable and more productive Greater Sydney.

This integrated network also includes the widening of the M5 and extension of the M4, resulting in thousands and thousands of quality jobs and reducing travel times across the State. Similarly, the newly constructed M5 Belmore Road on and off ramps are also enabling local residents to get to and from work sooner. These ramps have reduced congestion and improved the flow of traffic on the motorway, helping thousands of motorists who use this route every day to spend more time with their families rather than being stuck in traffic. This project, in conjunction with the widening of the M5 East and duplication of the M5 tunnels, will bring much-needed relief to thousands upon thousands of motorists across Sydney.

The new M5 will provide twin nine kilometre underground motorway tunnels from Kingsgrove to the new St Peters interchange at the site of the old Alexandria landfill facility. The St Peters interchange will provide motorists with connections to Alexandria and Mascot. It also includes connections to the future Sydney Gateway, the M4-M5 Link and the F6 Extension. Local streets and intersections around the St Peters interchange are also being upgraded to ensure safe and efficient connections for the new M5. It is expected that the upgrades will be

open to traffic later this year. Importantly though the project is protecting six hectares of new open space in St Peters, creating 12 kilometres of shared pathways around St Peters and over 4,400 jobs, while maintaining no impact on Wolli Creek bushland. As part of this M5 project, my local community also saw upgrades to the King Georges Road interchange at Beverly Hills, which until now has been a well-known bottleneck for south-western Sydney motorists.

In saying this, our Government recognises that a successful road system is not just about the grand projects; it is also about consistently improving and updating our local roads. That is why we have delivered much-needed local projects, including a roundabout in Beverly Hills at the intersection of Edgbaston Road and Melvin Street. We have also responded to community safety concerns by swiftly delivering new pedestrian crossings around Mortdale and Penshurst as well as school crossing supervisors for St Joseph's at Oatley and Mortdale Public School. These local projects, along with many other major projects, are all aimed at improving road safety and ensuring that motorists return home from their destinations. I thank the Minister and the Government for this incredible commitment and service. I look forward to keeping the House up to date on any further developments.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): We will look forward to that. I thank the member for Oatley for his Churchillian private member's statement.

TERRIGAL ELECTORATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:44:35): The New South Wales Women of the Year Awards are an annual event that celebrate the achievements of a diverse range of women. More than 65 women were named on the New South Wales Local Women of the Year Honour Roll for their exceptional work. Yvette Wilson has been named as the Terrigal electorate's Woman of the Year at this morning's 2020 Women of the Year Awards, held at the International Convention Centre in Sydney. Yvette and her fantastic husband, Ryan, are the masterminds behind Free Trade Day. In 2017 Yvette and Ryan founded the Free Trade Day initiative. It helps families struggling to make ends meet and the elderly living in dangerous homes that need essential maintenance. This initiative helps match tradespeople and suppliers to those in need of home repairs or maintenance.

I have seen firsthand that it undoubtedly helps people. I was with Ryan and Yvette at Davistown in my electorate where a lady had been showering in cold water for more than 12 months because her hot water system had broken and she could not afford to have it fixed. One of her neighbours nominated her for a Free Trade Day. I was there when the electricians arrived—Ryan was one of them—to install and fix her hot water system. In addition, they made her home safe because loose live wires were around the property. She had purchased her dream home many years ago but had found it tough to maintain. Free Trade Day came to help this wonderful lady in Davistown. They made her home safe and provided her with what we take for granted sometimes: hot water.

The inaugural Free Trade Day was held in 2017. I was pleased to be a part of it. It was great to see so many tradespeople and companies helping Central Coast residents. I give a big shout-out to Kincumber Mitre 10, which is a huge supporter of Free Trade Day. Ryan and Yvette are owners of Terrigal Electrical. Together with other local trades they have helped more than 60 households free of charge. Those people would not usually be in a position to undertake essential work around their homes due to financial hardship or a physical disability. The inaugural day was organised in less than 18 days and attracted national recognition from the Channel 7 *Sunrise* program. This initiative shows that when the community comes together on the Central Coast we can accomplish great things for those in need. The 2018 Free Trade Day was held on 29 August 2018. More than 45 local trade and small businesses supported a total of 60 local projects. Repairs ranged from replacing taps, unblocking drains, replacing ovens, installing appliances and providing disabled access to a number of homes.

Free Trade Day is so successful that it has expanded from the Central Coast to a number of new locations in Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. Free Trade Day is going national. I am so proud that Yvette and Ryan started it in my electorate of Terrigal. I am so heartened by Yvette's tireless work giving back to the less fortunate and for creating such a fantastic initiative. At this morning's event we were joined by so many hundreds of outstanding women from regional New South Wales and across the State. New South Wales has its own Minister for Women, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, in the Legislative Council. She has been spearheading the Women's Week this year. Sunday is International Women's Day.

We thank all women for their contribution to the wider community. Many of these women are well known but a lot of them are quiet achievers who tirelessly get on with making a difference. I applaud their achievements and encourage them to continue inspiring people across the Central Coast. Free Trade Day is just one incredible example of how our communities come together. Yvette is the powerhouse behind Free Trade Day. She does all the organisation to get the trades together and to marry them up with people in need. I see her, with such a young family, working tirelessly. Her children attend Terrigal Public School. Yvette and Ryan have done an incredible job while running their own small business. They want to help others.

The fact that Free Trade Day has gone national shows the incredible spirit spreading from the Central Coast right across the nation. Yvette and Ryan should be proud of what they have achieved. As I said, Yvette and Ryan are tireless advocates for the Central Coast. But today was Yvette's day. She has done such an incredible job for our community. Yvette is a quiet achiever who never expected the recognition that she totally deserves. I am so proud to have been able to stand with Yvette today and present her with Terrigal electorate's Woman of the Year Award. I hope that over the next few weeks she gets to enjoy it and relax but, knowing her, she will be hard at work, working on the next person that she can help. Yvette, congratulations.

GOSFORD ELECTORATE CONSTITUENTS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:49:41): I raise two issues of concern on behalf of my constituents. Both these gentlemen are deep thinkers who are seeking social justice. First, I speak on behalf of Hendrik Withaar, who is disappointed by the actions of his individual solicitor. He wants to make a greater change. Upon reflection, he has come to realise that his concerns reflect a flaw in the legal system that has much greater impact beyond his own concerns. Acting on behalf of Mr Withaar for a rural property transaction, it appears Mr Withaar's solicitor failed to disclose contractual information requested. The said information is required to be sought and disclosed by the solicitor undertaking such a transaction as this information is not freely available to the purchaser. It appears this information is to be sought by the solicitor and should appear on the contractual transaction. In Mr Withaar's case, this information did not become available until the property was in his hands and outstanding rates and fees were billed to him by the Land Titles office.

Upon investigating further, Mr Withaar has been informed by the Office of Legal Services Commission that this is an issue that he needs to take up in the civil court. So as a result of Mr Withaar's solicitor failing to disclose the information, the solicitor has put his client into a situation of litigation, which, from his understanding, is what he is supposed to avoid. Mr Withaar would like to see the correction of this legal situation. It seems a solicitor's obligation of disclosure, outlined in a legal request supported by his/her signature and relied upon, is currently not considered a legal obligation, knowing that the information can only be disclosed by him or her or by his or her authority and not the office that is responsible, due to matters of confidentiality.

Mr Withaar claims that, in short, the law should protect the public from this situation and make it the responsibility of the solicitor to disclose what he has been requested to disclose, that his or her signature should make him or her responsible and culpable for not demonstrating due diligence or purposefully misleading parties to the contract, as the information requested from him or her is not available freely to the purchaser. Not only do I thank Mr Withaar for drawing this concern to my attention, I also thank him for highlighting the lack of clarity on the website in the appointment process for the Legal Services Commissioner. It is not only on the website but Mr Withaar had trouble chasing this through the Parliament to seek the information he was after.

Whilst a member of Parliament cannot communicate with the Legal Services Commissioner about any specific cases, I thank Commissioner McKenzie for his time spent clarifying his appointment process to my chief of staff on behalf of Mr Withaar. For the clarity of this House, the appointment of the Legal Services Commissioner is by the Governor in Council, meaning by the Governor on advice of the Attorney General. His employment contract is not through the public service and is unique and similar to a judge in that it is through an individual contract with the Attorney General.

I also bring to the attention of the House the concerns of constituent Keith Lincoln Cook. Keith is vision impaired and had no legal rights to protect him when he was evicted from his residence in the McCallum's West Gosford commercial property by the landlord's representative, Mr Kevin Masters, who treated Keith with disdain. Keith is a talented, deep-thinking individual who does not seek legal penalties. He came to me to ask that he be treated with respect. At times our community, this world, lacks kindness and respect, especially directed towards older members of our community. Let us all commit to being kind and doing the job entrusted to us with diligence and respect. Thanks to both Hendrick and Keith for their contributions to our community. We appreciate you.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE BLACKTOWN DIVISION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:53:52): During this long, hot and devastating summer of bushfires in New South Wales, we had volunteers from many community organisations collaborating together to support the firefighting efforts of the Rural Fire Service [RFS], Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Forestry Corporation. In the Prospect electorate I am immensely proud of the hard work by the extraordinary volunteers of the St John Ambulance Blacktown Division. Under the leadership of Superintendent Keith Avery, members of the Blacktown adults division provided vital assistance at the NSW Police Force call centre at Redfern. Volunteers made the trip into the Sydney CBD, often after working a full day in their employment, to help community members from bushfire-affected regions when they phoned for assistance. St John Ambulance volunteer members were on the phones ready to talk and counsel people in crisis

and distress over what they had witnessed. Most of the work was done quietly and discreetly and with little public recognition.

I was told by other emergency service workers that it was an enormous benefit to have St John's staff to debrief with after very stressful and often heartbreaking phone calls came in from frantic members of the public. This regime of working all day and then volunteering at night became the new normal for the hardworking men and women of the St John Ambulance Blacktown Division. They did this selfless work over the summer school holidays, Christmas and well into the New Year. I know that many of them missed out on special times celebrating with their own families so they could be on hand to assist our community 24/7. The dedicated Blacktown division members were also deployed to key evacuation centres across the State in Batemans Bay, Bega, Wagga Wagga, Cooma, Kempsey, Grafton and Glen Innes. Those centres are a long way from their home base in western Sydney, yet these passionate volunteers packed their kit and left their families and friends and were sent to the centre of so many tragic losses of life and property.

Without thinking of themselves, the men and women of the Blacktown St John Ambulance gave so much to people who had lost everything, with their caring support and professional medical training. They were called on to assist injured firefighters on the ground, working at a fast pace and with a precise methodology to ensure the finest first response medical care for each firefighter. Some of the firefighters presented with burns, dehydration and breathing difficulties. Naturally, as they were rendering acute medical care to the firefighters they were simultaneously counselling them and assisting with their initial psychological distress. These men and women deserve heartfelt thanks from each of us for being in such dangerous positions during what was a national emergency with disastrous conditions.

As residents evacuated their homes, the St John Ambulance Blacktown Division provided medical help to many injured people in the community. The facts and figures of how much volunteer time was contributed by St John Ambulance is truly staggering. Since September 2019 they have deployed 402 highly skilled volunteers across New South Wales, providing a total of 23,506 hours of critical and crisis emergency support. Crews were deployed to 26 evacuation centres, from coastal towns to the dry centre of remote communities. They worked in four official staging areas, which are set up to manage fire, medical and evacuation operations. Some 438 patients were treated by the St John Ambulance workforce in the initial stages. Mental health support in person and over the telephone was provided to over 1,000 evacuees. Over 150 days these volunteers contributed so much to so many people.

If not for the St John Ambulance volunteers, this State would have a longer list of casualties. We have a great chance as a State to recover from this horrific bushfire season because of the diligence and thorough dedication of the St John Ambulance volunteers. Superintendent Keith Avery runs an excellent team at Blacktown and he deserves to be specially mentioned for his leadership and commitment. I thank St John Ambulance for the remarkable year it has had. I wish it all the best for the next 12 months as it continues to serve our community.

WEST DAPTO SCHOOLS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:58:26): In December last year Wollongong City Council conducted and adopted a document restructure and major review of chapter D16 of the *Development Control Plan 2009* for West Dapto, "West Dapto Urban Release Area". The review reaffirmed a very widely held belief in my local community: West Dapto needs more schools. It has been almost 10 years since the first version of this document was adopted and, unfortunately, not much has changed in terms of local educational facilities. Once again, the document tells us that ultimately West Dapto will need six new primary schools and two new high schools in the area to cater for families moving into new housing developments. This should not come as a surprise to any members in the House. It is not the first time I have said that West Dapto needs new schools—and I am certain it will not be the last.

In its updated document Wollongong City Council has again identified sites across West Dapto that would be appropriate locations for new schools—locations that would be easily accessible to new developments and are distributed evenly across the region. In the new stages of West Dapto's development, Wollongong City Council is seeking to include new primary schools at Darkes town centre, one at Wongawilli and Marshall Mount town centre and two in the existing suburbs of Cleveland and Avondale. A new high school is proposed for Bong Bong town centre and another in the Darkes Road area. Despite the council's vision, the work that has gone into planning and the impending deadline as more people flock to the region, the New South Wales Government and the Department of Education are still yet to identify or secure a single new site on which to build a new school.

I remind the House that West Dapto will include almost 20,000 new dwellings when complete. Ultimately 57,500 new residents will call West Dapto home. All that the rapidly expanding Dapto community has been promised at this point is an upgrade to Dapto Public School. Right now Dapto Public School has 738 students. Once the upgrade is complete, this will rise to 875 students. The 14 demountables currently on site will be

removed and replaced with 20 new permanent classrooms, which means that the upgrade will increase the school's capacity by 137 students. In some ways that does not seem like a lot because when we remember there is a need for six new primary schools and two new high schools in the area it is nowhere near enough. On the other hand, 137 more students on an already crowded site—which experiences road and traffic congestion issues every morning and afternoon at drop-off and pick-up times—is a lot for this community to handle. That is why I firmly support the plans put forward by Wollongong City Council.

We must plan for the future by establishing new schools throughout the West Dapto community. We should not be pushing more and more students into centralised sites, causing overcrowding and road congestion and impacting on student safety around the school. I welcome any development that will improve the learning conditions and outcomes for my community's children but I also believe that the time for this Government to start making long-term plans and securing sites for schools in West Dapto is now. In fact, the time to start securing sites was last year, or the year before that, or five years before that. The plans for Dapto Public School's upgrade have just been on public exhibition for the third time in six months. Obviously that means issues are popping up regarding how to make this upgrade work for my community. It is just not going to work because the school is already at capacity. As Schools Infrastructure NSW and the Department of Education start thinking up ways to fix the many flow-on problems from Dapto Public School's upgrade, I ask them to make the right choice next time: Build a new school in West Dapto and give our kids the space to grow, the convenience to walk safely to school and the opportunities that they all deserve.

Community Recognition Statements

BOAMBEE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:03:07): I am proud to report that a new pedestrian refuge on the busy Lindsays Road at Boambee is helping keep our children safer. The New South Wales Government provided more than \$70,000 for this new refuge at the crossing point for Boambee Public School, much to the delight of the school community and local residents. The work to build the refuge on Lindsays Road was completed during the October school holidays, with funding provided through the Government's Safer Roads Program. The work involved removing and replacing the existing kerbside islands at the crossing to improve pedestrian access, including providing ramps for prams as well as footpath and fencing work. The improved crossing is providing a safer environment for students, parents and other pedestrians using the crossing on Lindsays Road. I congratulate the Boambee Public School P&C, led by president Tas Alam, for its strident campaign and call for action, which highlighted the dangers of the school crossing. It was great to catch up with Principal Brad Lyne, Emma Lane—the public face of the safety campaign—and other parents at the crossing's official opening. I remind motorists to drive at the 40 kilometre speed limit in school zones and to be alert for students at the drop-off and pick-up times.

BLACKTOWN WORKERS CLUB

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:04:14): I acknowledge and show my appreciation to the board and members of Blacktown Workers Club for their generous donation of \$56,434 to the Rural Fire Service, which represented one dollar for each member of their club. This large donation was given on behalf of their club members, many of whom were directly or indirectly impacted by the bushfires. I am told that a large section of the club's sporting sub clubs also have raised money and made considerable donations from their own initiatives. Blacktown Workers Club CEO Frank Raiti and the board of directors president Kay Kelly said that they also wanted to show their support to the Horsley Park Rural Fire Brigade firefighters after the terrible bushfire season and made an additional donation of \$5,000 to the families of deceased firefighters Geoff Keaton and Andrew O'Dwyer. I am a proud member of the Blacktown Workers Club. I thank the club for supporting the Rural Fire Service and our community.

ST GEORGE MEN'S SHED

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:05:09): I was pleased to visit my friends at the St George Men's Shed in January. The Australian Men's Shed Association supports over 1,000 men's sheds, including the St George Men's Shed, of which I am a patron. The shed currently operates out of Carrs Park and services all of the St George area. The Men's Shed undertakes a wide variety of activities, including carpentry, furniture making, photography, leather work and basic computer skills. More importantly, it provides men an opportunity to bond and to develop their skills. It was great to visit the shed, which moved from Penshurst in 2016. It is always fantastic to see these men come from all walks of life to develop new friendships and work on beneficial projects, which can help boost their overall wellbeing. I acknowledge shed president Bernie Dolan for his continued leadership of the shed. I always enjoy visiting the shed and catching up with members. I look forward to continuing to support the shed in 2020.

CABRAMATTA ANGLICAN CHURCH

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:06:09): I was pleased to visit the Cabramatta Anglican Church in my electorate, which was one of the many recipients of the Community Building Partnerships Grants program. The Cabramatta Anglican Church plays an important role in my community, particularly for those of the Anglican faith. The church runs community programs that assist individuals who want to learn English as well as programs for seniors who are looking for something to do during the day. I thank Minister Law, Assistant Pastor William Quach and the church committee for giving me a tour of the church. They showed me the projects that are currently underway to improve the church, using funding from the Community Building Partnership Grant. I look forward to visiting the church once the works have been completed. I wish everyone at the church all the best for the coming year.

DALE FEENEY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:07:02): I recognise aged care professional Dale Feeney, who was recently acknowledged for 30 years of dedicated service to the Whiddon Laurieton. A respected and admired member of the aged care team at Whiddon, Dale celebrated her pearl anniversary with work colleagues where she recalled her many years of service to residents, listening to them and caring for their individual needs. Dale commenced her employment at Whiddon as a weekend supervisor and relief for the hostel supervisor. She gradually progressed through her nursing career and became the Deputy Director of Care Services. During this time Dale has witnessed significant changes within the organisation both locally and nationally. The core focus is now on holistic resident care. Described as a leader and mentor at Whiddon by her peers, Dale is committed to delivering the utmost specialist care through industry standard education and training opportunities for all staff. She is excited to see the next generation of younger people joining the industry. It takes a special person to care for someone during their latter stage of life. Dale's 30-year journey at Whiddon has been fulfilling and rewarding. She has worked so compassionately to ensure that our loved ones are safe, healthy and happy.

JUSTINE LORENZ

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:08:09): Happy International Women's Day to every single person across Australia, especially the women. Today I send a shout-out to our fantastic community hero Justine Lorenz. Justine is a deafblind practitioner who tutors deafblind people in tactile communication. She has established a peer network for deafblind members of the Hunter region, supporting members to build strong relationships, experience new things, reduce isolation and boost self-esteem and confidence. Roslyn from Umina, who is a champion member of the New South Wales deafblind community, loves outings such as Harley Davidson rides, cheese and wine experiences and swimming with sharks and rays. Thanks to Justine, members of our deafblind community also enjoy workshops in health, wellness and specialised communicative technology. It was very sad to see Justine leave the National Disability Insurance Scheme community on the Central Coast. However, I know she is welcomed with open arms at the Sexuality Education Counselling and Consultancy Agency where she will continue to be a fantastic advocate for people with disabilities across our community and beyond. I congratulate the 2020 NSW Community Hero Woman of the Year.

LALOR PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:09:15): I congratulate the school leadership team at Lalor Park Public School for 2020. Well done to school captains Lola Cameron and Cian Baker; vice-captains Sierra Johnson and Deakin Warwick; and prefects Amelia Baker, Hohepa Koni, Teagan Wheeler and Dakota Thompson. I trust these eight pupils will represent Lalor Park with pride and dedication. The 2020 sports captains from Wattle are Coopa Jackson, Zane Harrison and Tianna-Lea Basten. The vice-captains are Walker Taualupe and Charlie Bond. Waratah captains are Harish Vijakumar, Julius Espinosa and Lily-Ann Alfred. The vice-captains are Cameron Attwood and Tahlia Wales. The Banksia leadership includes captains Drayk Stockham, Austin Giardina, Mia Elizondo and Knalah Harris. The vice-captains are Blessica Papalii and Cooper Thompson. I also acknowledge the hardworking student representative council members: Declan Barber, Braxton Bate, Mia Elizondo, Emily Gayford, Austin Giardina, Summer-Rose Hall, Mariam Jamshidi, Noah Johnson, Tanishka Kaur, Shajfrie Koni, Bella Sharma, Archer Sharp, Coral Sharp, Kristian Uesele and Mason Walker.

CHARMHAVEN LIONS CLUB

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:10:20): Charmhaven Lions Club donated \$1,000 towards additional fox-proof fencing at the Walkabout Wildlife Park near Gosford. Half a million wild animals could have perished in the recent bushfires but several hundred animals luckily made their home at the Walkabout Wildlife Park. Walkabout Wildlife Park is located at Calga and is the only wildlife sanctuary in New South Wales with both free-roaming Australian animals and ancient Aboriginal rock art sites. The Charmhaven Lions Club was taken on a tour to learn about the wildlife park and a few tips on why not to pat a kangaroo from the front. Well done to

Charmhaven Lions Club for supporting and providing a donation to the Walkabout Wildlife Park on the Central Coast.

LUCIA HAMPTON

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (18:11:08): Well done to 11-year-old Lucia Hampton from Glenmore Park who recently placed as first runner-up at the regional Miss Junior Fashion Week competition. The event, hosted by Miss Fashion Week, was held at Pullman Melbourne Albert Park. Some 100 competitors across all three divisions competed for a title and the chance to win a trip to the United States of America to compete in the international final. After competing in casual wear, party wear and interview, Lucia was awarded first runner-up in her age division and was invited to attend the international finals in Dallas. This is an amazing achievement, as Lucia had never previously entered a modelling competition and had no formal training or experience in runway modelling. Lucia's mother, Hayley, felt this was the perfect competition to introduce Lucia to runway modelling, as Miss Fashion Week Australia advocates for positive self-image, self-love and self-confidence. I wish Lucia all the best in her future modelling endeavours and hope she continues to pursue the things she loves. I congratulate Lucia.

STEVE MACKNEY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:12:03): I pay tribute to Football Far North Coast general manager Steve Mackney, one of the region's most respected sports administrators. Football ranks as the number one participation sport for the State and nationally, with more than 4,460 registered participants in the electorate of Lismore. Steve is well regarded for his strategic thinking and calm leadership style. He heads a sporting organisation that has experienced an annual growth rate of 5 per cent. Research that evaluated the first year of the New South Wales Government's Active Kids program showed that almost 167,000 children redeemed the \$100 registration voucher for football. That is almost three times the next ranked sport. I also mention Craig Foster, who is from Lismore, a humanitarian, former Australian soccer player and sports analyst at SBS.

CENTRAL COAST VOLUNTEER RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:13:07): On 21 February I welcomed the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to the Central Coast. As members would know, parts of the Central Coast have been badly impacted by fire and flood in recent months. I pay tribute to all emergency services personnel, including the Central Coast Volunteer Rescue Association [VRA]. The volunteers put their lives on the line each day, particularly throughout the recent floods around Tuggerah Lake. When the Minister was on the Central Coast, we visited the headquarters of the Volunteer Rescue Association in Warnervale to inspect a number of brand-new government radio network portable radios, which were provided as part of the Government's \$156,000 boost to the association's statewide radio infrastructure. We know that VRA volunteers often face challenging situations. We will do everything we can to ensure they are as safe as possible when providing help to others. Once again I thank the VRA for its dedicated service to the community of the Central Coast. Its members do a wonderful job and they deserve to be awarded the highest accolade. I thank the VRA.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE BLACKTOWN DIVISION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:14:13): On 18 February 2020 I was delighted to attend the St John Ambulance NSW—Blacktown Division annual awards and annual general meeting [AGM]. It was a great night celebrating the hardworking men and women who serve the Prospect electorate and western Sydney with such dedication. The following people received awards for their outstanding volunteer service on the night: the Superintendent's Award went to Daisy Feng for her dedication as the division's New Member Liaison and Mentor Officer, the Ken Meany Members Choice Award went to Darshan Jaisaker for her commitment to new members education, the Clinical Excellence Award went to Vanessa Lam for patient treatment and care and the Patrick McDermott Memorial Most Improved in First Aid Award went to Terry Short and Joanne Apps. They both excelled in first aid skills and treatment. I thank the Blacktown division for inviting me to their awards evening and AGM. I congratulate the award recipients and I wish them another successful year in service to our community.

MILPERRA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:15:14): Recently I had the great pleasure of visiting Milperra Public School and taking part in its prefect investiture assembly. The acting principal, Sarah Casuccio, introduced the new 2020 student representative council, consisting of captains Charlotte Baxter and Tyler Barns; vice-captains Alexis Deane and Thomas Peroni; and prefects Isla Frappell, Heath Ebbs, Arrabelle Lloyd and Lachlan Matthews. I awarded the new student leadership teams with their badges and their very proud parents pinned them to their super stylish school blazers. The new leaders pledged to proudly wear their badges, lead by example and be true to the school motto of "Aim High". It was a lovely welcoming assembly and other students,

such as Claudia Aad, received merit awards for their great work so far in the school year and getting off to a great start in what I am sure is going to be a fantastic year of learning for Milperra Public School.

TUGGERAH AND LAKE HAVEN BUNNINGS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:16:11): Tuggerah and Lake Haven Bunnings store teams joined with others around the country and in New Zealand on 24 January to raise money for bushfire victims by supporting the communities who have been affected. Bunnings provided all materials for the day with their team members operating the barbecues from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. and every cent was donated to the Red Cross Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund. Bunnings accepted monetary donations in store and online. The store has provided products, time and services to those in need affected by the bushfires, particularly the people who have lost their homes, businesses and livelihoods. Bunnings has raised and contributed over \$850,000 for Australian communities. Through its barbecues Bunnings allows many of our local organisations to raise money every weekend and on quite a few weekdays. I thank the Tuggerah and Lake Haven Bunnings teams for their support and I thank everyone who has contributed to help the community in need at such a devastating time.

1ST MUDGEE SCOUT GROUP

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:17:13): I congratulate the 1st Mudgee Scout Group on its upcoming centenary. The group will turn 100 on 12 March. On the weekend of 21 and 22 March the special occasion will be marked with a dinner and a community barbecue. There will also be a display comparing scout camps of 1920 and today. This historic milestone has not happened by accident. It is down to the many volunteers who have helped along the way. I recognise a few of the longest serving volunteers: Lance Herbert, 37 years of service; Regina Larkin, 25 years; Phillip Larkin, 24 years; Susan Kenny, 20 years; and Denise Doyle, 20 years. Denise is also responsible for establishing the five-year-old to eight-year-old Joeys. Scouts creates opportunities for young girls and boys to learn independent thinking, leadership, problem solving and teamwork but it would be nothing without the volunteers who dedicate their time to enriching the next generation. Congratulations, 1st Mudgee Scouts. Here's to another 100 years.

NSW WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:18:15): Happy International Women's Day and go, women of the Central Coast! It was a thrill to attend the NSW Women of the Year Awards breakfast this morning. It was especially thrilling to be greeted by two nominees from the Gosford electorate for the Community Hero Award alongside local Ettalong entrepreneur Belinda Keehn, founder of BJ's PJs, who provided gift prizes for today's event. Glitta Supernova is a Central Coast community hero and founder of the Coastal Twist inclusive arts and culture festival. Justine Lorenz, who won the overall award, is a deafblind practitioner and leading organiser and advocate for members of the deafblind community across the Hunter and Central Coast. It was also great to see more coasties in the Local Women of the Year Honour Roll: Dorothy Butler, nominated by the member for Swansea; and Yvette Wilson, part of the great Free Trade Day team, nominated by the member for Terrigal. And of course we have lots more fab women on the coast. Happy International Women's Day to all of you and a special thanks to the great team who have organised a busy calendar of activities across the coast this week.

MIRANDA COMMUNITY GARDEN

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (18:19:27): I draw to the House's attention the work of a wonderful group in the Miranda electorate, Miranda Community Garden. Founded by Brian Gutherson in early 2010 on a block of land owned by the GyMEA Miranda Uniting Church, Miranda Community Garden aims to connect with people of similar interests, to share gardening knowledge and ideas, to have fun and help each other and, primarily, to grow fresh produce in a sustainable way. The group welcomes people from all walks of life to participate and presently consists of 30 members maintaining over 20 garden beds every Wednesday and Saturday morning.

Miranda Community Garden is celebrating its tenth birthday on Sunday 15 March. Celebrations will include a church service, morning tea, music provided by local high schools, garden activities, and lunch in the garden provided by the generous members of the group. I acknowledge Miranda Community Garden chairperson Moira Gugliotti, secretary Brian Sowerby and treasurer Bill Lewis and I commend their leadership and involvement in such a fantastic initiative. I congratulate Miranda Community Garden on 10 wonderful years and extend my best wishes for more to come.

HUNTAR LOHAN

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:20:29): I speak in recognition of the compassionate nature of Port Macquarie student Huntar Lohan for pledging to participate in this year's World's Greatest Shave for the Leukaemia Foundation. It is an alarming statistic that each day 41 Australians will be diagnosed with blood cancer or a related disorder. That equates to one person every 36 minutes. Knowing this, the year 7 student from

Heritage Christian School is prepared to lose his locks to raise vital funding for cancer research and to hopefully one day find a cure. Delivering the final cut, local hairdresser and family member Sophie Cook will shed an accumulated three years' worth or 30 centimetres of hair from Hunter's head in a brave move to promote the World's Greatest Shave event in our community. Also taking up the challenge, the year 12 students from Heritage Christian School have coordinated an event on 15 March at McInherney Park, Port Macquarie, to say goodbye to their locks, with \$600 already raised to nip cancer in the bud. We all have our personal stories of losing someone to cancer. I therefore thank the students at Heritage Christian School for raising vital funds for a wonderful charitable event.

KIAMA ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (18:21:30): Australia Day is an opportunity to celebrate some of our shining stars. That is certainly the case in the City of Shellharbour where this year the Australia Day Citizen of the Year is Tasha Armour. Tasha is the founder and CEO of Rare Ovarian Cancer Incorporated since its inception in 2018. The organisation was formed by Tasha in response to her daughter's diagnosis at 16 years of age with rare ovarian cancer, when she discovered that this type of cancer has historically received no funding or research for treating or curing the condition. In the 18 months since, Tasha has coordinated events that have helped raise \$50,000 for vital research.

Australia Day Young Citizen of the Year is Tamioka Garcia. At just 20 years of age Tamioka is the youngest boxing promoter in Australia, she runs her own gym and she has had type 1 diabetes since the age of 13. Tamioka shows that you can accomplish things through adversity and set a great example whilst working with the youth of the Illawarra, including students from St Joseph's Catholic High School and Warilla High School. I also acknowledge retired Shoalhaven High School teacher John Dyball, who received the Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to education. Mr Dyball taught at Shoalhaven High School from 1983 and retired in 2015. Prior to that he was a teacher in Cobar. In 2007 he also received a National Excellence in Teaching Award. Congratulations to winners one and all.

WOY WOY DIDGE AND DANCE GROUPS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:22:45): Tonight I celebrate the Woy Woy Didge and Dance groups that have been happening at Brisbane Water Secondary College Woy Woy Senior Campus for over 10 years now. A special shout-out goes to Chris George from Interrelate, who coordinates the group and also organises the food. Another special shout-out goes to Rhys Bull, a former student of Brisbane Water Secondary College who is now one of the coordinators. He is also now the Aboriginal Education Worker at Ettalong Public School, doing a fantastic job teaching culture to the younger kids in our community.

I also give a shout-out to Jesse, a proud Aboriginal man from Wollotuka who comes down and leads the young kids in dance, and to Jess, who is from the other side of the Brisbane Water. She is a great Aboriginal woman who joins the kids out on the dance floor and is a great female role model in our community, especially for the young women. It is a beautiful community event. Aunty Robyn and Aunty Anita have joined us on several occasions. It is great to see three generations of families getting together to be part of a very strong Aboriginal community. It is always good to be at Brisbane Water Secondary College, where they proudly fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag and the Australian flag side by side.

RESOURCEFUL AUSTRALIAN INDIAN NETWORK

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:24:06): I inform the House of the success of the Resourceful Australia Indian Network Pongal celebration held on 25 January. The Pongal festival is one of the biggest festivals celebrated in South India and is a thanksgiving for the plentiful harvest received. This is when farmers bring newly harvested rice home and feed their cattle a rice dish called Pongal, from which the festival got its name. It is dedicated to Lord Surya the Sun God. The Pongal festival is also celebrated as Tamil Nadu's new year day. The festival is not only an opportunity to celebrate Indian culture but also to celebrate the ever-growing Australian-Indian relationship. Australia and India share sport, cuisine, tourism and trade. The Indian community in New South Wales is making an immense contribution to our State. I thank Dr Sudha Natarajan and the whole team at the Resourceful Australian Indian Network [RAIN] for a fantastic celebration. I look forward to continuing my strong relationship with RAIN into the future.

PHEBE GELFLING

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:25:04): I recognise local veterinary nurse Phebe Gelfling for embarking on a mission in April to save the critically endangered orangutan apes located on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. At the aged of just 23 Phebe will put her veterinary skills to the test as she travels to Sumatra to join the Orangutan Project, funded to rescue and rehabilitate the orangutan great apes. Known for their distinctive red fur, the orangutan apes are the largest arboreal mammal and populate the islands of Borneo

and Sumatra off the coast of Indonesia. They are listed as critically endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. It is Phebe's hope to assist in the health and relocation of the native orangutans in an effort to save the species from extinction. Phebe attributes her upbringing on a hobby farm at Blackmans Point as the driving force that inspired her passion and love for saving animals. She has spent the past seven years as a veterinary nurse at the Bonny Hills Veterinary Clinic, describing her career as nothing short of "rewarding". I wish Phebe all the best in her campaign to save the majestic orangutan apes.

KINGS LANGLEY CRICKET CLUB

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:26:03): I recently visited Pearce Reserve in my electorate of Seven Hills with the Western Sydney Minister, Stuart Ayres. Pearce Reserve is home to the Kings Langley Cricket Club and is currently undergoing a major infrastructure advancement. The club will soon have a brand-new clubhouse to go with its picturesque playing surface and white picket fence. The clubhouse build has been made possible by a \$100,000 grant from Cricket New South Wales and the New South Wales Government as part of the New South Wales ICC World T20Cricket Legacy Fund. The fund was created with the intent of improving local cricket facilities across the State and increasing participation in cricket, with a particular focus on increasing the participation of young women in cricket. We have seen how successful the ICC Women's World T20 World Cup has been as we build towards the final on International Women's Day, Sunday 8 March. I cannot wait to cheer on Kings Langley Cricket Club and hear the members enjoying the brand-new clubhouse facilities next season.

KARIONG FIRE STATION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:27:03): Parts of the Central Coast have been impacted by fire and flood in recent months. Today I pay tribute to our fireys who put their lives on the line each day. I mention the Kariong Fire Station, which is staffed by a mix of permanent and retained firefighters who are available 24/7 to protect the community during emergencies. The facility has recently undergone a \$2.75 million upgrade and I am looking forward to attending the official opening late this year. This upgrade has involved renovations that will improve training and administrative services for the region as well as support our professional, scientific approach to firefighting. The upgraded facility will ensure local firefighters are trained, rested and ready to respond to emergency situations, whether it be a fire, accident or, worse, a chemical spill. Four strike teams from Kariong were involved in the Three Mile fire last year and I personally thank them on behalf of the Central Coast for their amazing work keeping our community safe. Once again, the team at the Kariong Fire Station, which is on call 24/7, does an incredible job. Thank you.

PAUL BARRETT

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:28:14): I commend Paul Barrett of Padstow who was recognised for his contribution to *Seniors Stories*, which was introduced in 2013 as a way of recognising and valuing the experiences of seniors. A selection of these stories is published each year in a book. This year seniors were invited to contribute short stories that were influenced by the theme of "love your life". Paul's contribution was titled "I am what I am" and features in *Seniors Stories* volume five. Paul wrote of his time with his mother prior to her death and the research they conducted into their family's history. Paul has stated in his contribution that in undertaking this research activity he has developed a passion for his family history and it has opened the doors to relationships he did not know existed. I congratulate Paul on his work being recognised in this book.

ROBYN FLACK

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (18:29:09): International Women's Day is a great opportunity to stop and pause and say thank you to some amazing women in our community. I am delighted to announce that the Kiama Woman of the Year is Robyn Flack of Shoalhaven Heads. Robyn is an absolute powerhouse, be it through work in the Shoalhaven Heads Lions Club or as chair of the Shoalhaven Heads Community Forum. It is an organisation she has been involved with for some time. Robyn is a passionate advocate for every person who needs support and for important projects. I know that Robyn would not want to take all the credit because it always takes a great team. There have been many projects such as the Shoalhaven Heads River foreshore funding, which is about to come to fruition, and the bike skills track and pump track at Shoalhaven Heads. That is another project Robyn has been passionate about. The strategic plan that Shoalhaven Heads has developed is something that Robyn has pushed. I think it is great to stop to celebrate Robyn's achievement not only as a woman but also as a wonderful individual and an outstanding contributor to our community.

COFFEE WITH A COP

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:30:12): The Coffee with a Cop initiative took place the other day in my electorate of Seven Hills. The event was hosted by the Parramatta Police Area Command and took place at Chook-a-Licious on Caroline Chisholm Drive in Winston Hills. The event was a great success, with

dozens of locals popping by to join their local police for a chat. No agenda or speeches took place, just a chance to ask questions, voice concerns and get to know officers in the local area. The event was widely circulated on the Winston Hills Community Group Facebook page, now with nearly 5,000 members, and is testament to my community's willingness to partner with local police to prevent local crime. The Winston Hills Neighbourhood Watch shares this ambition. It meets regularly at Northmead Bowling Club to discuss local safety issues and produces a monthly newsletter that it shares online and delivers to highly frequented locations in Winston Hills. It is an absolute pleasure to be part of such a great community, the Winston Hills community.

MADISON DE ROZARIO

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:31:12): I celebrate the amazing career of Madison de Rozario, a wheelchair track athlete, who has been immortalised as a Barbie. What an exciting thing to happen in any person's life. It is shattering the plastic athlete. Maddie is an amazing athlete. She won two silver medals at the 2006 Rio Paralympics in the 800 metres and 4 x 400 metre relay. When she was just 14 years old she won her first silver medal at the Beijing Paralympics in the 4 x 400 metre relay. She has won countless gold, silver and bronze medals at world para athletics championships. Maddie won two gold medals at the 2018 inclusive Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast in the 1,500 metres and the marathon. She has won the Australia Day 10 kilometre track race at The Rocks six times. She was born with transverse myelitis. Maddie sums it up: Girls in wheelchairs need heroes too. She is an absolute champion and I look forward to seeing her win gold in Tokyo.

GOSFORD STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:32:15): Recently I had the pleasure of welcoming Minister for Emergency Services David Elliot to the Central Coast where we had the opportunity to catch up with the Gosford SES unit located in my electorate in Erina. They are a fantastic team of volunteers who come together on a regular basis and are co-located with the Brisbane Water Rural Fire Service team. The team received an additional \$5,000 grant from the Minister to purchase an Arkangel inflatable rescue boat, which they use to keep the community safe. We are committed to providing our State Emergency Service volunteers with the best possible equipment and amenities so they can get on with the job of saving lives. I pay tribute to all of the emergency services, particularly the Gosford SES who put their lives on the line every day. I mention Rolf Girder for his amazing job coordinating both the SES units across the coast. Thank you to the Gosford SES for its great work.

LOCAL FIRE BRIGADES

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to issue my heartfelt thank you to the Emergency Services within my electorate for their courage and charity in their assistance during the recent bushfire season. Be it assisting with the organisation of charitable causes, heading North or South to help contain bushfires across the state, or, in rare cases, putting out fires within the local area, they were professional and diligent throughout. The fire stations within my electorate that provided such assistance, and which I would like to individually thank are as follows:

ROUSE HILL
BOX HILL/NELSON
KENTHURST
ANNANGROVE
KELLYVILLE
GLENHAVEN, and
CASTLE HILL

I would also like to thank Local Fire Control Officer John Hojel for ensuring that when fire struck in Box Hill, our brigades were more than well equipped to overcome this emergency and prevent loss of life or property. I again thank these brigades and all the volunteers therein, and wish them well as they continue to put their hand up and do what needs to be done for the benefit of our state.

2020 ROOSTERS LAUNCH

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—It was an honour and privilege to attend the 2020 Roosters NRL Season launch. The event was a great opportunity to reflect on seasons gone by, in particular winning the back to back premierships in 2018 and 2019, and a chance to build the excitement for everything to come this year. As a fifth generation Bronte-ite, and great grandniece to Gordon Benjamin Favell, rooster number 241 - part of the 1935 Premiership winning team - being a proud Roosters support is in my DNA. The launch was a true celebration of all things Roosters, including the induction of Cooper Cronk as a life member to the club after two brilliant seasons and in recognition of the critical and important role he has played in the club's recent history. I want to wish the Roosters the best of luck for this upcoming season, by saying; "Here come the Roosters, the best we've ever seen. The Red, White and Bluesters, the Eastern Suburbs Team!" Up the Roosters!

OUTSTANDING P&C SERVICES

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to take the time to congratulate two individuals who have served for many years as P&C representatives in the Mulgoa electorate. I would first like to congratulate Mark Geerin who served 9 years on the P&C committee at Glenmore Park High School, with 4 of those years as President. Through his leadership and representation of the parental body of Glenmore Park High School, it is no doubt that the school has benefitted greatly from all the P&C provides. I would like to thank Mark for his decision to serve the school community and help it reach its full potential. Congratulations Mark! I would now like to acknowledge Garth Nolan for his 15 years of service on the P&C committee at Penrith Anglican College in Orchard Hills. To serve the school community for such a substantial amount of time is a wonderful achievement and a great blessing to the staff, students and parents of PAC. I thank Garth for gifting his time, energy and efforts towards making the school a better place and I wish him all the best for the future. Well done Garth!

AMANI HAYDAR

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I recently had the pleasure of nominating local Bankstown artist, lawyer and inspirational woman Ms Amani Haydar, for the 2020 NSW Premier's Woman of the Year Award and I was thrilled to learn that Ms Haydar is among three outstanding finalists for this accolade. Ms Haydar's story is truly inspirational. Ms Haydar has triumphed through tragedy, using her legal knowledge and creative talents to address the scourge of domestic violence, and push for legal change in the field of women's rights. Ms Haydar was a finalist in the 2018 Archibald Prize for her self-portrait entitled 'Insert Headline Here,' telling the story of three generations of women in her family, and received the 2019 Law Society of NSW Just Arts Artists' Choice Award, as well as producing three exhibitions. Ms Haydar generously volunteers at the Bankstown Women's Health Centre and delivers workshops to raise awareness about the devastating impact family violence has on the lives of women. I acknowledge and commend incredible the courage and strong determination Ms Haydar has displayed, and I applaud her tremendous contribution to women and our community at large.

EILEEN O'CONNOR CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Eileen O'Connor Catholic College in Lewisham has become the first catholic school to provide classes and support for kids with intellectual disabilities from kindergarten to year 12. In Australia around 3.7% of kids aged 0-14 live with an intellectual or learning disability. Kids like Jamie Gillibrand, who one of the first kids in the school's new Kindergarten. Jamie was born with infantile spasms, a severe form of epilepsy who suffered his first seizure at just 3 months old. Eileen O'Connor Catholic College was first established just four years ago with just 19 students from Years 7-10. The school has now grown to support more than 100 with learning and intellectual disabilities from Kindergarten to Year 12. Providing support and educational opportunities for kids with physical and intellectual disabilities vital to ensuring every child loves and learns at school. Thank you to all the teachers at Eileen O'Connor Catholic College for your tireless efforts and support of your students and their families. And congratulations to Principal Gail Story on the wonderful success of the school and on the new kindergarten.

CASINO BMX CLUB

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I rise to offer my support and best wishes to the five riders from the Casino BMX Club who will participating in the National Titles in Tasmania later this month. The Casino BMX Club would be one of the smaller BMX clubs around and for them to have 5 members qualify to attend the National Titles is a huge achievement. The five riders are:

Harry Rapmund competing in the 11 years boy's event
Dean Sneesby competing in the 13 years boy's event
Danny Rapmund competing in the men's 40-49 years event
Grace Rapmund competing in the 13 years girl's event
Penny Sneesby competing in the 5-7 years girls event

I wish each and every one of these competitors a successful event and look forward to hearing of their continued successes.

WALLSEND WOMAN OF THE YEAR AMBER SAUNI

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—Today it was pleasure to announce that Amber Sauni as the 2020 Wallsend Local Woman of the Year. I nominated Amber for the award, based on the design and construction of the portable outdoor cooking and food preparation unit, 'The Movable Feast', which is designed to make good, healthy food preparation and meals more accessible and encourage community participation. Amber is an Architecture PhD candidate at the University of Newcastle, a first-generation immigrant, who has overcome challenging circumstances to become a tireless advocate for vulnerable people in society. Amber's innovative,

community-minded work is exactly the kind of thing we should be encouraging. The Movable Feast is a reminder that something a lot of us take for granted—safe and easy access to food—is difficult for a lot of people. Amber has overcome a lot of challenges in her life, and she is a kind, empathetic person who is committed to making our community more accessible, inclusive and stronger. Congratulations Amber. I wish you all the best with you PhD candidature and future career. I look forward to seeing what comes next for you.

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise Community Legal Centres (CLCs) in this state and their peak body, Community Legal Centre NSW. There was a Parliamentary briefing by CLCs on 27 February 2020 in this building. The briefing heard from the Chair of CLC NSW Arlia Fleming, and the Executive Director, Tim Leach. There were also presentations from Karen Cox, Financial Rights Legal Centre, Rachael Martin Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre, Julie Foreman Tenant's Union and Janene Cootes from Intellectual Disability Rights Services among others. Individual CLCs also met with local MPs. CLCs do incredibly important work. They often deal with the marginalised and most disadvantaged members of our community. They have a capacity to provide what can be described as "wrap around" services because they have much greater flexibility than other institutions. They are an important part of meeting the very considerable amount of unmet legal need in our society. And they perform all their roles with remarkably limited funding.

GIBRALTAR HOTEL BOWRAL

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I recognise the Gibraltar Hotel in Bowral. At the recent Asia-Pacific Incentives Meetings Event (AIME). The Gibraltar was one of the venues from Regional NSW conferencing locations who attended the event. At that event Regional meeting and conference venues facilities had the opportunity to pitch to 3,000 event planners and suppliers at 2020 AIME and to bid for their business. The Southern Highlands area of my electorate was severely impacted by the bushfires. Regional conferencing will play a vital role in the economic recovery of many regional communities, following those devastating bushfires. Gibraltar Hotel offers extensive conference event spaces with contemporary style accommodation. The centrepiece of the conference facility is the 420m² Ballroom has panoramic windows overlooking manicured gardens towards Mount Gibraltar It's the largest function venue in the Southern Highlands. Attached to the Hotel is Gibraltar Country Club has a proud 70 year history. The course is challenging and set amongst a wonderful mixture of mature European and Australian stands of gums, progressing between tees with panoramic views over the township of Bowral and the Mt Gibraltar escarpment. I congratulate owner John Uliana on his participation at the event and wish the Hotel every success.

ALEX AND DANIELLE JIMENEZ

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I wish to inform the house of the recent acknowledgement of Alex and Danielle Jimenez' business success in opening the first Cheerleading business in Forster. Cheerleading is an inclusive sport for all ages, abilities and sexes, Danielle says. Along with husband Alex, Danielle earlier this month opened Great Lakes Cheerleading in Forster to cater for the growing number of local youngsters embracing the sport. Opened for just a handful of weeks and sporting all the latest equipment, the facility is already a huge hit with youngsters throughout Forster Tuncurry and surrounding areas, with many travelling from Taree, Nabriac, Pacific Palms and all points in between. The couple is supported by two, highly skilled American coaches who have also relocated to Forster. Both have achieved some of the highest awards both in Australia and overseas and bring a wealth of knowledge and skills to the Great Lakes, Danielle said. Like many who flee the Sydney-scene in search of a better lifestyle the couple and their two young children regularly holidayed in the Great Lakes. Thank you for your work you do Alex and Danielle.

NOELA GRESHAM

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Recently, I attended the opening ceremony of the Tweed Shire Council 2020 Seniors Festival. I had a lovely morning celebrating the extraordinary achievements of local seniors, despite the torrential rain, thunder and lightning. I thank Tweed Shire Council and members of the Senior Festival Working Group for organising this wonderful event. I was delighted to learn that Ms Noela Gresham of Murwillumbah was one of the recipients of the Local Seniors Achievement Awards. Ms Gresham is an outstanding member of the Murwillumbah community and is well known for her willingness to lend a hand to others when needed. Ms Gresham has been President of the Murwillumbah Autumn Club for 19 years, and was very much involved with the Club before this. With a passion for Country music, each year, Ms Gresham works as a volunteer with the Murwillumbah Music Festival. Ms Gresham has also been a committee member for the Tweed Seniors Week and the Tweed Seniors Expo This award recognises Ms Gresham's passion, commitment and contribution to the Murwillumbah and wider community. On behalf of the community, I congratulate and thank Ms Gresham for her ongoing contribution in making our community a better place to live.

HOLLY BURGMANN UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE BUSINESS PLAN CHALLENGE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I would like to acknowledge seventeen-year-old student Holly Burgmann, from All Saints' College Maitland St Mary's Campus, for being in the top three per cent of entrants in the University of Newcastle Business Plan Challenge. The challenge involves creating a business plan with an innovative product or service, or an existing product or service that will be delivered to the market in an innovative way. This year the university also asked that students consider ethical and sustainability issues in their plans. Holly was also named in the top 20 in NSW for her business plan called Natural Beauty. The school and her business studies teacher expressed gratitude for Holly's dedication and diligence while working on this task, both at school and at her home. I wish her luck in her future endeavours and believe her continued application to her work will take her far in her life.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—Last Sunday I was pleased to lend a hand at Garie Boardriders, 'Clean Up Australia Day' event. It was fantastic to see the community spirit as everyone came together to help out. I wish to commend Garie Boardriders on yet another successful day and look forward to helping out again next year. Amazingly the club has been hosting this event for 30 years and continues the fantastic initiative every year.

BEE PLUS!

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate Bonnet Bay Public School on receiving \$7,860 from the inaugural Sustainable Schools Grant. The four year, \$10 million dollar program gives schools the opportunity to develop innovative hands-on projects that help students learn about environmentally sustainable practices. Led by Principal Karen Deacon, School Captains Kade Rogers and Polliana Condon, and Vice Captains, Scarlett Bloomer and Samuel Maiorca, Bonnet Bay Public School's innovative sustainability project 'Bee Plus!' involves a whole-school approach to increasing the numbers of bees in the local area. Students will learn about different types of native bees and their habitats, working to design solutions that will facilitate the increase of bee populations in the school and local surrounds. The initiative will be supported by the school's science curriculum, with different classes working on different aspects of improving the students' knowledge on native bees, their lifecycles, foraging habits and how they support the local ecology. I commend Bonnet Bay Public School for embracing this exciting opportunity and look forward to seeing the 'Bee Plus!' project come to fruition.

CARLINGFORD MORNING TEA CLUBS

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—I want to pay tribute to a great initiative in my electorate: the Carlingford Morning Tea Clubs. These clubs run on Tuesdays—for ladies—and on Wednesdays—for men and women—every week at Carlingford Court Shopping Centre. They provide a wonderful opportunity for local people aged 55 or over to come together and socialise. I love the modern world, with its mobile phones and social media. But at the same time, it's important to make sure that we maintain the strong relationships and communities. It is especially important to ensure that our seniors, who might otherwise feel lonely and even abandoned, have a support network of friends. The Carlingford Morning Tea Clubs started in 1981, with Jenny Cameron as their first co-ordinator. Today they are as busy and successful as ever, thanks to the tireless efforts of their current co-ordinator Dianna Hammond. Dianna has been a pillar of the local community for many years, especially involved with Beecroft Rotary club. I congratulate Dianna for her efforts, and I send my greetings to everyone involved in the Carlingford Morning Tea Clubs—a great initiative in the Epping electorate.

JUBILEE COMMUNITY SERVICES FUNDING

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—I congratulate Jubilee Community Services on the continuation of their 'Safer St George Citizens' initiative. In December last year, the NSW Government announced a grant of almost 5 thousand dollars to continue this very worthwhile program. Jubilee Community Services, together with this Government, recognise that education is the first step to creating safer communities. That is why this money will be put towards workshops on pedestrian safety and driver safety, in order to make St George's roads safer. The money will also fund basic emergency first aid training for seniors, making the older members of our community more independent and confident in a time of emergency. Given the large amount of seniors in my electorate, this is a particularly worthwhile initiative. Just before Christmas last year, it was great to visit Jubilee Community Services and meet some of the people who will benefit from the program. I would like to thank General Manager Lance Rickards, Chairperson Marion Smith and the whole team at Jubilee Community Services for their work on the 'Safer St George Citizens' initiative. I am immensely proud that our Government has been able to contribute to such a valuable program.

PORT MACQUARIE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Our first responders tackle the harshest of conditions and undertake selfless acts of bravery and heroism to support our communities during their darkest hours, often going without pay or recognition to ensure our towns, businesses and residents are safe from harm. These qualities epitomize our outstanding Port Macquarie State Emergency Service (SES) who risk their lives to help others in danger and distress. Recently the Port Macquarie SES travelled to the remote community of Lord Howe Island in my electorate to support the clean-up efforts resulting from the aftermath of Cyclone Uesi that struck the Island violently, with winds in excess of 155km/h. I was on the Island at the time to announce \$753,400 in grants from the Liberal and Nationals Stronger Country Communities Fund, when the natural disaster hit the community. Thankfully, we had our local SES on the ground, ready to assist the authorities, with fortunately, no reports of injuries to people and no significant damage caused to local infrastructure. I thank our dedicated team; Katie Blake, Leonie Stephenson, Alfred Portenschlager, Kevin Sherwood and Scott Robinson for their tremendous efforts in supporting the residents of Lord Howe Island in their hour of need.

ROBYN CLAYDON

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—I would like to acknowledge Robyn Claydon of Hornsby Heights, for her outstanding achievements over the past 60 years. Robyn has been awarded an Order of Australia Medal this year, for her service to both education and the Anglican Church of Australia. Robyn started her teaching career at Abbotsleigh School in 1956. Here she went on to become second deputy, acting chaplain and deputy principal. Since leaving Abbotsleigh, she has developed the St Andrew's School in Hyderabad India, and has been highly influential in continuing sponsorship for hundreds of disadvantaged children. Robyn has also developed a mentoring network of young teachers in New South Wales and is a fellow at the Australian College of Education. Beyond teaching, Robyn is a dedicated member of the Anglican Church of Australia. She has held several leadership positions with the Australian and International Lausanne Committee. In addition Robyn is a former leader of the World Evangelical Alliance Women's Commission Network for Women in Christian Leadership. In her work throughout the years, Robyn has shown what it truly means to be a dedicated teacher, a good Christian and a global citizen. Thank you for your work, our community is extremely proud.

CITY OF SYDNEY BUSHFIRE FUNDRAISING

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I commend the generous community response to the City of Sydney's New Year's Eve fundraiser, run with the ABC and Australian Red Cross. Incredibly, this one night event raised \$13.3 million. The City of Sydney and ABC used the annual New Year's Eve display and the attention it receives to activate concern for those affected by fires, drawing attention to those communities where lives, homes and property were lost, and to plants, forests and fields burned, along with innumerable animals and insects. Separately, the City of Sydney donated \$620,000 and with the Office of Local Government, the City set up Local Government Bushfire Recovery Support Group, which coordinates staff, equipment and vehicles that councils across the state can send to help recovery efforts in affected areas. I am hopeful that this significant pool of funds will ensure rebuilding and recovery as well as a bank for the next major disaster we face. These devastating fires will have serious and long-lasting impacts. The community response has been amazing, with all sorts of people and groups showing humanity and generosity. I'm proud to be part of this community.

ABORIGINAL BARK CANOE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—Last month I was fortunate enough to represent the Minister for Police and Emergency Services at the hand-over of an Aboriginal Bark Canoe. The Canoe was built by John Kelly an Aboriginal Canoe Building Knowledge Holder and was presented to the Commissioner of the New South Wales Police Force, Mick Fuller, by 'Rise Up' graduates and Transport for New South Wales representatives. The canoe was then ceremonially placed adjacent to the primary staircase at the centre of New South Wales Police Force Headquarters at Parramatta. The event included a welcome to country; a smoking ceremony in the courtyard of the Headquarters; a traditional Aboriginal dance performance and a history of Darug canoe-making. Rise Up is a PCYC program developed by the Commissioner, connecting disengaged young people with workplace opportunities. The handover was overseen by New South Wales Maritime and also present were students from Woonona East Public School, participants in the 'Rise Up' program.

RECOGNITION OF JOAN WHILEY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—I would like to acknowledge the outstanding commitment by Joan Whiley to the Golden Memories Millthorpe Museum. Joan became a member in 2003 and joined her husband as a volunteer at the museum and as a result of her untiring

efforts has recently been awarded Life Membership. Joan is a fabulous cook and her attention to detail when setting up for touring groups is impeccable. There are always special touches of flowers, decorations and welcome messages which never goes unnoticed. Some of her many tasks include organising cooks and helpers, purchasing food and supplies, layout and setup of the catering space, coordinating menus and special dietary requirements and endless washing and cleaning. Joan is a quite achiever behind the scenes and takes great pride in keeping the buildings spick and span as well as helping with any projects that are being worked on. Congratulations Joan on your contribution to your community.

OAK FLATS HIGH SCHOOL GENEROSITY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I rise today to highlight a recent act of kindness, generosity and outstanding community spirit in the Shellharbour community. Over the last school holidays, and in the middle of the bushfire disaster, Oak Flats High School opened their gates to livestock that were at risk on the South Coast. On 3 January, the school posted on their Facebook page "Our school farm has a spare paddock and we're happy to provide a temporary home to livestock needing to be evacuated during the fire emergency on the South Coast. We have bore water available ... and our awesome staff are happy to do the feeding as they are there each day." The school received some enquiries and over a number of weeks, housed and helped care for a public school teacher's pony and gelding. To see a school come out an offer whatever they can to help others in a time of need is a great example of the Illawarra's community values. Thank you again to the staff and community of Oak Flats High School for your generosity and community spirit. It's inspiring to see such acts of kindness so close to home.

MARITIME UNION OF AUSTRALIA

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I want to acknowledge the work of the Maritime Union of Australia who work vigorously to defend workers in the maritime industry and protect ferry services including in my electorate of Balmain. The inner west is lucky enough to be served by a marvellous ferry system which makes it easy and quick to get across our beautiful harbour. The MUA represents the workers who make our ferries tick and they do a great job of advocating for better services across the network. I especially want to acknowledge Branch Secretary Paul Garrett who went in to bat for the new Glebe ferry saying that it "is a new service, it's seeing passengers, it's seeing growth. It has a lot of growth potential, there's new stops that are being added so give it a chance, it is going to work." The MUA has a long history of defending and extending our public ferry system and today I acknowledge the support of the Maritime Union of Australia and thank all the members and officials for their outstanding work.

CURRABUBULA

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation)—I recognise the efforts of the village of Currabubula and its local advisory group of dedicated volunteers chaired by Veronica Filby who are working together to improve their community. The Currabubula Community Hall is set for an upgrade thanks to a \$157,910 grant from the Stronger Country Communities Fund. Built in 1912, it has been home to the local Red Cross branch's art show since 1964 and this year the committee will hold their 57th exhibition and sale. This funding for the hall is on top of a recent grant of \$132,168 to help improve the town's recreation ground and reserve. We know that by transforming the existing court into a multi-purpose surface, children in Currabubula would be provided with new sporting options to improve their skills development. Expanded facilities and addition of a multi-purpose arena will help attract regular events and competitions to the Currabubula reserve, with an increased number of competitors able to be accommodated and catered for at the site. These improvements will boost the economy of the town of Currabubula and surrounding local area.

2020 VAUCLUSE WOMAN OF THE YEAR MADDY DARKE

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)—Ahead of this year's International Woman's Day on 8 March 2020, I am so delighted to congratulate Maddy Darke as my 2020 Local Woman of the Year. Maddy is a local resident from Dover Heights and a valued member of the local cricket and sporting community. She has been a member and representative of the local Eastern Suburbs Cricket Club for over 10 years, playing since the age of seven. As the Club's Girls Cricket Ambassador for the 2019/20 Season, she is a strong role model for younger female cricket players in the Eastern Suburbs, and often coaches younger girls teams. In 2018, Maddy represented Australia in South Africa for the Under 19 Women tri-series - the first international series played by a female Australian under 19 team since 2003. She also joined the Sydney Sixers for her first Women's Big Bash League campaign last summer and signed her first NSW Breakers contract in May 2019. Maddy is a rising star in cricket whose progress we will all follow with great interest!

RESTORE INNER WEST LINE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I recently had the great pleasure of meeting with Mr Roydon Ng, a representative from the Restore Inner West Line—Liverpool via Regents Park group concerning the state of our

rail network and the impact cuts to services has had on our local and surrounding community. Mr Ng expressed grave concern over changes made in recent years under the NSW Liberals/Nationals Government and has highlighted the impact this has had on so many local residents. As a result of timetable and line changes, members of our local and surrounding community have had their daily commute times adversely affected, with some instances of people being forced away from using our transport network all together as it is no longer a feasible option. For several years, Mr Ng has been championing the push for the restoration of the Inner West line and for upgrades to a number of stations for improved access to service the needs of the community. I would like to commend Mr Ng for his ongoing contributions and support for better transport services for our region and on behalf of the broader Fairfield community would like to thank him for all his efforts.

PRINCIPAL HANDOVER FOR NORTH SYDNEY DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—At the conclusion of the school year for 2019, North Sydney Demonstration School said farewell to a longstanding member of staff, Ms Myra Wearne, who has been the principal for over a decade. I know that the students, staff and community will miss Myra and the passion she shared for the school, and the wider community. I would like to wish Ms Wearne the very best of luck for her future endeavours, and know that the school community wishes her the very best as well. Ms Wearne has now handed the reins over to Ms Fiona Davis, who has commenced as principal at the beginning of this year. She is a passionate educator who brings with her twenty-five years of experience in public education. Ms Davis has worked at Middle Harbour Public School, Mosman Public School, and most recently at Cammeray Public as Deputy Principal for the past four years, and I wish her the very best as in her role Principal of North Sydney Demonstration School.

GO WILD FOR BUSH WILDLIFE DANCE

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I congratulate Save our Species Oz organisers Suzi Deyris, Jude Fanton, Cass Llyod and the numerous other volunteers who organised the Go Wild for Wildlife Bush Dance on Sunday 1 March in Mullumbimby. Proceeds from an art auction, wildlife face painting, a poster competition as well as local food and drinks sales all raised much needed funds for WIRES Northern Rivers and Bangalow Koalas. The family friendly event was a great success with live entertainment from Waangenga Blanco ex Bangarra dancer and choreographer who performed a visually spectacular Ochre Dance. The crowd was kept entertained by MCs, performances from musicians and a poetry recital. Funds raised from the event will go towards endangered, fire, and drought threatened Australian wildlife in the Northern Rivers region.

MASCOT RSL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)—On Sunday 1 March the 2020 Annual General Meeting of the Mascot Sub-branch of the Returned and Services League was held at the Eastlakes Sports Club. I joined my Parliamentary colleague Matt Thistlethwaite, and my fellow Sub-branch members, for the 101st year as an active RSL sub-branch, making it one of the oldest in NSW. I congratulate Mr Les Cannon, President, Mr Frederic Carre, Treasurer, Mr Paul Graham Secretary, and Mr Don Graham Vice President, who were elected as the executive team for 2020. The House recognises outgoing President and Secretary Pam Richardson and Carolyn McMahon and I congratulate them for their leadership throughout their term. Mascot RSL punches well above its weight – it organises the highly popular annual pre-ANZAC Day march in Mascot, and its Secretary Paul Graham was the visionary behind the now annual projection of the poppies of Flanders Field on the sails of the Opera House.

INTERGENERATIONAL FRIENDSHIP IN DENMAN

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)—I would like to congratulate the Denman Children's Centre, and Merton Court of Denman who have implemented a wonderful program where children from the Denman Children's Centre visit the residents at the aged care facility. The children and supervisors visit Merton Court on a weekly basis to catch up with their "grand-friends". The program is extremely popular for both old and young participants. Thank you to Merton Court and the Denman Children's Centre for executing this wonderful program which benefits not only the aged but also the younger generation.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 18:36
until Tuesday March 24 at 12:00**