



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 4 June 2020

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 4 June 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 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Universities 2019 audits*, received this day and authorised to be printed.

Committees

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL

Government Response

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government Response to Report No. 3/56 of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General entitled *Twelfth General Meeting with the Valuer General*, received on 3 June 2020 and authorised to be printed.

[Notices of motions given]

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2019-2020

Debate resumed from 5 March 2020.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (09:43:31): When I first put this speech together it was a very different speech. It was written prior to COVID-19 and the impacts of the pandemic and the Government's strong response, which has mitigated both the health and economic consequences, has changed that speech. COVID-19 has dramatically changed the landscape within this State, in the nation and across the world. It has been a really challenging time for all of us. Our health and finances have been severely impacted. Our vulnerable have become more vulnerable and those who were self-reliant to this point are much less so.

Our whole community—the way it regards itself—has become such a different place. As local members we have had the opportunity to play an important role in responding to the concerns of our community. I thank my local community for their emails, calls and letters. When the outlook was very uncertain for our community across New South Wales, my team in my electorate office—like every other MP here and their teams—were working incredibly hard to provide good information to our community so they could make decisions. To provide clarity, where we could, about what those people could do and not do across our community.

It was a challenging time for everybody but we had such an important role that brought to the fore the importance that MPs have in their community as a source of truth about what our community members could do off the back of COVID-19 and its impacts. We sent out many emails. There were e-newsletters. There were calls. I found it a privilege to help my community in such a practical way day-to-day. Many of those emails were plaintive. They were emotional. They showed a great deal of distress in our community. This opportunity allows us to reflect on our true heroes, our local heroes. Members of my community who are local doctors, nurses healthcare workers, aged-care workers, the police and emergency services workers, all our volunteers in not-for-profit organisations across our communities and in my community, our teachers and our childcare workers were on the frontline of the pandemic.

They were putting their lives at risk in what they did day-to-day and I want to thank them for that. One of the reasons we have been able to ride the wave a little more comfortably than some other States—and some other nations—is that the New South Wales Government, our Premier, our Treasurer and other leaders stepped up early and strongly. While there were risks in that decisive action, it has benefited our State and enabled us to have a strong, early response to slow the transmission of COVID-19. There was a strong health response which must and appropriately be the response of any government to protect the health of people in our community. But it was also matched with a strong economic and financial response.

The New South Wales Government stepped up in the early days of the pandemic, making critical decisions because we could. Our strong financial position enabled us to roll out economic support across the community to stifle the economic impact that a strong health response had on our community. Some \$10 billion of economic support, including \$800 million to boost our health system, putting ventilators into our hospitals, ensuring the supply lines were there so that respirators and the other personal protective equipment [PPE] we needed in our health activities across the State could be brought forward and manufactured in a way we could not have imagined prior to COVID-19.

There was \$4 billion in payroll tax relief and a \$73 million mental health package. Those responses by this Government were only possible because we had taken care of the financial circumstances over the preceding nine years. This involved tough decisions in times which seemed tough. But what really counted was taking those tough decisions during those nine years of stewardship of the fiscal position of this Government, allowing us to step up with that kind of turbo-charged economic financial support to help our community when it counted. That began as early as 17 March with the first stimulus package.

There was a \$2.3 billion health boost and an economic boost, \$700 million for medical equipment and facilities, \$506 million for payroll tax cuts and waivers, \$80 million to waive fees and charges for some small businesses, \$250 million for additional cleaners on our public infrastructure, and \$750 million to bring forward maintenance and capital works on public infrastructure to keep those jobs going across our community where possible. On 27 March—just 10 days later—our second stimulus package contained the \$1 billion Working for NSW fund to keep and create jobs at the heart of an economic recovery package.

There was \$4 billion for deferral of payroll tax for more businesses across our State, deferral of gaming tax, the parking space levy and for commercial tenants in smaller government-owned properties. There was \$34 million to prevent homelessness, which we know would spike with the vulnerable in our community being impacted more than ever before. There was \$30 million for the Energy Accounts Payments Assistance scheme and \$10 million to support the amazing work of Lifeline, supporting those with mental health and related issues.

On 3 April the Planning System Acceleration Program began. This brought forward a lot of infrastructure and planning decisions, clearing the backlog of Land and Environment Court cases which were blocking the way for development applications and other planning decisions that would create and sustain jobs across New South Wales. This package created more than 30,000 jobs within six months, supporting our councils and creating the \$70 million community infrastructure fund. There was assistance in April for our frontline workers with a \$104 million package. There was \$58 million for health worker accommodation and \$25 million for medical research and vaccine trials.

We are leading the way with our support for medical research efforts. This will help us create the kind of vaccine and the clinical trials we need to ensure that when it is available, it is going to be available to create the herd immunity we need in our community so we never face this kind of pandemic again. There was \$11 million to fund the commercialisation of research products and I was particularly thankful for this because it goes to an issue I have felt strongly about during my time in government. We need to make sure—and this was called out in the economic blueprint released last November by our Chief Economist—that we commercialise research and the development of good ideas better and faster. These might be software, innovative work practices or something out of a test tube. We must get that to market quicker.

The \$11 million research products fund will help us do that, using insights gained during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am keen to get this fund moving because there are jobs that will be created in the near-term by making sure that our scale-ups, our universities and our research institutes get that incremental support in funding so they can bring those products which create jobs to market sooner. On 15 April the Government waived licence fees for the construction sector. Later that month there was funding for regional infrastructure—\$101 million for vital infrastructure projects in New South Wales—not only to help in response to the pandemic but also to help the recovery from drought and bushfire. There was \$46 million for the Forestry Corporation to repair damaged public infrastructure, \$25 million for local councils in regional areas and \$20 million for Aboriginal housing.

On 24 April there was a mental health funding boost with \$73 million in mental health funding to boost jobs, and boost the impact of and increase the capacity of the NSW Mental Health Line. There was the creation of pop-up mental health safe spaces across our State. We know and probably do not even understand the dimensions of the mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across our community but those measures will enable people who have been hit harder than others and find that they just cannot take that next step, to make calls and hear a voice that will help them through what could be an incredibly difficult, crisis-ridden feeling.

The drought relief package worth \$310 million in emergency relief was announced in May. I could go on. The Government's strong funding response to the COVID-19 pandemic has many dimensions and it would not have been able to do it had it not taken tough decisions over its nine years of government. As we go forward, those

measures will take a toll on our finances but it is an investment the Government had to make and could make. Members on this side of the House will be able to deal with it because over nine years we have demonstrated our strong fiscal management in preparing for just such an emergency to help support the wellbeing and economic health of our community.

I will reflect on the impacts on my own local community and some investments that have been made in my community since 2011, when I became a member of this House. In the 2019 election I was gratified to be re-elected as the local member for the Vacluse electorate, which, at 15 square kilometres, is one of the small electorates in the State. It has over 52,000 people. It was gratifying that before the election I was able to make some serious, material commitments to my community, the most significant of which was about addressing an issue that had existed for a long time. A sum of \$85 million was committed towards the closure of the deep ocean wastewater outfalls at Diamond Bay and Vacluse. I was astonished to find that they were the last wastewater outfalls in the State to still be pumping wastewater into the deep blue ocean. The Premier made that announcement with me in November 2018, leading up to the election. The Government's capacity to facilitate Sydney Water to make a bid for \$85 million in its Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] submission will bear fruit by ensuring that the wastewater is taken off the cliffs from Diamond Bay and Vacluse and sent to the treatment plant at Bondi, which is not terribly far away, rather than destroy our beautiful marine life and ocean for many years.

I am also proud of the announcement I made about Rose Bay Secondary College, a public high school in my electorate, which has become an exemplar. It is not a selective high school. It serves our brilliant local students and also has a stream that helps those more challenged by a regular public high school education. The school does both those tasks in an excellent fashion. In February 2019 I visited Rose Bay Secondary College with then education Minister Rob Stokes to announce that the tennis courts that were in bad disrepair would be replaced with two brand-new multipurpose sports courts. That project has been completed. Members can imagine that in a small electorate, schools are not blessed with large outdoor areas where students can have good recreational space; they have to make do with small space to provide the recreational facilities they deserve. The new multipurpose sports courts will provide an opportunity to the Rose Bay Secondary College students to play competitive sports, in which they do very well, but also to use those facilities during their breaks to do other things. I thank the Government for enabling that because the courts were in such disrepair that their surfaces were unsafe for students to use for any activity whatsoever.

Another announcement was made about an upgrade to the female change facility at Easts Rugby Club in Bellevue Hill. The Government has a strong commitment to enhance women's role in sport. A Government strategy that was announced enables us to ensure that if we are going to encourage women and girls into sports, which helps with their physical and mental wellbeing, they must have the facilities to change and shower in the privacy of facilities set up specifically for them. The Easts Rugby Club Beasties do a great job. About 18 months ago they started a women's rugby team. Last year Natalie Ward, MLC, who is involved in rugby, the local mayor, Easts Rugby Club board members and the leadership and I announced that \$1.8 million would go into building a new change facility for female and male players so that, as the young players would tell me, they would not have to change in their cars or wait to get home to have their showers. Now they can be equal partners in using the rugby and playing facilities at Woollahra, as they should.

In the lead-up to the last election, an important commitment of \$2 million was made to support a large part of my constituents, the Jewish community, around their security funding. For quite a number of years the Jewish community had made that bid to the Government. The Government's good financial management enabled it to make that announcement. The funding allows the community, which had security issues at their places of worship, aged care facility and schools, to invest in a network of CCTV cameras and to upgrade their control rooms and crisis centres. That will ensure that the Jewish community can go about celebrating, commemorating and going to their synagogues and shuls and focus on their culture and religion rather than worrying about their personal security. That was a big commitment of the Government to help secure the places of worship and commemoration of the Jewish community across not only my electorate but also the State.

I announced \$500,000 for the North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club in my electorate. My electorate has only two surf life saving clubs. They both patrol the most famous beach in the world, Bondi Beach, which can have up to 50,000 people per day at peak times during summer. The \$500,000 was for an advance response life saving facility, which will help the club better patrol the beach. *[Extension of time]*

The club leadership has told me that the funding will help the club save more lives by helping it get its surf rescue boats out onto the sand and into the waves much more quickly than it can at the moment. Currently, the boats have to be brought from the storage facility inside the club. It has been such a benefit not only for my local constituents but also for all people across New South Wales and Australia, and eventually internationally, who will grace the shores of our most famous beach in the world.

I am particularly proud of two announcements about local playgrounds. Green spaces are rare and small in my electorate. People use those spaces for their mental and physical wellbeing to help them get through day-to-day living and to enjoy each other's company on weekends. Clark Reserve in Vaucluse has been upgraded with new play equipment and will soon open. Because this is a playground for young kiddies, soft-fall and playground garden barriers have been installed to enable safe play. Shade trees are important for young parents who often have to wait in exposed places while their kids finish having fun in playgrounds. The upgrade includes new shade trees, a drinking fountain and even a water bowl for dogs, which is critical even in my electorate. People in my electorate may live in smaller spaces than in other places in New South Wales, but they love their dogs and taking them out for a walk. A wonderful walk that dogs and their owners take follows the cliff from Bondi all the way to Gap Bluff and then to Watsons Bay. A drinking bowl along the way is an important part of making that walk even more pleasurable for dog owners.

Bondi Beach playground had a \$300,000 upgrade which, as you can imagine, given what I said about Bondi Beach, is a well-used recreation facility. It had fallen into disrepair and was looking pretty sad, so I made an announcement with the local councils that the playground was to be upgraded to make it appropriate not only for little kiddies but also for a range of ages. Playgrounds for older kids require equipment that works differently. We needed some new equipment to create the kind of playground that could serve our little ones through to our older kiddies. We had to change the way the playground equipment was configured. The \$300,000, which will be matched by the council—and hopefully more—will make sure that the Bondi Beach playground, which gets a lot of foot traffic from parents and children, gets the age-appropriate equipment those parents and children deserve.

The final election commitment I mention is one I am really pleased about because I am very conscious of water quality and desire to make my electorate aware of environmental issues, both on and off the land. Some 18 months ago I set up a working group with my local council after I became concerned that Rose Bay Beach received a poor water quality rating in the annual Beachwatch results put out by the environment Minister. The working group consisted of councils, Sydney Water, the former Roads and Maritime Services and all parts of government that make a contribution to try to improve the water quality at Rose Bay Beach. It astounded me that seven stormwater channels flowed into that beach. Those channels partially accounted for the poor water quality, along with the fact that the beach does not experience the flushing that coastal beaches get. Harbour beaches have other challenging issues that impact water quality. Not only were seven stormwater channels ending up there but also the area is used heavily for recreational purposes such as paddle boats, dragon boats, school training sessions and by people and their dogs. A lot of work has gone into identifying and addressing the sources of contamination.

This is a long-term piece of work. Turning around a poor rating from a Beachwatch survey does not happen after only one round of measurements. We know that sampling for Beachwatch is only done at certain times of the year so it is often not a completely accurate picture of year-round contamination. However, it is a wake-up call across the State when those ratings are poor. I was able to secure \$150,000 to put towards the work of the Rose Bay Beach working group. We are part way through the great work we plan to do. The funds are being used to test for the type of contamination coming out of those stormwater channels. The preliminary results are important and will help us locate the source of the contamination. Members know that contamination identified at one part of the stormwater output may, in fact, be coming from places some kilometres away so it will be no surprise that some of the contamination found at Rose Bay Beach originates across the way in Bondi. Road surfaces, dog litter and litter from people in other parts of my electorate end up at Rose Bay Beach. We will create an awareness program to tackle some of those issues contributing to pollution at Rose Bay Beach whose origin is a couple of kilometres away.

I thank Sydney Water, my local council and my local residents who have come together in a constructive way over the past 18 months to do this work seriously—not simply to make an announcement, "We have fixed this," but to come on a journey to understand how complex it is to resolve the water contamination issue. It takes years of work. It takes parts of the government and community goodwill. We are a long way along now because I set up the working group 18 months ago. Since becoming the local member in 2011 some amazing commitments and improvements have been made in my community. It is the result of a partnership—the money made available at the State level, working with my local councils and goodwill within my local community. A major improvement was the Edgecliff Centre upgrade. Edgecliff train station, the major hub in my electorate for travel into the city and onto other networks, had been neglected. It was built in the 1970s and there was no way that the elderly people in my electorate could connect between buses and trains. We had a big piece of work around that because many landlords within the station and the shopping centre had to agree to how the new design and planning work would be done.

We announced and opened the upgrade. It cost \$26 million because it required two new lifts, four new escalators and new entrances to Edgecliff station. In addition, we provided new bike racks, CCTV and a new safety ramp. But it was so important. A relatively modest amount of money invested into that upgrade has made such a difference to the lifestyle of not only the elderly in my community but also the mums and bubs and the

travellers who come through that major hub in my electorate. To go from a train to a bus, from a bus to a train, enables people to leave their cars at home, frees up the roads and ensures that people have a less stressful way of travelling to their destination. I cannot emphasise enough what a lifestyle and safety change that investment into the major transport hub has made to my community. It took this Government to deliver that money to get the planning approvals, to get the community support for the design, to actually make it happen. I am so gratified because it was such a meaningful commitment to my local electorate. I could speak for much longer. I have spoken for 30 minutes and still have many more pages to go. I am grateful to be a member of a government that can deliver such important changes to people's livelihoods, safety and welfare in my local community of Vaucluse.

Debate adjourned.

Bills

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TRAVEL CONCESSIONS) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Jenny Leong, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (10:14:18): I am pleased to introduce the Transport Administration Amendment (International Students Travel Concessions) Bill 2020 on behalf of The Greens. It is a simple bill. The object of the bill is to allow full fee paying international tertiary students to be issued with the same concessional travel passes as other tertiary students. This will bring New South Wales into line with every other State in Australia. It seeks to amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 to give effect to the object of the bill by granting international tertiary students the same access to travel concessions as other tertiary students. Specifically, this bill inserts provisions relating to international students in schedule 7 explicitly setting out that:

- (1) A full fee paying international student is entitled to be issued with a concessional travel pass (as referred to in section 88) of the same kind as is available to a person who is a domestic student at a tertiary educational institution.

The second element of this bill, which is described as a "consequential amendment" omits part 8 division 5 section 88 (3A) of the Act, which states:

If the regulations so provide, persons of a class prescribed by the regulations are not entitled to be issued with a free travel pass or a concessional travel pass under this section. This subsection applies despite any determination or direction of the Minister or of an Authority or the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.

While consequential in the sense that regulations can only be made if they are consistent with the Act, as a matter of principle this is important because it goes to the heart of the problem the bill is addressing. This clause enables regulations made through the Transport Administration Act to exist outside the Anti-Discrimination Act framework when it comes to travel concessions. It is there for a reason and that requires us to go back to 2006, which I will do a little later.

It may come as a surprise to some in this place, and many in the community, that international tertiary students studying at New South Wales institutions are not able to access travel concessions. Student travel concessions exist for a good reason. There are real financial pressures on students associated with studying in our State. Rightly, public transport fares for enrolled tertiary students are subsidised to help ends meet and to help students gain the financial freedom necessary to focus on their education and get the best out of their studies. These financial pressures are the same no matter where you were born, the colour of your passport or the type of visa you have. However, access to these concessions is not equal and it is not available to all students.

International students who reside in New South Wales contribute to our society in the same way as anyone else. They pay GST and income taxes, they support our local businesses, they see our local bands, they play in our sports teams, they grow things in our community gardens, they eat in our restaurants, they buy food in our shops and they use public transport. International students, like all students, add value to our society and communities and enrich the lives we lead. They deserve the same support as anyone else. Other States have recognised this important principle and have acted to grant international student travel concessions.

Shamefully, New South Wales is the odd one out when it comes to granting international student travel concessions. Access to travel concession should be an issue dependent on residency, not citizenship and certainly not on the colour of your skin or the language you speak at home. This bill seeks to end racial discrimination against international students so that anyone who is a full fee paying student in New South Wales is entitled to travel concessions. I am sure some in this Chamber and others who are not aware of this issue are saying, "Come on. Really, racial discrimination?" And to that I say, "Yes, really".

So how can it be allowed to continue if it is, and has been found to be, racial discrimination? That is simple. As I mentioned earlier, there is an exemption in our Transport Administration Act: section 88 (3A) was inserted in 2006 as a way for the State to avoid granting international student travel concessions after this practice was found by the Administrative Decisions Tribunal to be in contravention of our Anti-Discrimination Act. This campaign for travel concessions for international students is not a new one. International students have been working on this campaign for a long time.

In 2006 the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal found that excluding international students from travel concessions was racial discrimination. That was a huge win for the travel concessions campaign and a clear sign to the government of the day that things needed to change. But, alas, rather than complying with the decision, the then Labor Government passed new legislation to make travel concessions exempt from the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act. At the time the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association [SUPRA], of which I was president, had run the case in the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal. It claimed a win and called on the then Labor Government to both recognise the racial discrimination that was occurring and to remedy the situation by giving international students access to travel concessions.

I acknowledge the incredible contribution of Aristotle Paipetis, who worked with the international students, SUPRA, staff and office bearers over many years to achieve this tribunal outcome. But the same conditions that the tribunal deemed to be racial discrimination in 2006 still exist. The only difference is that the Transport Administration Act is now exempt from having to comply with the Anti-Discrimination Act. So how did the Iemma Labor Government get around section 19 of the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, which states:

19 Provision of goods and services

It is unlawful for a person who provides (whether or not for payment) goods or services to discriminate against another person on the ground of race ...

Instead of fixing the racial discrimination in our transport system, it amended the legislation and put an exemption in the Transport Administration Act. At the time The Greens Lee Rhiannon, who was then a member of the upper House, commented on the outrageous side-stepping of this basic responsibility. She said:

It beggars belief that the Government is prepared to so boldly dismiss the Anti-Discrimination Act ... In New South Wales, the Anti-Discrimination Act is the legislative cornerstone for the basic human rights of equality, of treatment and freedom from discrimination.

When the then Labor Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport John Watkins introduced the bill he said:

These are minor legislative amendments involving changes to section 39 and section 88 of the Act, which will mean that government policy concerning who is not eligible for travel concessions can be written into law. This is a necessary step that simply preserves the status quo.

Let us be clear, it is preserving the status quo of racial discrimination. That is what the amendment did and he made it clear that that was the aim. As it happens I then met with Barry O'Farrell, who was then the Liberal Opposition Deputy Leader, in the Strangers' Dining Room—it was my first experience of being inside this building—together with Ruchir Punjabi, the then SRC international students officer. It was a strange five-minute interaction. We urged the Opposition to support the students' call for a campaign to end the discrimination in travel concessions. At that time I had no idea how normal a five-minute conversation or meeting was in this place. I remember leaving thinking what a weird job to have where you meet with someone for five minutes, talk about a complex issue and then go on to another thing.

The bill had been rushed through the Chamber because the Administrative Decisions Tribunal had found that there was a problem. It is worth noting that in his speech Barry O'Farrell mentioned that rush and the fact that he had been unable to meet with students. It is also interesting to note how quickly we move with technology. He said he received a facsimile communication from the students but was unable to meet them in person due to the less than 24 hours they had to consider this bill. So it might have been a campaign that was active over a decade ago but this is unfinished business that needs to be fixed.

Last year a group of 12 student organisations wrote to the transport Minister calling for change. The letter was signed by the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, the Western Sydney University Student Representative Council, Newcastle University Postgraduate Students Association, Newcastle University Students' Association, the University of New South Wales Postgraduate Council, the University of New South Wales Student Representative Council, University of Technology Sydney Students Association, Southern Cross Postgraduate Association, Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association [SUPRA], the University of Sydney Students' Representative Council, the Wollongong University Postgraduate Association and the Wollongong Undergraduate Student Association.

Past and present student leaders at universities in New South Wales have been pushing this since before 2006. Multicultural organisations and groups have been a part of this push and I hope that the introduction of this

bill reactivates the many generations of student leaders that would have been pushing for travel concessions for international students who no doubt find themselves in this Chamber and in this Parliament right now because many members this place were student leaders on their campus and would have seen the injustice of discriminating against international students in this way. I acknowledge those who have been part of campaigns over the years and ask them to activate with their networks to achieve this change. I acknowledge those who were part of the Cross Campus Concessions Coalition—I have already mentioned Ruchir Punjabi but also wish to acknowledge Shehbaz Singh and the SUPRA 5—as well as all of those who joined the stunts, rallies and actions and wrote articles in student newspapers and signed petitions.

Racism and discrimination are real problems in our community, in our society and in our world. They are not abstract concepts, as we have seen in recent times. The impacts cause real harm. We know that people experience racial discrimination and vilification on public transport regularly. We know that this has increased during this current pandemic. We know that international students are vulnerable to discrimination and racism when they catch a bus, get a job and or rent a house. The fact is that our State sanctions racial discrimination against international students because it is embedded in our Transport Administration Act. We cannot allow this practice to continue.

It is unclear what is the Berejiklian Government's position on the bill. It is very welcome news that it announced \$6 million to support vulnerable multicultural communities and non-citizens through this pandemic. It is also unclear what is the Opposition's position on the bill. I hope Labor will see fit to support it and finally right the wrongs of past New South Wales Labor governments. It is worth noting that in 2012 the Liberal Government was moving on this issue. To much fanfare, then Premier Barry O'Farrell—no longer the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—was leading the Liberal Coalition Government and was in India promoting New South Wales as a great destination for international students. He announced a 35 per cent discounted transport pass for students in certain circumstances as a trial. It did not cover the whole State but it was a start and it looked like things were moving. Unfortunately, once he returned from India the trial ended. In August 2016 the discount was quietly put in the bottom drawer and there has been silence ever since.

So why introduce this bill now? Before the COVID-19 pandemic there were around 190,000 international tertiary students enrolled in New South Wales. In fact, New South Wales has the highest proportion of the international students in Australia. Despite this, it is the only State in the country in which international students do not have access to travel concessions. International students bring substantial economic contributions to New South Wales. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], in 2018 alone, international education brought in \$13 billion to the New South Wales economy. This is largely through students' expenditure on tuition, travel and costs of living. International education also adds to the economy through local job creation. In 2018 international education created almost 96,000 full-time equivalent jobs in New South Wales. They generate revenue through tourism not only through their own exploration of our country but also in hosting families who visit them while they are studying here. A report commissioned by the Australian Council for Private Education and Training found that tourism from visiting friends and relatives contributed \$102 million to the New South Wales economy in 2011 and created 1,185 full-time equivalent jobs.

In a 2019 discussion paper developed by the Council for Australian Postgraduate Association, it was estimated that extending public transport concessions to higher education students in New South Wales would cost the State only a maximum of \$169 million per year. This is a small price to pay for the welcoming community response that shows international students that we will treat them equally in this Chamber and in this Parliament. It is also a small price to pay given the economic contribution these students make. To put it into context for those who are not convinced that \$169 million is a small price to pay to eliminate racial discrimination on our buses and trains, it is important to realise that each year the New South Wales taxpayer will give more than \$900 million to ClubsNSW in gambling tax rebates. That is more than five times the cost of providing travel concessions to international students each year.

But it goes beyond the dollars. International students are part of our community. They contribute to our society and add to the diversity and vibrancy of our cities and our State. At the moment they are doing it really tough. Many international students were already living in poverty and many members will have heard from the Sydney Alliance and the incredibly disturbing stories of the impacts this pandemic is having on international students. They have commented, "I am desperate to get more work", "Everything has changed and we are trapped", "Soon I will run out of my savings", "I can't afford a flight out", and "We placed our trust in Australia. I don't know what to do." These are the harrowing stories that the Sydney Alliance has shared about the impact of COVID-19 and the tough times that international students are facing at the moment.

A concession on daily travel will not solve all of those problems, but it may make a difference for one in seven international students who say that they skip meals and go hungry because they cannot afford to travel to class. It may allow them to afford the fare to travel to class. This is a small but significant step that this State

Parliament can take to acknowledge that international students are a key part of our community. We are in this together, and if those words ring true we must abolish the racial discrimination that currently exists in the Transport Administration Act. I urge all members to look at this simple bill on its merits and finally work together to end this discrimination. International students need it at this time when racial discrimination and vilification is prominent in all our lives. We can send a strong message to diverse communities that says we value equality and that this Parliament will not tolerate racial discrimination.

Debate adjourned.

Motions

KIM GOLDSMITH AND DUBBO ARTS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (10:33:13): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Commends artist and community leader Kim Goldsmith of Dubbo for her continued contribution to Dubbo's cultural life.
- (2) Congratulates Kim Goldsmith on her recent exhibition, *Eye of the Corvus: Messenger of Truth*, contrasting two extreme landscapes of drought-ravaged western New South Wales and the Icelandic coast at the Western Plains Cultural Centre.
- (3) Recognises Kim Goldsmith's promotion of the Dubbo art scene through her BOOMDubbo initiative and her advocacy for the region's artists through the local organisation the Creative Assembly.

I will talk more about Kim, the artists and art groups across the Dubbo electorate shortly but I will start by recognising the importance of our State's creative and cultural sector, particularly at this time of uncertainty. The good news is that the Government is injecting \$50 million into the sector to help resuscitate arts companies suffering severe financial distress due to COVID-19 and the lockdown. That rescue package is a must and it is the largest of its type offered by any Australian State, which is good to see. New South Wales is the home of many great arts and cultural institutions. Sadly, live performance is going to be one of the last sectors to be able to generate its own income again. The \$50 million initiative that I mentioned is on top of \$6.34 million announced last month by Create NSW to help support independent artists and small to medium arts, screen and cultural organisations.

Under the latest plan, not-for-profit organisations funded currently by Create NSW are eligible, along with other arts bodies, based on an assessment of their economic and cultural importance. More than 100 performing arts companies, museums and galleries and festivals could qualify. Successful organisations can use funding to cover expenses that are difficult, such as rent, utilities, and staff salaries, as well as funding sets, costumes and commissions for new productions when they reopen. That is really important. Create NSW will assess an organisation's finances before making recommendations to Treasury for the funds. The arts sector supports 118,000 New South Wales jobs and contributes \$16.4 billion to the economy.

Many tend to think of our larger metro areas as the main contributors to the arts and creative sector, but today I highlight the thriving arts and cultural sector that exists in the regional areas of our State, including in my electorate. As I mentioned, Kim Goldsmith is one of the artists involved in a group called the Creative Assembly, which is focused on raising awareness and involvement of local artists and art exhibitions. They do it well and take the community along with them. Some other artists who have been involved include Allan Shillingsworth, Gill Pedrana, Leanne Tremain, Indigenous artist Lewis Burns, Milena Sallustio, Peter Aland, Ruby Davies, Jack Randell, Tamara Lawry, Vicki Aland, Paul Berkeley and Jude Morrell. They are fantastic artists in their own right but are doing good things as a group to help promote art and artists in the region.

In Kim's case, the exhibition at the Western Plains Cultural Centre—*Eye of the Corvus*—took on an international flavour, thanks to her research trip to Iceland. The exhibition looked at highly intelligent ravens and crows—known as corvids—and revealed some of the complexities involved in survival and the strategies other species employ to make their way in the world. What makes a species so resilient in one part of the world but not in another? In Australia, corvids are thriving and adapting; in Iceland, they are under threat. Kim used a selection of cameras and sound equipment to capture the rural, peri-urban and urban landscapes of Australia and Iceland from the eye of the bird. It is a pretty remarkable exhibition and one that was made possible through some funding. Doing that on an international level gives Kim, who comes from regional New South Wales, an extraordinary sense of achievement.

Over my years in radio I have been lucky enough to speak to a range of artists, curators and arts and cultural lecturers, and the amount of talent we have in regional New South Wales never ceases to amaze me. Things that spring to mind for me include large sculptural exhibitions like at Rosby in Mudgee to small gatherings of the Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society. Regional areas do tend to have it all. Speaking of Rosby, Sculptures in the Garden at Mudgee, which is the brainchild of Kay Norton Knight with much help from her husband, Gerard, has been a great success. It is a fixture on the calendar now and normally takes place on 12 and 13 October. This

year's exhibition is probably under discussion to see how it can progress. It brings together fantastic artists from across Australia and New South Wales into our regional communities in a great setting.

It was great that Destination NSW provided funding of around \$150,000 towards the construction of a purpose-built cellar door that incorporates an art space and event venue aimed at providing a whole new experience for visitors with a focus on wine, local produce, arts and events. It is an important part of our cultural acceptance of each other and Rosby will continue to do great things in the future. There is no doubt that a thriving arts and cultural scene is vital for any region. Across the Dubbo electorate that is very much the case.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (10:41:48): I thank the member for Dubbo for moving the motion before the House. We can all see that arts are important to our society. They are a reflection on us and on society, especially in tough times. In the past year our society has seen its fair share of tough times with fires and floods in my part of the world, which compounded an already existing drought, and then COVID-19. As I said earlier, art and the arts in general are a reflection of our society, none more so than cartoons. We often see politicians—the member for Oxley, who is in the Chamber, the Deputy Premier and the Premier—graced by cartoonists; they are great fodder for them. It is probably a sign that one has made it as a politician when one has one's own look in cartoons. I have not made it yet; I have not been graced yet by a cartoonist.

But Coffs Harbour is lucky to have the National Cartoon Gallery @ The Bunker on City Hill. Two years ago in 2018, the gallery was fortunate to be blessed with \$2.7 million in funding from the State Government to expand to a much bigger facility. The concrete bunker, built in the 1940s during World War II, was in the 1980s turned into the National Cartoon Gallery—hence the name. For anyone who goes through Coffs Harbour and enjoys the arts, a stop at the bunker gallery is an absolute must. Each year it holds the annual cartoon awards, nominating cartoons from many different categories—from political cartoons, which are obviously our favourite, through to about six or seven different categories. Cartoonists from all over the country come to Coffs Harbour or attend on Zoom calls and the like for the awards night. It is absolutely fantastic.

Late last year, along with the Deputy Premier, manager Margaret Cameron and Paul McKeon, we turned the sod for the new cartoon gallery, which will extend above the existing gallery with a coffee shop—an ongoing source of revenue for the gallery—and a wonderful new exhibition, which is a unique project. The gallery is looking at each decade since our Federation. It will be showcasing the history of Australia through cartoons: World War I, the sinking of the *Titanic*, the roaring twenties, the depression, World War II, the moon landings and September 11 through to our modern era. These wonderful, and some not so wonderful, events are looked at through the eyes of the cartoonists of this country. It will be a unique experience for students to learn about history through the medium of cartoons. That will be a fantastic project once it is open, perhaps later this year.

Proponents of a competing gallery have spoken out against the Bunker Cartoon Gallery in quite a shameful attack on its worthiness as a gallery. I hope those people have since reconsidered their thoughts on the gallery, which is such a wonderful Coffs Harbour institution. I thank the member for Dubbo for his motion, and I congratulate community leader Kim Goldsmith on her continuing contribution to Dubbo's cultural life.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (10:46:05): I congratulate the member for Dubbo on moving the motion and I congratulate Kim Goldsmith on the Dubbo exhibition. This debate is a wonderful opportunity for the House not only to recognise the arts in Dubbo and in regional New South Wales but also to recognise the value of the arts across the entire State, such as in my electorate of Bankstown, where undoubtedly the arts provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to express their talent.

In Bankstown we are blessed to have a wonderful cultural institution, similar to Dubbo—the Bankstown Arts Centre, which opened just over 10 years ago. It houses a number of organisations. One of those is Outloud, formerly known as the Bankstown Youth Development Service, an organisation that has provided art opportunities for young people for more than 25 years. Urban Theatre Projects is another long-term organisation in my area that innovatively provides cultural art and urban theatre opportunities for young people. That group has been there for almost 38 years and has played a huge role in giving young people an opportunity across Bankstown and, indeed, across south-west Sydney.

The Bankstown Lapidary Club, a long-term club in my area, is housed within the arts centre also, along with the Bankstown Theatre Company. For a long time the Bankstown Art Society has been fortunate to have a number of volunteers and tutors who have taught generations of young people in my area the wonderful skill of art. Indeed, years ago my daughter benefitted from being a student of that society. She is now 15 and a wonderful artist in her own right.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to acknowledge in this House the arts sector and the value those cultural institutions provide to every part of New South Wales. It is very important. The arts are often undervalued. Currently we are seeing the impact of the coronavirus on the arts sector, which has had to shut down exhibition

spaces and centres. The sector is facing all sorts of financial crises at this time: It is desperate for funds and support. There is no doubt that all members can share and embrace the value of the arts in developing young people, and in providing solace and comfort to people of all ages.

I love coming down for the art society's exhibitions, seeing people from as young as four or five up to 90 or 95 showcasing their incredible talents and seeing how happy those occasions are. The member for Dubbo would agree that whenever we visit one of those exhibitions we are simply delighted to be there. The opportunity to support talented people is one of the great aspects of being a member of Parliament. I thank the member for Dubbo for moving the motion, which I support.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (10:50:08): I support the motion moved by the member for Dubbo and thank him for bringing the attention of the House to the importance of the arts. I take this opportunity to speak about the arts scene in my electorate of Miranda. Local artists and members of our community are incredibly fortunate to have a regional art gallery in Gympie. In 2000 Hazelhurst Arts Centre opened as a regional gallery, community gallery, arts centre and cafe. Already it has contributed significantly to the cultural and social life of southern Sydney. Not only is it considered to be the first public arts facility of its kind in Australia, but also it provides a level of gallery and arts centre function unmatched by any similar complex in the country.

One of the many things I love about Hazelhurst is that it fosters and encourages a new generation of artists through its participation in the annual ARTEXPRESS exhibition. ARTEXPRESS features a selection of outstanding student artworks developed for the art-making component of the visual arts HSC examination in New South Wales. It includes a broad range of approaches and expressive forms, including ceramics, collection of works, documented forms, drawing, graphic design, painting, photo media, printmaking, sculpture, textiles and fibre, and time-based forms. Exhibitions are held at only six locations around the State, including the Art Gallery of New South Wales and, as I mentioned, our very own Hazelhurst Arts Centre.

Presented jointly by the NSW Department of Education and NSW Education Standards Authority in partnership with the gallery, Hazelhurst featured 53 outstanding works in the 2020 ARTEXPRESS, including works from many schools in the Sutherland shire. In particular, I congratulate local students on having their outstanding works featured, including Hannah Millar from Sylvania High School, and Taya Corrigan and Patricia Turner from Kirrawee High School. That initiative is a fantastic means by which to recognise young artists and encourage them to pursue their artistic talents.

Another incredibly popular Hazelhurst exhibition was the recently held "Southern Swell", an exhibition about surfing in southern Sydney from the 1950s to now. This shows the diversity of our regional gallery. It will be no surprise that surfing is a major part of life for many in our shire, given that Cronulla was one of the first locations for modern surfing in Australia. "Southern Swell" traced the fascinating history of the popularity of surfing in the area from the 1900s through until now, showcasing contemporary and historic photographs, surfboards, films, memorabilia and artworks from 15 local artists, photographers and filmmakers, including John Veage. With more than 22,000 people having visited Hazelhurst to see this exhibition, "Southern Swell" was one of the most successful in the gallery's 20-year history.

The shire is now also the home of another fantastic showcase—the "Walk the Walls" street art festival. During the inaugural festival, streets along the border of the Miranda and Cronulla electorates featured large-scale murals that brought colour and excitement to the streets of Caringbah. More than 30 visual artists painted 1,500 square metres of walls in Caringbah as part of a large crime prevention program to stop graffiti and vandalism, and as a way to revitalise the open spaces in the Sutherland shire. It was supported by the State Government. The success of the inaugural "Walk the Walls" festival saw it continue in the Cronulla electorate in 2019. Certainly it is now something locals look forward to enjoying. I am proud to represent a community that values and celebrates the importance of the arts. I thank the member for Dubbo for providing me and other members with an opportunity to express this sentiment. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (10:54:06): I congratulate the member for Dubbo on bringing to the attention of the House one of his local leaders, Kim Goldsmith, and her work in the arts. As local members with local constituencies we all appreciate how difficult art is, and how difficult it is to find funding and support for the arts. Quite often that is left up to local councils, but recently we had the State Government go through the process of an arts and cultural fund grant. It announced \$100 million worth of grants in total over two processes. The second round of that grant was \$47 million. It is important for that money to go into the arts. The arts are often sincerely and genuinely underfunded, given what they bring to the community.

Coalition governments are often cast with a reputation for never funding the arts, but here in this State it did. It funded the arts through a grants process. Cessnock has a wonderful performing arts centre called the Cessnock Performing Arts Centre [CPAC]. At CPAC not only do we have performing arts but also we have the static arts. The Society of Fine Arts put up its displays and the Cessnock Regional Art Gallery is in the process of

moving one council location into a different location underneath the performing arts centre. Cessnock City Council applied for funding in the recent grants process so that it could put in LED lights, which would make the cost of running the arts centre much cheaper. That would make arts opportunities more accessible to everyone. That is a pretty good idea. The independent panel cast with the responsibility to consider the applications for the arts and cultural funding thought so highly of the application from Cessnock council that it ranked it as number 13 out of 159 applications. That is pretty impressive.

In its generosity to the arts the State Government ended up funding 56 projects. One would think that the top 56 would get funded, or at least 50 out of the top 56, maybe with a few discrepancies at the bottom end. One would surely think that number 13 would get funded. But as is unfortunately the tradition, whether it is arts or sports, whether it is culture or the fields, there was intervention. Cessnock is not an electorate held by the Government, and so apparently Cessnock was not important to this Government with regard to the arts. The \$118,000 grant that was applied for under the fund was overlooked by this Government, which means that arts in Cessnock are going to be less available, less accessible and more expensive because of political interference.

While I congratulate the member for Dubbo on supporting his community and his artists, I condemn the interference of the Ministers responsible for overlooking the recommendations of an independent panel, which made sure that almost every application from an electorate not held by the Government was overlooked. It is shameful. It is not pork-barrelling; it is bordering on corruption. But I commend the member for Dubbo for his motion in this House.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (10:58:18): In reply: I thank all of those who contributed to the motion. It is important to recognise the importance of art and culture in all areas of New South Wales including, most importantly, our regional areas. I thank the member for Coffs Harbour, who reflected on art in his area and the National Cartoon Gallery, which is a treasure for his electorate and was one of those that was funded. I challenge the member for Cessnock to put it to the constituents in Coffs Harbour that they have done the wrong thing by getting funding there. It was built in the 1940s and it is great to see it getting a much-needed face lift. I am looking forward to seeing some history addressed via cartoons. The member for Cessnock would make a fantastic cartoon in that place.

I thank the member for Bankstown for her contribution. It was good to hear about the Bankstown Arts Centre and some of the great theatre opportunities there. As she said, as a member of Parliament it is a great privilege to be able to go to galleries and theatre performances, and to help celebrate art in so many ways in our electorates. The member for Miranda talked about the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery at Gympie, which sounds amazing. The gallery is involved in ARTEXPRESS, which many of us know is a really good opportunity for young, budding artists to exhibit their art as part of the HSC, and build confidence and repertoire. One of those exhibitions that has been on display at Hazelhurst with a focus on surfing through art sounds amazing. It is good to see the member for Cessnock recognising the importance of arts funding. It is fantastic to recognise the number of projects that were funded across regional New South Wales. We should all be grateful for the arts being funded in that way.

It is worth noting that art contributes in so many ways to the livability and the visitor appeal of towns across regional New South Wales, as well suburbs in metropolitan New South Wales. It also contributes to our general wellbeing and there are certain arts groups within our communities that help do that. In my region Orana Arts and Mudgee Arts are part of that. I recognise Orana Arts, which has been contributing to cultural life for many, many years. Orana Arts is looking to increase engagement through culturally and linguistically appropriate storytelling, exhibitions and projects, which is fantastic. I have always strongly advocated for Orana Arts; the work it does is amazing and it will certainly continue to do that.

I mention some of the opportunities for young people in regional areas through Moorambilla Voices, which is a program focusing on music, singing, movements, art, cultural awareness and retracing some of our Indigenous ancestors and their work over many years. I acknowledge Michelle Leonard and the entire team involved with Moorambilla Voices. It is one of the main regional providers of art and art outlets for young people from the age of eight to 18. It is an incredible program that, like many, has had to adapt and change this year due to COVID-19. Moorambilla Voices developed a series of modules to put online and provides a daily briefing for young people through virtual connectivity. I congratulate the team on being able to do that. Normally it would be having a camp, getting a choir together and performing in September. I hope we are not too far away from getting back to the norm.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for Dubbo. I imagine he will win support for his motion. I thank the member for Cessnock for his contribution of an impromptu exhibition of performance art. I am sure it was greatly appreciated by the member for Dubbo. All members performed well and all of the contributions were worthy, but the member for Cessnock gets the Oscar.

The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

AUSGRID

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (11:03:07): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes during the 2007 tempest storm, there were 100 linesmen employed by Ausgrid in the Hunter region.
- (2) Notes during the 2015 east coast low storm, the number of linesmen had been halved to 50.
- (3) Urges the Minister for Energy and Environment to explain why there are only 17 linesmen in 2020.

On the June long weekend 13 years ago Wallsend was devastated when a terrible storm, combined with king tides and driving winds, brought down powerlines and flooded most of the electorate. Hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses up and down the coast were left without power for days. Thankfully the 100 linesmen employed by Ausgrid worked tirelessly to restore electricity. In 2015 an east coast low threatened further flooding and brought down trees and powerlines across the electorate. Homes and businesses were again left without power. My office in Wallsend was dark for several days after the storm and it was a real worry to me because we knew that people were calling for assistance but we could not help them. Once again, linesmen at our local Ausgrid worked tirelessly to restore power but this time their number had been halved. Only 50 linesmen were employed by Ausgrid in 2015. Earlier this year another torrential storm threatened to break the banks of Wallsend's Ironbark Creek, and both Wallsend and Lambton were flooded. Thankfully, the rains eased before widespread flooding.

While Wallsend avoided major catastrophe, much of the Central Coast did not. Some 100,000 homes and businesses were without power on the Central Coast. Only 17 linesmen were employed for repairs. Only 15 linesmen were retained at the Wallsend depot in the immediate aftermath of the storm. They could have helped Central Coast residents and businesses but management refused. They were required to undertake an unnecessary training refresher course at the time. I told the Herald that day, "Ausgrid have office staff patrolling the Central Coast reporting downed lines instead of having linesmen on the ground making the area safe." Ausgrid ended up calling for assistance from the army, probably because it had less than one-fifth of the capacity it had in 2007.

As part of the privatisation deal in 2016, the Government committed that Ausgrid and other government-owned electricity companies to be sold would guarantee a minimum number of employees until 30 June 2020. Documents released earlier this year show that as at December 2019 Ausgrid had only 3,228 employees—fewer than the 3,570 required by law, and far fewer than the almost 4,300 claimed by this Government. Ausgrid has cut 1,300 jobs from its workforce since 2015 and 3,000 since this Government took office. Ausgrid would have been able to clear storm debris faster, make areas safe and reconnect homes to power more quickly if it had the number of employees the Government had promised it would.

An Ausgrid linesman told me, "It was demoralising to be forced to sit in a room while there were people on the Central Coast without power and unqualified staff were on the ground assessing damage. We have had our workforce slashed and are being asked to do more and more with less qualified workers. We need more linesmen; plain and simple." Linesmen do a dangerous job. Robert Nichols, who worked out of the Gore Hill depot, was killed on the job in April 2019 while replacing a low-voltage power pole in Lane Cove. The work they do is vital. Without them it would be impossible to maintain the State's power grid. We in this place owe our electricity workers a high standard of care, which is why we must ensure we have enough linesmen to get the job done safely and on time for our community in New South Wales. Why are so few linesmen currently employed at Ausgrid? With dangerous weather events becoming more frequent, can residents and business owners in the Wallsend electorate really trust that such a diminished workforce can cope?

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (11:09:49): The Government does not support this motion. Ausgrid has advised the Government that as of 31 May 2020 a total of 260 linesmen were employed by Ausgrid and able to work across its entire network area. In addition, Ausgrid has arrangements in place with major contractors and energy networks across New South Wales and Australia, providing access to hundreds of additional experienced technicians and specialists who can be called in to assist during responses to significant outages and weather events. This highlights the benefits of resource sharing in a timely way to deliver faster electricity restoration times for customers and the community during times of crisis.

Clearly the storms that hit Sydney over the summer had a substantial impact on the network. This Government does not want people to be without electricity for any longer than is strictly necessary. However, the network faced a perfect storm over this past summer. Not only was the storm itself one of the worst Sydney has experienced in many years, but also it happened at a time when the industry as a whole was also trying to repair

the network from bushfire damage. A total of 4,000 hazards were reported, including 13,000 fallen powerlines, fallen trees and damaged wires that needed to be cleared before repairs could begin.

Ausgrid's business approach led to crews from electricity networks across the country working collaboratively to clear hazards and make streets safe. Ausgrid's business model also includes the contracting of staff on demand, which may not reflect existing employment levels within the company. Under the supervision of Ausgrid crews, the New South Wales State emergency and relief services were also engaged to remove significant vegetation and debris hindering the recovery operations. Ausgrid mobilised these experienced crews to assist in the restoration work and restore power as safely and as quickly as possible during these extremely challenging conditions.

More generally, the Government is committed to ensuring that the electricity network is reliable, well maintained and able to cope with customer electricity demand. The Government has imposed strict licence conditions on New South Wales network operators, including minimum standards for reliability and safety. As part of their licence conditions, network operators are required to report and rectify any part of their network that does not perform to these standards. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal rigorously monitors compliance with those licence conditions and reports annually to the Minister on the performance of each network operator, including Ausgrid.

I say this about Ausgrid's resourcing: Ausgrid must ensure that it has the resources required to get people re-energised after a storm or natural disaster. However, we must also remember that this is ultimately paid for by consumers. For this reason, the Australian Energy Regulator has the role of independently determining the revenue that network companies need to run their business. This system makes sure that we strike the right balance between ensuring that our network companies have the resources they need and ensuring that electricity prices are as low as possible. Finally, I say this regarding the lease of Ausgrid. Ausgrid was leased in December 2016, after the Government took the policy to the New South Wales people at the 2015 election.

The successful completion of the electricity network transactions, which includes a 99-year lease to Ausgrid, has enabled the Government to deliver in full the \$20 billion Rebuilding NSW plan through Restart NSW. Restart NSW commitments include WestConnex, the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan, the Pacific Highway upgrade—which goes through my electorate—and the new Intercity fleet. Right now, those job-creating projects are keeping the New South Wales economy going. The Electricity Network Assets (Authorised Transactions) Act 2015 also guaranteed minimum staffing levels for a five-year period from 1 July 2015. The minimum level set for Ausgrid is 3,570 staff. Ausgrid has met the employee guarantee obligations placed on it by the New South Wales Government since 2016. In May 2020 the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal reported that for the March 2020 quarter Ausgrid exceeded the level of this guarantee by 11 per cent, equivalent to 395 staff above the minimum level set. For these reasons, the Government does not support the motion.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:14:50): I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Coffs Harbour. He is a new member—he has only been in the House for a little over 12 months—and what those older, wiser, experienced heads in Cabinet do is send the speech down to some of these poor new guys and say, "Listen, here is a hospital pass. No, actually, it is a really good speech. Can you just go in and read this really good, accurate speech because, quite frankly, I would rather your name go on it than mine?" That speech was rubbish. It was full of garbage, nonsense, mistruths and non-facts. One does not have to be Einstein to figure out that jobs have been cut from Ausgrid. Thousands and thousands of jobs have been cut. That is a reality. That is a fact. It is in its financial end-of-year and mid-year statements. The figures were not made up by the member for Wallsend; they came from Ausgrid.

Here is another fact: I represent a community that used to have hundreds of Ausgrid workers. Hundreds of families were supported by the wages earned by the men and women who worked at Ausgrid. Now I have barely 100. The decisions that this Liberal-Nationals Government has made are costing 200 or 300 families in my community their income. Those jobs were stripped out from the time those opposite formed government in preparation for the sell-off. Then after the sell-off more jobs were knowingly stripped out. Is it any wonder we have shortages in certain skills? Ausgrid used to be a major employer of apprentices. We would produce dozens and dozens of electrical machinist fitter apprentices every year. That all stopped on the watch of this Government—from 2011. Do not worry about the privatisation process that came four or five years later—apprenticeships stopped under this Government from the time it came to power.

Government members stand in this Chamber and decry the lack of skills in our community. It was done by their hand, their architecture, their design and their implementation. So they should not stand in this Chamber and cry crocodile tears, because they are guilty. They are guilty as charged by me in this Chamber right now. The Government is responsible for the shortages in my community. It is responsible for hundreds of families in my community being without a wage. It is responsible. Here is a piece of trivia for the House: The Government said

there would be no forced redundancies. So what it did instead was put dozens of workers into rooms and in front of computer screens with no task but to play tick-tack-toe on a computer for months on end. And guess what? Eventually, the Government won. It suppressed people's will to go to work and they walked away from their jobs.

No, it was not a forced redundancy; it was a painful, punishing, drawn-out firing of those employees by the Government's hand, on its watch. Now we have an economic crisis in New South Wales and we could have had a State-owned corporation returning billions of dollars to our bottom line every year. That would have helped enormously during this time. It is more than just the linesmen; it is the entire workforce. The Government should be condemned for its actions at every step of the way concerning Ausgrid, not just the linesmen.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (11:19:03): I reiterate that the Government does not support the motion. As has been said, Ausgrid has advised the Government that as of 31 May 2020 a total of 260 line workers were employed by Ausgrid and able to work across its entire network area. Ausgrid was leased in December 2016 with strict requirements placed on it as part of the electricity network transactions by this Government. The Electricity Network Assets (Authorised Transactions) Act 2015 provides guaranteed minimum staffing levels. The minimum level set by Ausgrid is 3,570 staff and in May 2020 the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal reported that for the March 2020 quarter Ausgrid exceeded the level of this guarantee by 11 per cent—equivalent to 395 staff.

The storms that hit Sydney earlier this year were one of the biggest storm events in the past 30 years. Now the Government wants to see people reconnected as soon as possible after they have been impacted by a storm. We also expect that Ausgrid has the resources it needs to reconnect people as quickly as possible. Reconstructing the network after those storms saw crews from electricity networks across the country working together to clear hazards and make streets safe. The New South Wales State emergency and relief services were also engaged to remove significant vegetation and debris hindering the recovery operations under the supervision of Ausgrid crews. I put on record the Government's thanks to all those men and women who worked to get the network back up and running.

It is also important to put those storms into context. First, the storms caused significant and extensive damage to the electricity network, including the Ausgrid electricity network. A total of 4,000 hazards were reported, including 3,000 fallen powerlines, fallen trees and damaged wires that needed to be cleared before repairs could begin. Parts of the network basically had to be reconstructed. Secondly, the storms hit at a time when the industry was still reconstructing those parts of the network destroyed or damaged by the worst bushfire season in the State's history. Thirdly, Ausgrid's costs are ultimately borne by consumers. That is why, while Ausgrid needs to ensure it has the resources required to fix its network, it also must make sure it is not unnecessarily adding costs to families connected to its network. That is why the Australian Energy Regulator independently decides the costs that Ausgrid can recover from consumers. The Government is committed to ensuring reliable, affordable power for the people of New South Wales.

Strong requirements are placed on the electricity network operators, including Ausgrid, to minimise and avoid outages. However, when natural disasters such as bushfires or severe storms occur, unfortunately some outages will be unavoidable. What the community expects is that reconnections occur as quickly as possible, while also keeping downward pressure on electricity prices. That is what the regulatory framework is in place to do.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (11:22:42): I acknowledge the motion put forward by my colleague the member for Wallsend. In speaking to her motion, she mentioned the Central Coast and she is absolutely spot on. The lived experience of her constituents in Wallsend is the lived experience of constituents in my electorate, in particular, and on the wider Central Coast. The Central Coast has an Ausgrid depot in my electorate and as soon as privatisation occurred—or leasing, whatever one wants to call it; the transfer from the government sector largely to the private sector—jobs were lost on the Central Coast from the ranks of linesmen, who had experience on the ground and the local knowledge to service our local area. We lost 10 per cent of those workers straightaway—over 300 workers—and more have departed since then.

That has had an impact on my electorate and on the wider Central Coast. The Central Coast is noted for its green trees and its green hills, and most of our power is above ground, so whenever there is a storm we notice it. The electricity network in our area needs careful attention and a whole bunch of people on the ground who know the local conditions to address them and fix power outages as quickly as possible using their local knowledge.

Ausgrid now brings in contractors and other labour from outside the Central Coast to undertake that work during periods of need, but it can never replace the people who went through the system, had the local knowledge and knew the Central Coast's winding local streets and hotspots. That local knowledge enables them to address the issues quicker than somebody brought in from outside the area. We have experience in that. But even outside the storm period, my constituents on the Central Coast have noticed a change from service delivery to efficiencies, which has meant that people are treated as customers rather than as members of the public.

The service obligations of the privatised provider are carefully followed. In the past for a large number of my constituents who live in larger properties, the powerlines brought in from a main road across a number of properties and ownership zones used to be serviced as a public duty by Ausgrid workers. It did not matter whose property the line traversed. But now the private operator services only properties on public land—on its land—which it is required to do under the Government requirements. If the powerlines are on private land, my constituents are being told to clear the trees that might fall down on the lines and impact them during a storm. We have noticed the change at storm time and from day to day. The cost is being shifted to my community rather than being borne by the private operator, which is how it is making profits. The terrible question about the debate is: Where is the Minister to answer the member for Wallsend? Not many private members' motions are debated in the House on Thursdays. The member's motion is being debated and the Minister should be here to answer her questions. I support the motion.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (11:27:09): Like the member for Wallsend and the member for Goulburn, I acknowledge the work that our linesmen and lineswomen have done over the past several months. They have faced challenging conditions—storms around the Central Coast and Sydney and bushfires right down the eastern coast of New South Wales—but they have responded magnificently. Essential Energy operates in our part of the world. Due to the Green Valley Talmalmo fire and Dunns Road fire, 3,600 customers went without power and 406 power poles had to be replaced. A total of 470 Essential Energy field workers were out in the field. It was magnificent to see because they were literally out in the field within a matter of hours after the fire had been through the field.

I will touch upon what the member for The Entrance said about reliability. The Government is focusing on providing affordable power pricing and reliability to the people of New South Wales, which goes to the heart of the issue. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that in New South Wales the revenue that Ausgrid receives is paid for by the consumers through network charges on their bill. The network component of New South Wales energy bills is around 40 per cent, well down from 50 per cent a decade ago. The costs are set independently by the Australian Energy Regulator, which determines the overall operating and capital expenditure of the business. The Government has been focusing on keeping the energy prices down because it knows that pricing and reliability are important for households and businesses across our State.

At the same time as network cost has been decreasing, for the past 10 years supply interruptions per customer have also been decreasing at around 1.5 per cent a year across the three New South Wales distribution network areas. That means that costs are decreasing and performance is increasing. How can we argue against that? The member for Cessnock raised the issue of jobs. Unfortunately, I have not seen such a prosecution case acted out since *Rafferty's Rules*. Obviously he has not seen the benefit of the Restart NSW funding across our State. My colleague the member for Coffs Harbour spoke on WestConnex and western Sydney infrastructure but I will talk about the region. In my region there has been an allocation of \$9.9 million for the Nexus industrial hub, \$2 million for the Wagga Road revitalisation, \$4.9 million for the rail trail, which has been a magnificent thing for Rosewood and Tumbarumba as they battle the bushfire, and \$11 million for the Murray River Experience. If that has not been contributing to jobs across our State, then I would like the member for Cessnock to tell me what that money has done in his electorate.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (11:31:09): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Coffs Harbour, Cessnock, Goulburn, The Entrance and Albury for their contributions to debate on the motion. The choice of Government MPs to participate in the debate is interesting. They are all terrific people but could they be any further geographically from the Wallsend electorate? I would have loved to see the Minister explain why there have been so many job cuts at Ausgrid but the Minister is as far away from the Chamber as those contributing Government members are from the Wallsend electorate, which is unfortunate because they are terrific people.

My first point is about privatisation. Today's discussion has brought to bear that privatisation does not work. I am not saying that because I am in the Opposition; I opposed it in when Labor was in government. I publicly opposed it. I would have crossed the floor against privatisation. I opposed it because the community did not want it. It is a bad deal for the consumers and the community. The member for Coffs Harbour, who is a terrific bloke, talked about the 260 employed linesmen in Ausgrid. Where were they when the community of the Central Coast spent weeks and weeks without power this year? The notion of the 99-year lease is interesting. Is that the world's longest lease? It is privatisation by any other name; nobody is confused by that.

The member for Goulburn made an impassioned and wonderful speech but I am afraid that some of the information that Ausgrid has given her is incorrect. From the documents that we have, I believe Ausgrid is telling the Government porky pies about the number of employees it has. That is sad because ultimately that means Ausgrid is ripping off our community and not fulfilling its responsibilities to the New South Wales Government. It must be brought to bear for the lies that it is telling. The member for The Entrance spoke well about the

relationship between the Central Coast and Wallsend and the similar problems that we had. Interestingly, he pointed out that as soon as Ausgrid was privatised, the Central Coast network lost 10 per cent of its employees, who were sacked.

The member for Albury spoke well and I agree with him. I acknowledge all of the linesmen and lineswomen in New South Wales. They do a wonderful job; we all agree with that in this Chamber. But I challenge the member for Albury. I do not believe that the Government is focusing on affordable power because Ausgrid is not focusing on affordable power. In fact, I believe that the Government is being hoodwinked by Ausgrid because it is not doing the right thing. I ask the Government and the Minister to hold Ausgrid accountable for the jobs it has taken away that should be there and should be on the books. There have been massive job cuts and they have impacted on the length of time that it has taken to undertake repairs in New South Wales, in particular in the Hunter and the Central Coast. I urge Government members to be sensible and to support this motion.

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

The House divided.

Ayes37
Noes41
Majority.....4

AYES

Aitchison, J
Car, P
Cotsis, S
Dalton, H
Doyle, T
Harris, D
Kamper, S
McDermott, H
Mehan, D (teller)
Park, R
Smith, T
Warren, G
Zangari, G

Barr, C
Catley, Y
Crakanthorp, T
Dib, J
Finn, J
Harrison, J
Leong, J
McGirr, J
Mihailuk, T
Parker, J
Tesch, L
Washington, K

Butler, R
Chanthivong, A
Daley, M
Donato, P
Greenwich, A
Hornery, S
Lynch, P
McKay, J
O'Neill, M
Scully, P
Voltz, L
Watson, A (teller)

NOES

Anderson, K
Berejiklian, G
Conolly, K
Crouch, A (teller)
Elliott, D
Griffin, J
Johnsen, M
Lindsay, W
Perrottet, D
Provest, G
Sidoti, J
Speakman, M
Toole, P
Ward, G

Ayres, S
Bromhead, S
Cooke, S (teller)
Davies, T
Evans, L
Gulaptis, C
Kean, M
Marshall, A
Petinos, E
Roberts, A
Singh, G
Stokes, R
Tuckerman, W
Williams, L

Barilaro, J
Clancy, J
Coure, M
Dominello, V
Gibbons, M
Henskens, A
Lee, G
Pavey, M
Preston, R
Saunders, D
Smith, N
Taylor, M
Upton, G

PAIRS

Atalla, E
Bali, S
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Lalich, N
Minns, C
Saffin, J

Constance, A
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B
O'Dea, J
Sidgreaves, P
Williams, R
Wilson, F

Motion negatived.

Bills

PETROLEUM (ONSHORE) AMENDMENT (COAL SEAM GAS MORATORIUM) BILL 2019

First Reading

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

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I advise the House that I have received a written authority from Mr Justin Field, MLC, advising that the member for Barwon will have carriage of the bill in the Legislative Assembly.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: BILLS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to:

- (1) Permit the consideration of the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019 forthwith, and for its consideration to take precedence of all other general business until 2.00 p.m.
- (2) Should the bill not be concluded by 2.00 p.m.:
 - (a) permit the resumption of its consideration after the placing and disposal of business; and
 - (b) consideration of the bill to take precedence of all other business for the remainder of the sitting, excluding the petition debate at 4.00 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

PETROLEUM (ONSHORE) AMENDMENT (COAL SEAM GAS MORATORIUM) BILL 2019

Second Reading Speech

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (11:51:49): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Much will be made of my carriage in this place of a bill introduced by a former member of The Greens. It should not be a surprise. I have always said that I will work with anyone in the Chamber or the other place on issues that are important to the Barwon electorate. The attacks have already started. I am anti-jobs, anti-manufacturing and I want families to have high energy bills. That is a nonsense, and I will tell members why shortly. They will try to say I am going against the sentiment of my community. I assure members that that is not the case. That is theatre by a government that wants to ignore the Chief Scientist & Engineer's recommendations for a project that makes no sense. I challenge anyone in this place to find a person in regional New South Wales who would say gas is more important than water security during a drought that some are still suffering through.

My stance has been, and always will be, that I will not support any extractive industry that puts water—our most precious resource—at risk. Ground and surface water needs to be protected for our communities to exist. My alignment is to my community; I have no donors or mates in this industry who are affecting my position or what I am saying. I want to talk about groundwater and the importance of it. We are still feeling the impact of the worst drought in living memory. Groundwater has been used exclusively for agriculture and domestic use in most Barwon communities throughout the drought. Water for stock and limited irrigated agriculture is all groundwater. One cannot have the clean, green food that the Government often talks about without clean water. Without access to groundwater over the past few years we would have been stuffed.

The towns of Narrabri, Coonamble, Bourke, Walgett, Warren, Coonabarabran and many others have relied on groundwater for their survival. If we contaminate the source of groundwater it will not matter if we have all the jobs in the world. Those communities will not survive without water. There is no contingency plan for water in towns such as Narrabri if groundwater is contaminated. I will tell members a little about the Great Artesian Basin. It sits under 22 per cent of Australia, mostly under New South Wales and Queensland. It is quite deep. It is an amazing hydrological feature. Water moves between those aquifers—there is connectivity. It is a series of aquifers. Interestingly, the structures they move through are called aquitards. The water moves between those aquifers and if something goes wrong in one aquifer a long, long way down underground one cannot stop it affecting another aquifer.

We have other ways of creating energy. We do not have other ways of creating water. We need to ensure that water is protected. On this, I travelled to Queensland and met with the water Minister and the Queensland Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment regarding Dalby and Chinchilla and the coal seam gas projects taking place in those areas. We know that the groundwater table is affected and is dropping. They continue to have to lower their bores to pull up water for agricultural and domestic use. On top of that, locals are reporting health issues such as rashes, dizziness, vision issues and headaches that they associate with the water. We have to be careful what we invite into our tent. There is a myth about cheap energy at Narrabri. Australia exports so much gas there is not enough at a reasonable price domestically. This hurts the hip pocket of families and businesses.

As a country, we have surpassed the rest of the world to become one of the biggest exporters of liquefied natural gas. Australia exports over 3,000 petajoules of gas a year. The Narrabri project is for just 70 petajoules. The Government has supported this while energy prices in Australia have soared. This hurts working families, especially those on limited and low incomes. The Government needs to put its people first. If we do not, we will end up in a ludicrous situation where we are extracting gas and liquefying it in Australia. I do not know whether members are aware of the process, but one uses a portion of the gas as an energy source to liquefy the gas so one loses a percentage of the volume to liquefy it. One then puts it on a tanker and sends it overseas, where it is likely to return to a gas and then be returned once again to a liquid using more of the gas to send it back to Australia to be bought at an inflated price.

That is the situation we could find ourselves facing if we do not change the way we manage our gas resources. It does nothing to decrease energy prices for Australian consumers. The current Government's handling of gas exports has done nothing to stem the meteoric rise of energy prices for Australian consumers. There is no public interest test on our exports. There is no domestic reservation policy to make sure we have gas for our own people. We have not put our own people first. There is a glut of gas on the international market, with prices at a 10-year low. Anyone who understands markets will know that industry will be attracted to where the gas is cheap, not where the gas is expensive. Prices for gas in Australia have continued to rise. This goes against market trends and points to total mismanagement by government.

I do not know whether it is as a result of incompetence or wilful ignorance that State and Federal governments have manufactured a crisis. We have substantial conventional gas reserves and energy-generation capacity in Australia; it has just been managed poorly at every level of government. According to an estimate from the Australian energy market manager, the cost of gas at Narrabri at the well head before it is piped anywhere is \$7.25 a gigajoule. That is not cheap energy. That is twice as expensive as gas that is currently available in Western Australia. There is no off-take agreement for industry to set up to use that gas. Those are all things that should be in place if we are serious about looking at industry off the gas at Narrabri. The Narrabri Gas Project will not deliver lower energy prices to the domestic market.

I have publicly challenged anyone to show me how Narrabri, with an estimated well head price of \$7.25 a gigajoule, can give anyone lower energy prices. I have not received an answer. No-one has shown me that it will be economically beneficial in energy costs for Australians. I am all for economic development in regional New South Wales; it is something I talk about frequently in this place and the media. Most of the contributions I have made in this place have been about economic stimulus in regional New South Wales throughout the drought. Do we say yes to this project without the scientific recommendations in place, potentially contaminate the groundwater and destroy the agriculture industry and communities of the north-west? We cannot put the genie back in the bottle if something goes wrong; it is deep, deep underground.

I said to the Treasurer yesterday, "If you want jobs, invest in agriculture." We have the opportunity to help agriculture recover and deliver those jobs. From a community sentiment perspective, the vast majority of people in my electorate have concerns and feel betrayed by this Government and The Nationals. They believe the Government is defying the will of its communities. Professor Mary O'Kane, at the request of the Government, came up with a series of recommendations to mitigate the risk of coal seam gas extraction. At this point only two of those recommendations have been fully implemented. Those recommendations mitigate risk; they take away risk from the project. The Government wanted the recommendations. I make this really clear: Santos invested in Narrabri knowing full well and expecting that these 16 recommendations would be implemented. They are not a surprise.

It would be a broken commitment and irresponsible for this Government to allow the project to proceed without insisting that the 16 recommendations are fully implemented. Also, given the fact that no-one will underwrite or insure the risks around groundwater, how can we even consider proceeding with a project such as coal seam gas in Narrabri under those circumstances? Insurance companies have actuaries who look at risk and assess risk, and one tool amongst many that they use is an impact and probability matrix, which looks at the impact of a particular incident and the probability of it. The industry will say that the probability of something going wrong is quite low. That is fine because the impact of when something goes wrong in this industry is off the

charts. If something goes wrong, the impact is far beyond anything that would mitigate it by the possibility of something going wrong.

Water is by far our most precious resource. We should not risk long-term groundwater security for a short-term gain. In this protracted drought many of our communities are totally reliant on groundwater. While we have water in our pools today, one day we will be back to relying on groundwater in this country where we know we will go back into drought. Gambling with water should not be considered when it is central to everything we do. There are alternative sources of energy, including better policy, but no alternatives for water. It is important to say that the bill does not stop the Narrabri project; it ensures the commitment of the Government to the chief scientist's recommendations around risk mitigation and that they are fully implemented before the project proceeds any further.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (12:01:32): I appreciate the opportunity to speak in debate on the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019. Today is a sad day when the member for Barwon, a member of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, presents a private member's bill to the lower House that was introduced in the upper House by a Greens-cum-Independent member. It clearly shows that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, along with its Labor-aligned friends, has today decided to sell out the jobs of regional New South Wales. Last night the upper House—the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers, The Greens, the Independents and the Labor Party—voted for downward pressure on job opportunities and upward pressure on gas prices and energy prices. That is what they voted for—at a time of COVID and when 1,000 jobs were lost in the month of March alone.

We must look for opportunities to boost employment in regional and rural New South Wales. Mining in New South Wales is not new. The coexistence of agriculture, mining and managing water is something that all governments have managed in the past and that our regions have done successfully. Every piece of development that happens in the regions has some level of impact—be it a wind farm or solar farm; or be it Snowy Hydro, which we know has possible impacts on dams in the Murrumbidgee. Decisions are made based on expert advice that comes out of planning. The bill is already making a decision on a moratorium to stop a decision by the Independent Planning Commission [IPC], a body that was put in place at arms-length of government— independent of government—to look into the science and that has the expertise to make a decision on its merits. The planning department of New South Wales—the planning agency—is a part of government with experts in place.

The Chief Scientist and Engineer's report and recommendations that the member for Barwon alluded to are being pursued. In my mind, there is probably only one that has not been pursued at this stage. Those recommendations are in line with whether there was a gas industry in New South Wales. But we do not have a gas industry at the moment and the only project we are looking at is in Narrabri. So that is a lot of red tape for very little when we do not have a gas industry. The Labor Party will sit with the crossbench and pretend it is all holy now. Pre-2011 that same Labor Party was giving out coal seam gas exploration licences across the State like confetti. For the price of a flat screen television, it was giving out licences across the State. It was the Liberal-Nationals Government that brought the State from being about 90 per cent covered with licences to about 12½ per cent today. Our track record in looking to the science and working with communities is clear. Labor members are hypocrites.

The Labor Party thinks this is a political win for votes in regional and rural New South Wales. It is selling out the regions because it does not understand the regions. The member for Barwon says it is his job to represent the people of Barwon, and that is exactly what every member should do. Every member should come to this House and fight for what is right, but clearly he is not listening to the people of Narrabri. He may be listening to cohorts in other areas but he is not listening to the people of Narrabri. In front of me this morning I have an email from the Mayor of Narrabri. She wrote to Roy Butler, the member for Barwon, and I understand she also cc'd in Mr Borsak from the other place, wanting the member for Barwon to distribute amongst members her letter on behalf of Narrabri—her community and her council. They have been part of four comprehensive submissions over three years in relation to the Narrabri Gas Project.

They looked at the environmental impact statement in May 2017, the response to submissions, the supplementary RTS on 14 May and then the update in April. They put forward why they believe the Narrabri Gas Project is beneficial and why the risks will be mitigated on behalf of the community. The mayor says that the Narrabri Gas Project has the potential to alleviate some of the recent gas market price distortions by increasing overall supply. We know that. We know that Narrabri could deliver anywhere between 60 per cent to 80 per cent of the domestic supply in New South Wales. I heard the member for Barwon speak earlier about a gas reservation policy. We would be hypocrites as a State in arguing for a gas reservation policy when we do not produce gas. What are we going to reserve in New South Wales? Every State can reserve their gas, but what are we going to reserve? One must have a gas industry and gas if one wants a gas reservation policy. I assure the House that

Santos has made it absolutely clear that the gas that comes out of Narrabri will all be domestic gas—every drop. We cannot trust the Labor Party when it comes to coal seam gas.

Ms Kate Washington: We can't trust anything you say.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I accept that interjection, but we cannot trust the Labor Party when it comes to gas. Compare its track record with ours every day of the week. Some 90 per cent of the State was covered in licences under Labor. We came to government in 2011 and fixed the mess it left on the North Coast. We fixed the mess across the State and now we are dealing with licences in areas where the experts are saying it is possible. This proposal still has to go to the IPC. The Independent Planning Commission will make its independent decision in relation to Narrabri but we are pre-empting that decision with the bill before the House. The Mayor of Narrabri says, "The Narrabri Gas Project, in conjunction with Inland Rail and Northern NSW Inland Port, has the potential to assist Narrabri to leverage our economic strengths and, through a reliable and affordable energy supply, support manufacturing businesses and other value-adding activities." This is a key point. This is not just about Narrabri and gas and the opportunities for Narrabri; we are living in a post-COVID time.

The Australian public has said—and we saw this during COVID—that they want Australia to produce more, to manufacture more and to become a manufacturing country again. The one advantage we have as a nation rich in resources is making sure that energy gives us the competitive advantage. If we want a strong manufacturing sector, we need affordable energy. If we want a strong manufacturing sector, guess what? It is going to be in regional and rural New South Wales. That is why investments such as Inland Rail, which will reduce the costs of moving freight, is a significant investment by the Federal Government—\$11 billion. It is a new spine through New South Wales. The member for Orange already sees the benefits of what Inland Rail brings because of the Government's investment in the special activation precinct at Parkes to create an inland port. Do we want to deprive Narrabri and the people of that region of an opportunity for an inland port in Narrabri?

Turning to drought, we will have experts and we will manage water like we have always done—mining coexisting with water and agriculture. But we have a question here. We are trying to pre-empt a decision in an area that has been hit by drought and where farmers have done it tough. Over the past few years the Government has invested in excess of \$3½ billion in drought support and water security. The best thing we can do for our farmers and regional and rural communities is to build diversity in our markets and employment opportunities. A few ingredients are required to futureproof regional and rural New South Wales. One is water. The Government is proud of its multibillion-dollar investment in new dams. For the first time in 30 years in the State, we will secure water security with more dams, with more to come. In excess of \$280 million is going to water security by working with councils to upgrade—

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order: The Deputy Premier should speak to the leave of the bill. He is talking about—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The introduction is unlimited.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The member for Orange probably does not want a special activation precinct in Parkes.

Ms Kate Washington: Nice threat.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It is not a threat as the Government is delivering it, and it is delivering for Williamtown. It is a shame that the member for Port Stephens was not there for the announcement that day. She does not care for the people of Port Stephens and the opportunity for generations to come.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order!

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It was great to have the great Newcastle mayor there, who is from Labor.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Why don't you comment on the projects instead of threatening everyone?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Don't you start.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The Deputy Premier will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: As I said, we must build diversity in regional and rural New South Wales and design manufacturing industries, new industries, recycling industries and energy industries for the future. To do so affordable energy is needed and there is an opportunity through Narrabri. The Independent Planning Commission's final decision on Narrabri is awaited but members opposite have decided to pre-empt it by playing politics in the upper House and now in the lower House. As I said at the beginning of my contribution, it has taken

a Shooters member to bring in the private member's bill, which was introduced to the upper House by an Independent member, who is a turncoat of The Greens and a friend of the Labor Party.

We have never seen this unholy alliance before, for which the Australian Workers Union [AWU] has slammed the Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party. Once it was the party that looked after blue-collar workers, but no more. Once upon a time it looked after industries that created jobs, but no more. That is what the Labor Party stands for today. I know there is dissent in the Labor Party room meetings. Labor members are appalled at the decision of the leadership, led by a certain member of the upper House on a Green movement, trying to win inner city seats at the cost of jobs for the bush and regions. That is what members opposite have chosen to do. The mayor of Narrabri asked for this emailed letter to be sent to all colleagues so that they can make an informed decision. This morning the member for Barwon talked about representing the people of his electorate. One of the larger centres of that electorate is Narrabri. The people have spoken: They want a gas industry and they want the Narrabri Gas Project approved. They want a future for the generations of kids with not just any jobs but great jobs.

Why do we keep treating regional and rural New South Wales as the environmental offset for metropolitan Sydney? We build, concrete and invest in transportation, buildings and new precincts in the city. But when the regions want to benefit by building prosperity with projects that will make a difference not just today but also for generations to come, the Labor Party has no appetite to support them. It talks big but delivers little. But what the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has done this morning is disappointing. It has aligned with The Greens, the Independent member and the Labor Party to kill jobs in Narrabri and the north-west of the State at a time when jobs and job recovery industry investment, including an infrastructure pipeline by the New South Wales Government, will get us out of the crisis that we are in. Yesterday the economy went into recession. The unemployment rate is running at 6.2 per cent nationally. Underemployment is disguised by JobKeeper and is probably in double figures. At a time when jobs and job security are the most valuable things we can offer to the people of the State, we see an unholy alliance. I seek leave to table a copy of an email from Councillor Cathy Redding, Mayor, Narrabri Shire Council to Mr Roy Butler, MP, regarding the Narrabri Gas project, dated 3 June 2020.

Leave granted.

Let me make it clear: Today we are fighting for not only Narrabri but also team New South Wales. Those who decided last night to vote for upward pressure on prices and gas and downward pressure on job opportunities for the bush are selling out this State. They are selling out opportunities, businesses, manufacturing and even our agricultural sector, which has been smashed by drought and the recent fires, which has impacted the landscape that we live on, that we love and are a part of. As we now start to see hope of getting out of drought, the green drought, the green fringe, rivers with a little bit of water, a bit of hope and an opportunity ahead of us, once again the unholy alliance of the Independent member, The Greens, the Labor Party and the Shooters is coming together and playing politics rather than outcomes. Maybe the member for Barwon needs to spend some more time in Narrabri listening to his community. They want this project.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Ask Canada about coal seam gas.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I call the member for Gosford to order for the first time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I will never be lectured by Labor members. They can keep interjecting. The party's track record is in the archives of this place. Its corruption around what it did in resources is in the archives forever, for generations to study. I will not be lectured by Labor, I can promise that. But I will engage with the Shooters because I like the member for Barwon, whom I meet with regularly and work with for the benefit of that community. I urge him to rethink his position, which is out of step with what the people of his community want. It is very easy for the Hon. Robert Borsak to sit in the upper House. The member for Barwon has to face the community, not Robert Borsak, who has the comfort of eight years in the upper House. He claims to know the regions but lives in Sydney. He claims to be the voice of the regions but he is not anymore, I can promise you that. Mark my words: The people of regional and rural New South Wales will never forget today when the Shooters sold out the jobs of regional New South Wales to align themselves with The Greens, not because of outcomes but because of politics.

In this State, gas has become a political football that has been kicked about for more than a decade. The Government cleaned up the mess and put in a rigorous process around it. It is putting in place the experts and the independent process because it knows how important water is in the regions and it is going to protect it. But as we make approvals across the State, when it comes to mines and resources, even though the coal industry may end in 2040 or 2050, one of the strengths of the State is minerals. There is a future for mining in the State, especially in the Central West, in a way that will turbocharge the regions and support the renewable industry. What goes into a solar panel, a wind farm or the turbines that are running our hydro power? Members opposite,

especially Labor and The Greens, talk about renewables replacing even coal-fired power stations. Liddell is coming offline shortly. Once upon a time The Greens were arguing that gas was the answer; now no longer is it the answer. Is gas not better than coal?

The problem is that The Greens have let ideology lead rather than looking to the transition to a cleaner future. The opportunity today is for Narrabri to give that community prosperity, which has done it tough. The member for Barwon knows that the hopes of Narrabri and the work that the council has done on the Northern NSW Inland Port is all about setting up a future for that city, town and region, for its people and the generations to come. It is not just any job. We are not just farmers. We do not do just fencing. We are not tradies. Why can we not have some of the best jobs in the regions? To do so industries must follow. Industries will follow where there are opportunities through resources and where there is an opportunity for precincts like the Narrabri inland port, like we are seeing in Parkes. That is why the blatant political stunt by those opposite in an unholy alliance has sold out the regions, the jobs and the next generation. It is a shame. Labor will pretend, but slowly but surely it is being seen for what it is. The AWU is out strong; the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union [CFMMEU] is out strong. Once upon a time Labor used to support union members—forget about the leadership—but not today. Those opposite sold us out this week when they voted against the wage freeze, which would have created \$3 billion in savings and up to 20,000 jobs in the private sector. They sold us out for a pay rise for the public servants of this State, opposing 221,000 people that do not have pay, let alone a pay rise.

There is no decision the Labor Party will back that will produce an outcome for people. Over and over again it is about the politics of the Labor Party. Is it any surprise that Labor is spending its third term in opposition? It is not engaged. It is not listening. Labor members sit in Parliament in Macquarie Street pretending to understand the regions. What are they doing? What is their policy to turbocharge the economies of rural and regional New South Wales, and to build diversity in our future? What are their policies? They have zero policies. They want to shut down mining, the coal industry, energy opportunities and industry. When it comes to regional and rural New South Wales they think we are all about windmills and tumbleweeds. Those opposite do not understand what the bush is all about. The Labor Party voted against protecting the farmers' right to farm. It voted against us. Those opposite do not support our farmers. They do not support our industries.

Mr David Mehan: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 76. The Deputy Premier has traversed past the bill. He is starting to talk about other bills that have been through the House. He is starting to talk about the Labor Party's relationship with unions. Mr Speaker, I ask you to bring the Deputy Premier back to the leave of the bill. If he has finished talking about the bill he should sit down.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I don't know who that member is. What is the member's point of order?

Mr David Mehan: It is Standing Order 76. Mr Temporary Speaker, I seek a ruling on my point of order and I ask you to reflect on the Deputy Premier's disrespectful comments.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I don't know who you are.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The Deputy Premier's response is wide ranging—

Mr David Harris: You are supposed to know about regional New South Wales, but you do not know the electorates.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I remind the member for Wyong that I am speaking and that he should not interrupt me.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: There was an interjection by the member for Wyong, who opposes a coalmine—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The Deputy Premier will resume his seat. The point of order is about relevance to the bill. I ask the Deputy Premier to return to the leave of the bill. I also ask members to listen to the Deputy Premier's contribution in silence.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I note the interjection by the member for Wyong, who also opposed a significant investment in his electorate. The coalmine was going to produce more jobs and also make a contribution to a local hospital, which he rejected from the coal operator. That is a real shame for the people of Wyong. Their health services have been lost because of his decision.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I will not continue to take points of order. The Deputy Premier will resume his seat.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order relates to Standing Order 76. The Deputy Premier is flouting your ruling about returning to the leave of the bill. He did not even pretend to do it.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The Deputy Premier will return to the leave of the bill. I will allow him some 30 seconds leeway to make comments after he starts speaking.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Thank you, Mr Temporary Speaker. Again the Labor Party does not like being held to account. Today it is supporting a bill that will stop the Narrabri Gas Project, and stop the creation of jobs for regional and rural New South Wales in a community that has been hit hard by bushfires and, more importantly, by drought. That is what Labor members do not like hearing and that is why I will continue to interject this morning. They do not want to understand and accept that under their watch they have been seen for what they are. What Labor did across the State with coal seam gas licences last time it was in government—it was the Coalition that cleaned up that mess.

Today we have an opportunity to argue the merits, but this still has to go through the Independent Planning Commission, which is an independent process. Those opposite are pre-empting the decision. It is the same interference that got them into trouble in the first instance. Today they are repeating it almost 10 years on from when they were thrown out of government. It is unbelievable that history continues to repeat itself with the Labor Party. It is disappointing that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, which claims to be the new voice for regional and rural New South Wales, is aligning itself with The Greens. Its base would be disappointed if it looked at the number of times its members voted with both the Labor Party and The Greens in both Houses. Its base would clearly see that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is not the party that it claims to be. It is led by someone who lives in Sydney—

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 76. How is this in any way relevant to the leave of the bill? It has absolutely nothing to do with it.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I remind the member for Orange that the leave of the bill is about jobs and gas.

Mr Philip Donato: He is not talking about jobs. I am quite happy for the recording to be replayed.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Jobs is a wide subject.

Mr Philip Donato: About as wide as the gap between your ears.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Orange will resume his seat. The Deputy Premier is being generally relevant. The bill is about jobs in the regions and a project in Narrabri.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I will finish on this. I am sure those opposite are happy for me to finish.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Three cheers!

Mr JOHN BARILARO: They are cheering because they do not want to hear home truths. They do not want to hear the truth that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, and the Labor Party have aligned themselves with The Greens and with an independent turncoat and are selling out jobs for the bush. They do not want that message to get out of this building. But today people of this State are going to know about the unholy alliance between the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, the Labor Party, The Greens and an Independent that sold out jobs because of politics, at a time when jobs and job security are the most valuable commodities that the Australian people are chasing and yearning for.

Food and fibre are at the heart of everything we do, but resources will underpin a reset in the manufacturing sector. At a time when our economy is on its knees—we are in recession for the first time in over 25 years and we as a nation have said that we want manufacturing to be producers—they are voting against it. They are playing politics instead of supporting people. Good policy equals good politics. Today they have an opportunity to do that. Otherwise, mark my words: Today will go down in history. The people of regional and rural New South Wales will not forget what the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has done. It has betrayed them to align itself with The Greens and to introduce a private member's bill in this House on behalf of an Independent from the upper House. Sadly it is the member for Barwon who is selling out his electorate.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:26:50): I lead in debate on behalf of the New South Wales Opposition as the shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage. I represent the Hon. Adam Searle, the shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy from the other place. Although based on the Deputy Premier's contribution we might have lost an understanding of it, the bill that we are talking about today is the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019. The Deputy Premier has given his usual stump speech that tries to be something to everybody. He wants to be everything for everyone across this State. On one hand he pretends that he—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Port Stephens will return to the leave of the bill.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I will, Mr Temporary Speaker. On one hand the Deputy Premier is talking about the importance of water security to rural and regional communities across New South Wales. On the other hand he is opposing a bill that seeks to address the significant risks posed to water security in the very communities that he and his party purport to represent. The Nationals used to stand for something. They used to stand up for people in rural and regional communities. That is not what they are doing today. This bill passed the Legislative Council last night. The question today is whether or not Nationals members in this place are going to stand up for their communities and place extractive industries above water security. The Nationals know that their communities place enormous importance on water security.

The Deputy Premier seems to have forgotten the last election. Under his leadership The Nationals lost three seats in this House. What was the key ingredient across those three seats and the reason why he lost those seats? The member for Barwon has shown you. He stands up for his community and talks about the things that are important to them, which is water and coal seam gas mining. He has stood up for his community and represented their interests in this place today and it is the reason he was elected and kicked you out of this place from that electorate. Similarly, the electorate of Lismore, which The Nationals once held, was lost on the back of The Nationals' inability—

Mr Paul Toole: Point of order: I ask that the member for Port Stephens be directed to return to the leave of the bill. Members are not here to hear about electoral distributions.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): As I asked the Deputy Premier, I also ask the member for Port Stephens to return to the leave of the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Certainly, Mr Temporary Speaker. It is about the inability of The Nationals to listen to community concerns with regard to coal seam gas mining and industries that present a significant risk to water security. We are in this hot mess because of the Liberal-Nationals governments, both State and Federal. If they had a coherent energy policy that gave industry some certainty we would not be here today. If this Government had a gas reservation policy for the east coast we would not be here today. Australia is the largest producer of gas in the world, but we send most of it offshore. It is an indictment on the regulation of that industry that we do not have an affordable gas supply.

Today we are not debating a supply issue; it is a pricing issue. That has come on the back of an inability by this Government to regulate the market properly. People are paying the price for that. People should not pay the price of the gas that will come out of Narrabri. There is no guarantee that the gas extracted at Narrabri will be affordable. There is nothing in the Santos submission that goes to that question. There are no guarantees. Last night in the upper House I listened to Liberal and Nationals members state that the project will reduce household bills and prices for manufacturers. I ask what that statement is based on? Nobody has shown any evidence that those statements are sustainable. How can we trust the Government when it says prices will be reduced? I recall that expression being used when the poles and wires were sold.

Mr Paul Toole: Point of order: I ask that the member for Port Stephens return to the leave of the bill. Poles and wires have nothing to do with the bill before the House.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: To the point of order: This bill is about the lack of energy policy in this State from that side of the House. The member for Port Stephens is in order when she speaks about the lack of an energy policy and the failure of those opposite to provide affordable energy.

Mr Michael Johnsen: It is about jobs.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): There is no point of order. The member for Port Stephens will return to the leave of the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019. I ask members to address their comments through the Chair.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Yes, Mr Temporary Speaker. As the member for Upper Hunter interjected during your ruling, it is about jobs. That is what makes it relevant. The sale of the poles and wires affected the manufacturing jobs that the Government says it supports. The sale of the poles and wires saw electricity prices go through the roof. Does the member for Upper Hunter seriously suggest that people's bills did not go up?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I call the member for Upper Hunter to order for the first time.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Everybody in this State knows how much their bills have gone up. I have visited many of the manufacturers in my electorate. I have an amazing blue-collar workforce in my electorate. One manufacturer told me that his bills were now 160 per cent above what they were prior to privatisation of the poles and wires by the Coalition.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I call the member for Upper Hunter to order for the second time.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Presumably the member for Upper Hunter does not think the decision impacted the bills of working families. If so, that is an outright furphy. On top of the people laid off in manufacturing because of the high electricity prices, 3,000 Ausgrid workers have lost their jobs. Standing here today and talking about jobs is the height of hypocrisy when the decisions those opposite have made have already brought whole sectors to their knees. Those members on this side of the House understand the importance of manufacturing. Coming from the Hunter, my word, we understand the importance of it. We saw when those opposite offshored the Intercity train manufacture to South Korea, the ferries to China, the buses to Malaysia—

Mr Paul Toole: Point of order: This is the third time I have asked for the chair to rule about the member speaking to the leave of the bill. The member has again decided to go outside the leave of the bill. I ask that she be brought back to the business before the House right now.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I uphold the point of order. If the member for Port Stephens cannot speak to the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019 I ask that she resume her seat.

Mr David Harris: To the point of order: The Deputy Premier spoke on behalf of the Government. It is the right of members on this side of the House to respond to his comments. He introduced this subject matter into the debate and under the rules of debate members can then respond to what he said. He spoke of all those issues in his speech.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Standing Order 76 was applied to bring the Deputy Premier back to the leave of the bill.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: The Government has so far failed to support manufacturing in any way. The other main failure that has brought us to this point is the failure to implement the recommendations of the chief scientist, as the Government said it would.

Mr Michael Johnsen: All but one.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Upper Hunter. He said that all but one of the 13 chief scientist's recommendations have been implemented. That is a complete untruth and fabrication. Would the member for Upper Hunter like to come to the lectern and tell his mistruths to the members?

Mr Michael Johnsen: I will be later on.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: We look forward to you regaling us with all your mistruths.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): If the member for Upper Hunter continues to interrupt the debate, he may be removed from the Chamber.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: In 2013 the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer Professor Mary O'Kane was directed by Premier Barry O'Farrell to conduct a comprehensive review of the CSG activities. She was tasked with focusing on human health and environmental impacts. After 16 months of investigation, the chief scientist published her report. That report included a number of recommendations. The report found that there are many technical challenges and risks posed by the CSG industry. She also found that they can be, in general, managed through careful designation of areas appropriate for CSG extraction, high standards of engineering and professionalism in CSG companies, creation of a State whole-of-environment data repository, comprehensive monitoring of CSG operations with ongoing scrutiny, a well-trained and certified workforce and applying new technologies as they become available.

Professor O'Kane, importantly, said this, "Implementing the recommendations of the review involves nontrivial tasks." Now if this Government—the Liberal and Nationals members in this place—cared about jobs it would have implemented those recommendations so that this industry could have proceeded with those risks mitigated. But it has failed to do that. Government members stand here today and try to say that they have and that is, again, entirely misleading. In October late last year Portfolio Committee No. 4 examined the extent to which the Liberal-Nationals Government implemented the recommendations made by the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer on coal seam gas. In February this year it found that of those 14 recommendations—the member for Upper Hunter might like to take note of that because it was 14, not 13, as he interjected earlier today—made by the chief scientist that were meant to be implemented and that the Government said it would implement; only two have been implemented. Six of them have been partially implemented—but only just—and eight have not been put into effect at all.

If the Government cared about jobs it would not offshore them, it would not have sold off the poles and wires, it would have a credible energy policy and it would have implemented the chief scientist's recommendations. On the issue of jobs, numbers are being thrown around by proponents of coal seam gas without any level of serious analysis or truth. Precious few jobs on the ground are to be gained on these vast coal seam gas projects—projects that undermine existing, high-value land uses such as agriculture. That would be the industry that provides the food we all eat, just to be clear for members opposite. We are always enticed by the prospect of construction jobs and they are not to be dismissed, but the reality is that Santos has only committed to 200 ongoing jobs if the Narrabri Gas Project is approved. Of those 200, 50—this is in its own submission—are not new jobs. So we are talking about 150 new jobs. Meanwhile, farmers across the State are devastated by the prospect of losing prime agricultural land to make way for these coal seam gas wells.

These are farms that have been in people's families for generations; farms that have provided decent jobs, livelihoods and food, and carried entire communities for generations. Are we meant to trash all that for 150 new jobs? This is over 95,000 hectares of land in Narrabri. It is unbelievable that we could allow that to happen when we have no comfort that the risks the industry poses to those farmlands have been met. One of the important recommendations was in relation to insurances and underwriting that would be capable of being obtained by neighbouring land and landholders who might be impacted by coal seam gas. The Nationals members do not care about those landholders. They talk about blue-collar workers but they are not talking about the farmers or the tourism industry this will impact. This is not only about Narrabri; this is about the entire State. This is not about the Narrabri Gas Project specifically; it is about the prospect of coal seam gas mining proliferating throughout our State.

The Nationals party either has a short memory or it is deaf or indifferent to rural and regional New South Wales. I think all of the above are true. It has lost electorates on this issue and I am not saying that to play politics on this. This is not about politics—The Nationals members seem to miss that. This is about people—people who live in regional and rural New South Wales who know what they need to survive and thrive. It is pretty simple: It is clean air and clean water. If you do not think that people who have lived through the worst drought on record, who have lived through the recent bushfires and now a pandemic and the economic consequences of that, are thinking about the environment and what we need to do to create sustainable jobs in the future, which their children and grandchildren might be able to undertake on their land, then you will keep losing your electorates in the bush and you deserve to. Those Nationals members who vote against the bill today will pay a price and the price will be paid in your electorates. Because even if you do not care about the environment, those communities do and NSW Labor does too.

We do not trust you. We trust the science. Whilst risks continue to be posed by this industry to our water and our prime agricultural land, and those risks remain, Labor will continue to stand up for those communities. We will continue to stand up for our environment. Labor has an important and longstanding legacy when it comes to standing up for the environment and being instructed by the scientists and the experts when we do that. We have been led through this pandemic by the science. We wish that the Liberals and Nationals would realise that the science is what you should be looking at now as we go forward beyond this pandemic into the economic recovery. You cannot have jobs for the sake of it. They have to be responsible and sustainable. I look forward to seeing where Nationals members sit today on the bill. Labor supports the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I warn members to adhere to the leave of the bill rather than throw barbs across the Chamber. All comments are to be made through the Chair.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (12:46:29): I oppose the bill but I also put on record that it is very obvious that the first speaker for the Opposition was not the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition could not even be here to speak on this matter. Our leader has already been down here and spoken about the importance of this matter for our communities and about jobs to be created in New South Wales. I listened to the contribution of the member for Port Stephens. She spoke about the scientific evidence and the expert advice to be given, yet she is trying to have it both ways. If she wants to have the scientific evidence and she wants to hear from the experts she should oppose the bill. Because that is exactly what the Deputy Premier has already said: It is with the Independent Planning Commission. The IPC will make the decision and do a rigorous assessment, and it will be the agency that will make the determination. If you want to say in this House—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: —that you want to have scientific evidence, to go through the information provided, do that. But what you are really saying on the other side is, "Let's have a moratorium."

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: What I am once again seeing here is another unholy alliance between Labor and The Greens. Every time we see an unholy alliance between Labor and The Greens, it costs jobs in this State. They are a threat to the people of Australia, a threat to the people of New South Wales and a threat to the people in regional New South Wales. Every time Labor and The Greens have an alliance together they cost jobs, they wreck State budgets, they create deficits and they do not do anything to support regional communities. They have a history of devastating our forestry industry—something they have done over and over, time and again. This is critical at a time when affordable energy is important both for businesses and households in this State; at a time when it is clear that we need a diverse mix of energy resources; at a time when every job matters. Our State cannot afford to turn its back on coal seam gas as one of the ingredients to this energy mix.

It has been incredibly difficult over the years in the bush. We have had intense and crippling drought. We have had intense and crippling bushfires in our communities. We have had intense and crippling floods in areas, as well. We now have COVID 19, which has also been intense and crippling to our local economies. Very few families have not been impacted by one of these factors and some households have had to endure all in one hit. As a government we are doing everything possible to assist those families. We have invested billions of dollars in drought support, including last week, when \$310 million was given to help our farmers fight their way back.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 76. Talking about the drought and the Government's appalling response to it is not within the leave of the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I will rule on the point of order and contributions to debate on the bill. The member for Port Stephens did not speak to the leave the bill on several occasions. The member for Bathurst is talking about employment and unemployment, which is part of the debate on the bill. I will allow him to continue, but I warn him that he must speak to the leave of the bill for the majority of his contribution.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I will come back to the leave of the bill. I also point out that, because of the crippling drought, last month the Government contributed \$310 million to support our farmers across regional communities who have been doing it tough. The Government has announced a subsidy for transport and waiving of Local Land Services rates, which is critical to supporting a rural industry that has been impacted by drought. The crippling bushfires have impacted our communities and economies. The fact is that the Government is providing a mix of support. It has allocated \$46 million to support our forestry industry, which is another critical industry in our regional communities. COVID has also hit our communities. I mentioned all those issues at the start of my contribution as they are relevant to our regional communities at this time.

We must invest in options that will make our State stronger and our communities resilient. When talking about security of businesses and security of energy supply to households, it is important that we have the right mix. If we do not, we will continue to weaken our economies. We must invest in those options to ensure that manufacturing businesses can rely on affordable gas, can remain competitive and operate in the marketplace. That will ensure they can keep their doors open and keep employing people in regional communities. Some manufacturing plants are still operating in regional communities. One of the biggest costs for them is the energy cost. Some of those manufacturing plants continue to employ quite a number of people in local communities. If hundreds of people are employed in some of those plants, it is critical employment for each and every one of them. That is why the cost of energy is critical to all of them.

We all know it—deep down, Labor knows it as well. Labor knows we need jobs and competitive businesses. It knows we need to keep power bills down. We also know that Labor knows it because that is what it has been saying federally. The position taken by NSW Labor is nothing short of utter madness. We expect it from The Greens but Labor should know better. It is further evidence of it pandering to city seats in its fear of losing them to The Greens. Labor members try to support and create policy for inner-city seats and turn their backs on regional communities. They are fearful of The Greens coming after their inner-city seats. At the end of the day, it is critical that we get the balance right. About 220,000 jobs have been lost through COVID, including around 50,000 in regional New South Wales. That is 50,000 people who are not bringing any income home but are supporting their families and children. It is impacting on them. I have looked at the people who have lost their jobs over the past three months.

Ms Liesl Tesch: A hundred and fifty of them might get a job in Narrabri.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: You might laugh about it but—

Ms Liesl Tesch: I'm not laughing, mate; I'm sad for those people.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: You laugh at someone who has lost their job and has tears in their eyes. They are trying to support their families, put food on the table and send their kids to school. It is shocking that you are saying that.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I remind the Minister of my previous ruling: He should direct his comments through the Chair.

Ms Kate Washington: I ask that the Minister be directed to direct his comments through the Chair. Instead of the Minister being allowed to continue his tirade of abuse across the Chamber, he should be pulled into line sooner.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I assure the member for Port Stephens I will take that on board—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The Santos project is going to be the biggest job—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Minister, I am still speaking. The Clerk will stop the clock. This is a heated discussion. I ask all members to respect one another and to not start name-calling across the Chamber. I warn members that if they do not come to order many of them will go home early today.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The Santos project will be the biggest job-creating project in the Narrabri region for a generation. It is expected to create 1,300 jobs during construction, 200 operational jobs and 500 direct and indirect jobs in the region. It is estimated that it could deliver \$32 million, which could go towards creating jobs across the State. The project is currently with the Independent Planning Commission and it should be the IPC that decides whether it proceeds. We in this House should not pre-empt that decision. We must keep all energy options and all job options on the table. We must get the balance right. We should not turn our backs on possibilities for projects that create jobs to help our regions and that manage potential risks. There should be strong and rigorous controls. There should be expert and scientific advice. The commission should be making the decisions. For those reasons, I oppose the bill.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:57:05): Labor supports the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019. Labor supports a moratorium on coal seam gas [CSG] exploration as necessary until all recommendations of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer's report are implemented, which has not occurred. The Chief Scientist & Engineer's review made 16 recommendations in 2014. In February this year the parliamentary inquiry conducted by the committee in the other place reported that nine of those 16 recommendations needed a great deal of work. It has to be acknowledged that a body of work is involved in implementing those recommendations adequately, but it is important that if we are serious about it we follow the recommendations of the Chief Scientist & Engineer and implement them fully.

Due to the controversy around CSG projects, it is important to ensure that the community is confident and satisfied that we are doing the best we can when we extract minerals in areas where there are contesting water resources, agricultural resources and petroleum resources. That will not happen until all the recommendations are implemented. The report was necessary and the Government acknowledged that it was because of the risks involved. The uncomfortable reality is that some of the best places to extract coal seam gas in the State are terribly contested resource areas. The Narrabri area lies within the Great Artesian Basin. To get to the coal seam gas, mining companies will need to drill through the artesian basin, which has unconsolidated sediments. The potable water contained within the artesian basin is connected within the ground just below the surface. It is not connected to the saline waters held at depth within the coal seams. Any holes that pierce through the Great Artesian Basin to extract coal seam gas have the real potential to contaminate potable water with non-potable water, which has tremendous implications for agriculture and for water resources in the State.

There are tremendous risks in the coal seam gas potential of this State. The potential does exist and I am not opposed to coal seam gas mining. I grew up in Newcastle. There were three coalmines within walking distance from where I grew up: the Burwood pit, the Dudley pit and the Redhead pit. But mining was different back then; it was less intensive. It was before the days of longwall mining. It was bord-and-pillar mining and small-scale workings. There was mine subsidence in Newcastle, but only small sinkholes developed. As I followed the industry and worked in the industry, longwall mining came in. Longwall mining started to extract more. That is what companies will always try to do—extract as much as they can for the smallest possible cost. That will often have a greater impact on the environment. That was seen with longwall mining, which suddenly changed the circumstances of mine subsidence in Newcastle and the surrounding area from small sinkholes opening up occasionally to whole areas of land—whole suburbs—being lowered and cracking in houses located on the surface. We need to approach resource extraction, especially when we have more intensive resource extraction, with the greatest care possible.

With these risks we need to consider whether gas prices are so high that it might be worth it. That is a fair point to make. Maybe it is worth the risk to the agricultural land and to the water resources because gas prices are so high. These projects may lead to reduced gas prices. However, Australia is one of the biggest producers of

natural gas in the world. Most of it is conventional gas, not the unconventional coal seam gas we are talking about today. Most of it comes from Western Australia and Queensland. It is easily extracted. There is not the intense resource stimulation called "fracking" that is necessary to extract gas from coal seams. It is gas that is developed in natural reservoirs beneath the ground that can be extracted under its own pressure, rather than the enforced pressure that is required with coal seam gas. To get coal seam gas out of the ground, they have to pump out the held water in the ground. It is saline. If they bring it to the surface and they have not built it properly it could contaminate potable water on the way up. Then they have to get rid of that non-potable water at the surface.

There are many risks involved that are not the case with conventional natural gas, which we have in abundance in this country. Why is it so expensive? It used to be the case that Australia was a single market. The gas we produced was the gas we consumed. Until about 2014 gas could be had for \$4 a gigajoule in this country. But then we allowed an export industry to develop without any reservation scheme in place. Suddenly our prices were linked to international prices—\$15 a gigajoule. There is international competition. The small amount of extra supply that is going to come from the projects talked about in New South Wales will have absolutely no impact on gas prices because we are linked to the international price. Until we have an Australia-wide gas reservation scheme—and a New South Wales government that is willing to use the power it has to bargain with the Federal Government—this sort of industry in New South Wales will have very little impact on prices for New South Wales consumers.

We need a policy that is directed at the price of gas overall and at ensuring we have fair prices for gas supplied to local manufacturers and local consumers. That can only be done with the pricing policy. It is not just about supply. We can have all the supply in the world, but when we are connected to the international price it is not going to get us anywhere. We need a fair pricing scheme, local reservation of gas and for all the recommendations of the Chief Scientist & Engineer's report to be implemented. That is not beyond the capacity of this Government. It is not beyond the capacity of all the immense powers we have in this House.

The Government is shackled by its ideology, which says that when a private company wants to do something it should generally be allowed to do it. That is what is holding us back in this place. It is a shame that Government members feel that way, because of the consequences for rural communities—and valuable agricultural resources, water resources and hydrocarbon resources—of not getting this right. If we were smart enough we could extract and exploit in a positive way to satisfy the interests of all our community. We do not have a government with the wit to do that. This bill is necessary because we have a government that cannot get its act together. If it cannot get its act together these sorts of bills will keep coming before the House. We can do better in this State. This Government is failing us when it comes to gas policy and energy policy more generally. That is why Labor supports the bill.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (13:05:50): It may come as no surprise that I oppose the Petroleum (Onshore Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019. Imposing a moratorium on the exploration and production of coal seam gas in New South Wales will shut down an industry that has the potential to make a significant contribution to the ongoing economic prosperity of the State, which is more acute and urgent, given the hit to our economy from drought, bushfires and COVID-19. Gas is vital to New South Wales. It accounts for some 10 per cent of the energy consumed each year. The gas industry contributes to the New South Wales economy by creating jobs as well as export and taxation revenue.

New South Wales has about 1.4 million residents who rely on gas for cooking, heating and hot water. There are 33,000 industrial users in the State who rely on gas. Many use it in the manufacturing process and there are about 500 heavy industrial users. Those industrial users provide over 300,000 jobs to our economy in New South Wales. It was mentioned previously that manufacturing is important, and I agree. It was also mentioned that the costs of doing business have increased. I have manufacturers in my electorate that are major users of gas. One is JBS meatworks in Scone, which is crying out for a much better supply of gas, which can be local. It will be one of the major users should Narrabri get up and running, and a pipeline be built. That will retain well in excess of 500 jobs in the JBS plant in Scone.

An abattoir in Singleton is another huge gas user that relies heavily on gas. We have many other manufacturing businesses that need a good supply of gas to run their operations, to lower the cost of doing business and therefore give people more security in their jobs, to grow their business, to export their goods and to employ more people. By putting a moratorium on coal seam gas those opposite are contracting the market. If they want prices to come down, then open up supply. Supply and demand forces have been proven over many hundreds of years and that will never change. If Labor and the Opposition cannot understand the basic economic forces of supply and demand, they should not be sitting in this House in the first place. On one hand they argue that we need to lower the cost. On the other hand they say that we need to shut down or not even open up an industry that can do exactly that by lowering the cost of energy so our manufacturers can thrive and survive, and employ more people.

Our gas supplies have been under pressure. The ACCC's January 2020 interim gas inquiry notes examples of companies closing plants that have been made unprofitable due to high gas prices. The ACCC, using its own expertise, has come to the basic conclusion that the Labor Opposition cannot grasp. The current New South Wales domestic gas production accounts for less than 5 per cent of our State needs. New South Wales therefore is dependent on interstate imports of gas. As a sovereign State, should we be dependent upon other States and Territories for our energy supplies? The Opposition and other speakers have mentioned energy policy. If we want good energy policy that is going to work in New South Wales, let us focus on New South Wales being a net energy exporter, not a net energy importer.

Let us open up these gas fields—granted, with due scientific process and regulation. It has to be done properly. I do not have a problem with that; I never have. If we do not open up the industry and create opportunities, we are not assisting our manufacturing sector and businesses—which employ hundreds of thousands of people throughout New South Wales, including rural and regional areas—that are involved in the direct process of extraction or, as users, produce goods. Whether it is Port Stephens, Newcastle, Parkes, Dubbo or western Sydney, if we do not provide the opportunity for businesses to access good, reliable quantities of gas, we are harming our economy and the people of this State.

A moratorium is not a solution to the energy supply issues facing New South Wales. The ACCC gas inquiry report tells us that the long-term supply outlook for the east coast gas market remains uncertain. Southern States risk facing a shortfall in the medium term unless action is taken, including further exploration and development in the south and the development of one or more LNG import terminals. A greater diversity of suppliers will be most effective in ensuring gas is brought to the market in a timely manner. Two recent national reports, the Commonwealth *Technology Investment Roadmap* and the interim report of the National COVID-19 Coordination Commission's Manufacturing Taskforce, identify key future foundational roles for gas as a priority national energy source in supporting new manufacturing potential.

In addition, in January 2020 the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments entered into a landmark agreement. The memorandum of understanding jointly funds almost \$2 billion in energy and emissions reduction initiatives. The memorandum commits New South Wales to a target of an additional 70 petajoules of new gas supply to the New South Wales market. Yet Labor and the crossbenches want to stop this from happening. Developing a safe and sustainable gas industry in New South Wales can help meet this target and would add diversity and security to the State's energy mix, increase competition and put downward pressure on prices in the long term. Increased gas production would provide increased royalties and potentially support additional industry, providing jobs to our regional communities.

As was recently stated by the mayor of Narrabri, it is estimated that if approved the Narrabri project would deliver \$32 million per annum in royalties at full production and contribute to the creation of much-needed local jobs and wider benefits for the State as a whole. Over the life of this project, on average direct and indirect employment would be 512 employees. This means 127 jobs in the Narrabri local government area, 161 jobs in the wider region and a further 224 in New South Wales. It is clear this bill proposes unnecessary measures and will drive away vital jobs and investment in this State at a time when regional New South Wales can least afford it. This bill will see New South Wales gas consumers facing increased gas prices and reduced employment opportunities in regional New South Wales. For these and other reasons, I will oppose the bill.

I raise one more matter before I complete my contribution. Previous speakers have said that the State Government has not implemented the recommendations of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer Professor Mary O'Kane on coal seam gas extraction. I note that the only outstanding recommendation is currently being dealt with and should be clarified by the end of the month. The O'Kane report envisaged an industry. That has not happened. There is one project on the boil at the moment, which will be considered by the Information and Privacy Commission. Perhaps members opposite should get their facts right before contributing to debate.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I ask members to direct all their comments through the Chair.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: The member for The Entrance, in all good conscience from his point of view, tried in vain to provide a good argument in support of this bill but, unfortunately, was lacking in fact and detail. That reflection can be attributed to all the comments from the other side of the House.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (13:16:01): I speak on behalf of The Greens. The Greens support the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019 and congratulate the members who initiated this private member's bill. I do not know whether I am in a time warp when I hear The Nationals trotting out the same lines they used in 2014. I understand that it is hard for them to change. After what we have seen in the past 12 months, if ever there was a reason for them to change that would be it. It beggars belief that coming off the back of one of the longest droughts in living memory followed by the most intense bushfire season in

living memory the reality of a warming planet does not highlight the spectre of an industry that risks our clean drinking water, our food-growing land and our water security. It is sad and irresponsible.

The Greens welcome and support this bill. This has substantially been Greens policy since 2011. We believe the bill should go further. We do not think that a Minister should have the ability to override a community. In a nutshell, there is not a social licence for coal seam gas mining in New South Wales. The fact that The Nationals point to a "few versus the many" shows a lack of courage. As we know from *Climate Wars*, the precautionary principle tells us that we wasted so much time discussing the science around climate change it protracted the war. The science was proven. In this case the precautionary principle has told us for over a decade and through many examples worldwide that the risk associated with fracking is too high. It does not have a social licence or an environmental green light. There are serious risks. We cannot live on this planet without drinking water. We certainly cannot grow food, particularly on a warming planet, without water.

The Greens introduced bills twice to ban CSG across the whole State, both in 2011 and 2015. Far from being about ideology, we have supported communities and grassroots activism around this for over a decade in regional and rural New South Wales. They have known from the get-go that fracking posed too many risks. I can remember being at a Meet the Candidates in 2014 and, honestly, nothing has really changed in the arguments of those in the Government about the east coast gas supply and demand, and exporting gas overseas. We all know why that is happening and the continued support of coal seam gas as an industry does nothing to change that. Far from being about ideology, we have supported the science and the precautionary principle on fracking for a decade. Far from participating in what the Deputy Premier is suggesting is a political stunt, The Greens have a decade-long history of staring down the dinosaurs of the National and Liberal parties, and their mining donor mates in this place.

To the bill, gas is not a transition in the twenty-first century. International investors are not investing in gas and the latest science tells us that fugitive methane emissions from gas extraction make it worse than coal. Governments need to accept the science and use existing fossil fuel energy to power a rapid transition to renewables. I am disgusted that I still have to bang on about a renewables boom—the renewables boom we squandered and that we are trying to claw back. The Liberals and The Nationals cannot do it. They keep reverting to type over and over no matter what happens in the real world. They would rather die and decimate communities than accept that they need to go back to the drawing board. It makes me so angry. Gas is not beneficial for landholders. The recent inquiry into the chief scientist's recommendations found that the risks are so high that landholders are unable to access insurance and are left to bear the risks posed by coal seam gas activities. We know this.

Coal seam gas exploration and mining has no social licence in New South Wales. It is interesting to hear the Deputy Premier talking about Narrabri. Members of the Pilliga region community have been writing to us for a long time; the idea that there is some mandate in that community is false and misleading. Do not take my word for coal seam gas not having a social licence: History speaks for itself. As I said, The Greens introduced a bill in 2011. Unfortunately, back in those days, Labor had issued licences for a crazy number of towns—really vulnerable areas. But Labor did see the light. Those licences were issued without community engagement, without notice to landholders and with no regard to the potential impacts that coal seam gas exploration might have. Sadly, when the Liberals and Nationals took government after a 16-year hiatus in opposition, they doubled down and continued to issue licences across the State.

When they issued three licenses for exploration in northern New South Wales it changed the fate of history in this State because in 2013 we saw exploration drilling resisted by community blockades—first at Glenugie near Grafton, then Doubtful Creek near Kyogle and then Bentley. The Bentley blockade was a rare occasion in Australian history when an entire region stood up to government and corporations and held the line. I should know because I was elected in 2015 when The Greens took the electorate from The Nationals after 27 years on the back of that enormous regional response to coal seam gas, which reflected a much deeper passion and concern for social justice and protecting the environment. It did not happen in a vacuum. The North Coast has many decades of history of environmental and political activism. Bentley was a turning point because it was not only a national movement: What made Bentley unique was the extent to which it mobilised community support across the region. We know that farmers, traditional owners, townfolk, environmentalists, professionals and business people united in a vision of a gas fuel free region. We saw the Lock the Gate community movement around Australia, incredible surveys from communities publishing their stance and the anti-fracking movement took fire across the country.

By 2010 gas exploration licences covered most of the Northern Rivers region. Several local action groups formed and self-organised in response to this. From 2012 we saw a massive expansion of the gas fuel free communities movement. In my electorate I still see signs and I am so proud of them. Ranging from 87 per cent to 94 per cent, nearly 147 communities have declared themselves gas fuel free. Bentley was unprecedented because, unlike the famous Franklin Dam blockade in Tasmania and the Daintree in far north Queensland, it was not led

by a small group of hardened protesters, but by a whole region—my whole region. That was crucial. We know that at the eleventh hour the Government suspended Metgasco's licence for Bentley and did a U-turn on what was going on there. [*Extension of time*]

Despite the Government's backflip and Labor's new policy opposing CSG, the people in my community no longer trusted the old parties on this issue. After the 2014 suspension of the Metgasco licence, we saw the electorate of Ballina shift from The Nationals to The Greens after 27 years. Some five years on we know that it was not just about that specific environmental issue, but has proven to be overwhelming support for the protection of the environment, and support for green progressive values has increased over the decades. Even after the shock of the 2015 election results, the Baird Government did not go far enough and suspended licences only on the North Coast, despite our call for a statewide moratorium and Labor's call for no-go zones. In August 2015 The Greens introduced a second bill that would have seen coal seam gas prohibited in all areas of New South Wales. That bill was defeated 16 to 19, with the ALP and Christian Democrats voting with The Greens, following some ALP amendments. On 10 September 2015 Labor introduced its Coal Seam and Other Unconventional Gas Moratorium Bill. The Hon. Adam Searle paved a way forward, that this bill similarly reflects, of immediate and permanent no-go zones. We have always called for a statewide ban. We would go much further, but we absolutely support the bill and encourage all members, including those in The Nationals whose personal views and those of their communities do not support this industry, to support the bill. Unfortunately, the ideology of the Right will likely prevent them from crossing the floor.

The bill is timely. Federal Labor and the national Coalition are using a one-off favourable report for one CSG project in north Queensland by the CSIRO as a green light for a comeback tour of CSG in New South Wales and other States and Territories, and a gas-led recovery. Of course, vested interests are everywhere. The director of gas company Strike Energy is heading up the National COVID-19 Coordination Commission, along with some of his mining industry mates, and the New South Wales Government has approved expansion of a coalmine under Sydney's drinking water catchment. I look forward to speaking, knowing that the community will be watching this afternoon when that petition with 10,000 signatures is presented to Parliament. Putting our drinking water at risk and fracking our aquifers as a response to a warming planet, extreme droughts and bushfires is not what our communities expect.

The recent upper House inquiry into the chief scientist's recommendations for coal seam gas was scathing. The industry and this Government are not meeting community expectations. The Government has not even met the chief scientist's recommendations from 2014. I note that the previous speaker referenced that. Even if we had met the 2014 chief scientist's recommendations, it is 2020 and the most recent inquiry has opened a Pandora's box of issues. That is before we even address the lack of a social licence. That is what we are here for. We are representatives of our communities.

We are representatives of the people; we are not scientists. It was shocking to see the Deputy Premier yesterday. The ABC has been keeping all families across the country updated with science that we have relied on through the pandemic. To make fun of the same science beggars belief. Today I put on record on behalf of The Greens that the issue is above and beyond science. We think the science is settled. Our communities do not want this industry. The New South Wales Government has failed to introduce a cost recovery framework for regulation of the coal seam gas industry.

According to the upper House inquiry, close to \$3.75 million is being paid each year by taxpayers to subsidise the CSG industry. Try telling the same workers who were heroes through the health crisis that they cannot have a pay rise, but that the Government will fork out \$3.75 million to subsidise the CSG industry. It is extraordinary—no, it is not extraordinary; it is quite commonplace—to think we are discussing it here. There is no social licence for CSG. There is no justification to put drinking water, food-growing land and the environment at risk. There is not economic case for CSG. The Greens support the bill. We will go further. We support it as we have supported a ban on CSG since 2011.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:31:05): I make it fairly obvious that the Government does not support the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019, and nor do I. Some comments were made about Government members trying to be all things to all people, which I thought was interesting. I am happy to say today that I am trying to do as much as I can for as many people as I can. Whilst those opposite in some ways seem to be focused on just one thing and one solution, that to me seems to be cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. We must find ways to move forward and help people and communities. The bill will not do that.

I also note the message from the Deputy Premier earlier, who mentioned that the bill is the wrong thing at the wrong time. We must find ways of producing more and supplying our own resources. We have seen that and talked about that during the COVID-19 pandemic. But to do that—we have talked about this; we have heard about this—we need affordable energy and as many different ways of achieving that as possible. That could be through

renewable projects, like the Central-West Renewable Energy Zone in my region, which involves large-scale wind, large-scale solar or the possibility of gas somewhere. From my way of thinking, the more the merrier. The more mixes of energy we have, the better chance we have of getting guaranteed strong supply and lower prices.

The only gas project being looked at or talked about in New South Wales is the Narrabri project. As has been pointed out, the Independent Planning Commission [IPC] will make a decision about it. The IPC should not be under political pressure based on a bill such as this; it should remain independent. There has also been a bit of harping from those opposite about the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer's report. Again, to be clear, the full intent of that report has been followed. But again, the report was based on the expectation of there actually being a gas industry. At the time there was talk of gas power plants. There was certainly one plan for pipelines near me. That never happened. The only project being assessed is Narrabri. There is nothing else in the mix. Therefore, it is a different discussion. I understand there is concern. But that is why the project must go through the IPC. I believe in the role it has, based on the best advice.

We have heard talk about social licence as well. Earlier we heard about parts of a letter sent in by the mayor of Narrabri, who has made it clear that the council and the community is supportive of the Narrabri Gas Project and the opportunities that it can provide for the future. Is that not some sort of social licence? Narrabri is not in my electorate but if the mayor and the community make it clear that there is social licence, that needs to be taken into account. We have also heard that about 60 per cent to 80 per cent of domestic gas supply could come from the project. The proponent, Santos, has made it clear that that is what the gas from the Narrabri would go towards: domestic supply. On a number of occasions I have stated publicly that I would be more than happy to support the cancellation of the remaining petroleum exploration licences, or PELs, across New South Wales that are not currently under an assessment process by the New South Wales Government, like at Narrabri. But we cannot just pull the plug on that without it going through the process.

On that point, again, it should be remembered that it was Labor, with the support of The Greens, that handed out gas and mining licences like they were going out of fashion. Back then, for the cost of a smartphone we could grab one with no due diligence and no community input. It was The Nationals back in government that revoked the vast majority of those gas exploration licences across the State, including across my area, eliminating speculative companies from the process. The buybacks reduced the PELs, which covered around 60 per cent to 70 per cent of the State under the former Labor Government to around 6 per cent now. It was The Nationals in government that put in place the strategic lands policy to help protect prime farming areas and locations that could be at risk from any extractive industry. It was The Nationals in government that developed the gas industry plan, which highlights where and in what context the gas industry could emerge, backed by science protecting our precious ground and surface water.

The Nationals, in a Coalition government to date on all issues that incorporate any extractive industry decision-making, have centred on independent expert advice, not armchair commentators, unqualified people or outsiders who do not want any activity—like the member for Port Stevens—in regional areas. What we are talking about today is not following the science. One cannot just decide when and if one wants to follow the science. That is what this bill is trying to do. Since being elected, this Government has put in place the reforms needed to ensure that New South Wales is well positioned to develop a safe and sustainable domestic gas industry, including through the landmark NSW Gas Plan. That plan sets out a clear, strategic framework to deliver best-practice gas industry regulation while securing vital energy supplies for the State. The reforms mean that the administration of titles is harmonised across the minerals and petroleum sectors. It means that the independent Environment Protection Authority is now the lead regulator for non-work-related health and safety conditions for petroleum titles.

Also, the release of new exploration areas for gas is now regulated under the strategic release framework, which considers social, environmental and economic factors. These things happen. The reforms also ensure protections for other land users and natural resources, including our precious surface and underground water resources through the rigorous assessment of all planned gas-producing activities and potential impacts; the exclusion zones to prevent approval of new coal seam gas activities within two kilometres of residential zones or critical industry clusters; setting and enforcing stringent controls and regulation for gas producers, including through the requirement for water access licences; and expanding surface water quality monitoring. The Government has listened to community concerns about coal seam gas and, as has been mentioned, in 2013 asked the Chief Scientist & Engineer to undertake the thorough and comprehensive review. The chief scientist found that the risk of gas developments can be managed with the right regulation, with the right engineering solutions and monitoring. That is what forms the basis of the reforms.

Strict controls have been established for a clear strategic framework to deliver best-practice industry regulation. That includes the strategic release framework to give the Government control over the future release of the areas for gas exploration. We are talking about only one area. Under the framework, new areas would be

released for exploration only after environmental, social, economic and geological factors would be considered and the community would have had an opportunity to have a say. Explorers must always meet minimum standards for technical and financial capability and work programs, and have a demonstrated compliance record. Codes are also in place to ensure strong environmental management, rehabilitation and integrity. Potential water impacts rigorously assessed before activities begin and strict standards must be adhered to as they continue.

Certain chemicals are now banned, and buffer and exclusion zones are in place within two kilometres of residential land or industry clusters, as I mentioned. Gas exploration and production activities are subject to extremely strict conditions and always have to follow them. The Government has enabled it through a particular set of instructions, including through community benefit funds to help communities get their fair share if such projects are to go ahead. We have passed legislation to deliver stronger landholder protections, ensuring that they are properly compensated for petroleum exploration and production activities on their land. Together, those initiatives will help allow the Government to create and deliver a safe and sustainable gas industry if it is to happen in this State.

In regional New South Wales any development or project of scale has an aspect that deals with water. It is one thing that most of our larger-scale projects need. Whether it is how much water the project will use on a daily basis or where the wastewater goes, water is important for everything. That includes for our towns, homeowners, farmers—stock and domestic—and irrigators. Everyone needs water. Let us not pretend we care about water only for gas exploration. It is for every development. But that does not mean we have to stop development, especially in the regions. It means that care and diligence are needed. That is all we are calling for—care and diligence.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (13:40:28): There are strongly held views on the issue of the extraction of coal seam gas and fracking, particularly in the context of a post-COVID-19 environment in which people are talking about jobs, whether they are real or perceived. The word "fracking" has become a comprehensively dirty word not only in New South Wales but also across Australia and the world. We understand that there are divisions. We understand that people will try to create polemics from this. When we stand in this place as legislators our principal responsibility is to keep within the bounds of political discourse and make sure that we arm ourselves with cold, hard, immutable, scientific facts, particularly on subjects like this that have far-reaching consequences on both sides of the argument.

It might be worth undertaking a history lesson. I remember sitting in shadow Cabinet in 2012 and seeing horror stories coming out of international jurisdictions where fracking and the extraction of unconventional gas were causing untold environmental damage. The shadow Minister responsible and the Leader of the Opposition at the time, John Robertson, thought it was important that the Labor Party had a policy on this. The shadow Cabinet sat down and formulated a policy that declared a moratorium on coal seam gas and fracking in sensitive areas such as water catchment areas. The destruction internationally and in Australia continued. The debate continued and the polemics continued. The Labor Party adopted a policy platform position, binding on all Labor members of Parliament, which states:

NSW Labor will apply the precautionary principle to all areas under investigation for CSG mining which have the possibility of interfering with or polluting groundwater systems, until the scientific community can demonstrate this industry is safe.

It is not a blanket ban. It is not a philosophical objection. It states, "...until the scientific community can demonstrate the industry is safe". A policy position like that adopted by the Labor Party at its State conference is not altered on a whim. We certainly do not run for the hills when an Independent member of the upper House introduces a bill that mirrors Labor's position. Mr Justin Field might have sought to play some games and wedge the Labor Party, but these things happen in politics. When one is a legislator and when one is a member of a political party that has been around for as long as the Labor Party has, sometimes one has fights. But we work it out sensibly. We do not bolt and go weak at the knees just because an Independent member—one of over 100 in this building—decides to introduce a bill. We were heartened in 2014 when the former Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, the Hon. Anthony Roberts, released the New South Wales Government's gas plan, which the Government called:

... a clear, strategic framework to deliver world's best practice regulation of the gas industry while securing vital gas supplies for the State.

On the front page it states:

We have accepted all the Chief Scientist and Engineer's recommendations.

It is a good report. It states:

The report of the Chief Scientist and Engineer is clear that the risks of gas development can be effectively managed with the right regulation, engineering solutions and constant learning through monitoring and research. We welcome the report, which has given us a roadmap to establish a world leading industry that is safe and sustainable.

The Government has the map. It just has not travelled any of the routes that the map set out. The gas plan states:

The Plan identifies five priority pathways to reset NSW's approach to gas:

1. Better science and information to deliver world's best practice regulation

That has not happened yet. I hope it does and industry hopes it does. Nothing kills investment more than policy uncertainty. The plan continues:

2. Pause, reset and recommence: Gas exploration on our terms

The Government has got the pause right but it has not reset or recommenced yet. It continues:

3. Strong and certain regulation

Unfortunately for the industry and for stakeholders, that is still missing. It goes on:

4. Sharing the benefits

There are none, because there is only one unconventional gas field alive in New South Wales, at Camden, and this Government has effectively killed it. And lastly:

5. Securing NSW gas supply needs

That is not happening. The plan further states:

We will dramatically reduce the coverage of gas exploration licences across NSW by extinguishing all current applications and implementing a one-off buy back of existing licences.

We will maintain our freeze on new exploration licences and ensure that when future gas exploration does occur, it happens on our terms, and only after a comprehensive examination of the environmental, social, and economic factors has been considered.

Today Deputy Premier John Barilaro put forward the proposition that every well that is sunk and every bit of investment in coal seam gas that happens in New South Wales equals jobs. If that is the case, on his logic it is the Government and his party that are responsible for extinguishing thousands of jobs, because they have extinguished coal seam gas licences all over New South Wales. The report further states:

2. Preventing coal seam gas activities in sensitive areas

The word that the Government missed in that sentence is "politically". It extinguished licences in politically sensitive areas. It extinguished them in national parks—Labor supports that. It extinguished them in the Hunter. It extinguished them through the two kilometre exclusion zone in Camden. The Government has effectively shut down the only coal seam gas project in New South Wales—the AGL project in Camden—which supplies 5 per cent of gas to New South Wales. AGL has decided to pull out of the industry, taking Gloucester with it. In the Northern Rivers region, who can forget what happened in Bentley? Just before the 2015 election the Minister cancelled the licence on a whim—because it was politically sensitive for the Coalition—and had to pay \$25 million in compensation to Metgasco for shutting down that project.

Government members should not lecture us about jobs. By their own admission, if coal seam gas is the panacea they have killed the goose that laid the golden egg. But it is not the panacea or the goose that laid the golden egg. It is just an industry in abeyance because this Government has not done its work. It is interesting to note that the extinguishment of those projects and the establishment of no-go areas across the State were based on politics. The Government wanted to hold the seat of Camden. It wanted to hold some seats in the Northern Rivers region. It has left the people of western New South Wales—the people of Barwon—out of the equation. The Nationals were so arrogant that they thought, "They will never leave us."

The reason the member for Barwon is sitting here today as a Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party member and not a Nationals party member is that The Nationals left western New South Wales out of the exclusion zone to fend for itself. Now they are facing a project at Santos that must face full examination. I cannot see how the Independent Planning Commission [IPC] can do that without all of the recommendations of the chief scientist having been accepted. Despite the Government saying, "We accept all of the recommendations", the fact is they have not implemented them and they are important. Recommendation 5 states:

That the Government use its planning powers and capability to designate those areas of the State in which CSG activity is permitted to occur ...

That is important—not done. Recommendation 6 is to implement a single law covering all extractive industries—not done. [*Extension of time*]

Recommendation 9 is important to Santos operating in the Pilliga, "... a robust and comprehensive policy of appropriate insurance and environmental risk coverage of the CSG industry", including, "a three-layered policy of security deposits, enhanced insurance coverage and an environmental rehabilitation fund"—not done. Recommendation 11 suggests using a "Risk Management and Prediction Tool for extractive industries". That is exactly what we need in Narrabri. We need a prediction tool for what may happen to the Great Artesian Basin

recharge zone that the project sits wholly within. Recommendation 12 states that the Government establish a standing expert advisory body on CSG to advise: on the overall impact of CSG in New South Wales through a published annual statement, on processes for characterising and modelling the sedimentary basins of New South Wales, on updating and refining the Risk Management and Prediction Tool, on research that needs to be commissioned, on whether shale and tight gas extraction should be allowed to proceed. None of this has been done. Recommendation 13 was a five-part data analysis program that I will not go into. None of it has been done.

The Coalition, some sections of the media and some people within the Labor tribe would have us believe that it is the Labor Party from Opposition that cannot get this through the House and is somehow putting jobs at risk. That is wrong, disingenuous and not based on facts. It might be based on self-interest and polemics but it is not based on facts. I do not see how the IPC can approve Santos in the absence of the chief scientist's recommendations being implemented. Labor is not saying do not ever do it in the future; just do it on the basis of scientific evidence. That has always been the Labor way. In all of the things we have done to protect the environment we have not rushed in on a whim. We have not rushed in out of spite. We have thought about it carefully and we have acted on the basis of scientific advice.

I will conclude where I started. It is with the case that with controversial activities and industries like these there are very strongly held views. In the past I have spoken about this very position and the fact that not just in New South Wales but also in Australia we need to be careful of polemics—the people who want to control outcomes and corral politicians. They would prefer that all politicians and groups of society are based in two easily managed camps. We have seen that play out in the extreme in the United States at the moment where there is division writ large. That will never happen in Australia, I hope—at least not for a very long time, if it ever does, because we are a different people. We can spot a BS artist a mile away and we stick up for and look out for each other. We all have to be careful of those who would seek to foment polemics in relation to discussions like these.

We have seen it not only in the United States. It has played out a little in the past few weeks of the COVID-19 crisis with social distancing and people saying that civil liberties have been challenged through the wearing of masks. Concerning for me, and I hope for all of us, is the vaccination debate. There should not be a debate. We managed COVID-19 in Australia because we are a sensible people and we accepted the advice from chief medical officers, chief health officers, health Ministers and those we trusted to lead. But in the context of the CSG debate people are saying, "Forget about that. Pick and choose the expert you want to believe." Well, they cannot. There is only one set of scientific facts and our decisions are based on science or they are not.

To people who are saying to the Labor Party, "When it comes to CSG, forget about science; just do what you are told", that will never happen. The Labor Party has not become the great party that it is now—even with some of the difficulties it finds itself in from time to time—by allowing itself to be pushed around by self-interest. I am proud of the fact that the Labor Party brings policies to the floor of this House after careful debate and consideration with the best interests at heart of the citizens of New South Wales. That is the way it is today in respect of coal seam gas.

Debate interrupted.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Members

MEMBER FOR NORTH SHORE

MEMBER FOR HAWKESBURY

The SPEAKER: I wish the member for North Shore and the member for Hawkesbury all the best for their upcoming birthdays.

Announcements

HANSARD SERVICES

The SPEAKER: I make a brief statement in relation to current *Hansard* delays. To maintain social distancing in the office and to minimise travel on public transport during peak times, half the Hansard staff will be present in Parliament House on any given day. The reduction in staff will limit the amount of transcription that can be completed on each sitting day. Although Hansard is striving to complete its work as quickly as possible, there may be delays of one or two business days. Arrangements are being made to equip Hansard with new tools that will allow staff to produce House transcripts from home, but it is unlikely that those arrangements will take effect before the end of June. Members can expect the resumption of normal Hansard service levels when Parliament returns from the winter break. In the meantime, I apologise for any slight delays. However, I am sure members will agree that the safety of the dedicated women and men of the Hansard team must take priority.

*Question Time***PUBLIC SECTOR PAY FREEZE**

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:16:30): My question is directed to the Treasurer. Today the Treasurer was in the Industrial Relations Commission [IRC] trying to cut the wages of over 260,000 women. Given women make up 65 per cent of the public sector and the gender pay gap in the New South Wales public sector is at its worst in a decade, why is the Treasurer targeting so many women?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:17:01): I thank the member for her question. Let us start with the fact that it is the unions that are in the Industrial Relations Commission and the Government is the respondent. I draw to the attention of the Leader of the Opposition recent research which demonstrates that over the course of the pandemic and in relation to a recession, in respect of finding work during this time one of the most impacted groups of people are young women. I say to each of them, on this side of the House we stand in solidarity with them. Many people have lost their jobs. Over 220,000 jobs were lost in April alone and close to 500,000 businesses are part of the JobKeeper program. Many of those who will lose their jobs during this time are women.

We have a choice between doing two things: To provide pay rises for those who have a job or to provide a pay cheque for those who do not. On this side of the House we will always choose to support those who do not have a job and get them back into work. Yesterday, as this country entered into a recession for the first time in 30 years, at three minutes to midnight under the cloak of darkness in the upper House—it is generally a dark place—members supported a bill to ban an industry, which would cost thousands of jobs across the State. Many young women would lose their jobs as a result of this decision.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129—

The SPEAKER: I will not hear the member further. The Treasurer is being highly relevant. The Treasurer will continue.

Ms Jodi McKay: The question has nothing to do with what is happening in the upper House. This is specifically about the gender pay gap that his Government has created.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Leader of the Opposition does not speak on behalf of the many women who have lost their jobs in the hospitality industry. What Labor has always failed to understand is that one cannot be a worker if one does not have a job. There is no union representing the men and the women who have lost their jobs over this period. There is no union representing many of the people, the women, across our State who are on the JobKeeper program because the unions do not care about anybody who is not paying their member dues to the NSW Labor Party. Therein lies the difference between us and them.

Ms Yasmin Catley: You're so out of touch.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Out of touch? Labor has seen so many people lose their jobs. Labor has become the party of the 10 per cent.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Government stands with them but we stand with the 90 per cent as well—the 90 per cent of people across our State, the eight million men and women across New South Wales. We stand in solidarity with them. We represent everybody. This decision on wages was not a test for the unions of New South Wales. They do their job.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The unions of New South Wales do their job standing up for their members. This was a test for the NSW Labor Party, to see how far it has come from being the once great party that represented workers. Do not just take it from me; take it from the unions. The Australian Workers Union—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. We have all given the guy with new glasses a fair bit of leeway.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer is being relevant. The Treasurer will continue.

Mr Ryan Park: Really? He is referring to—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer is being relevant.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As we know, it has been younger female workers who have been disproportionately affected by the economic crisis. The Government will be making sure that every woman who has lost work over the course of this pandemic gets back into work as quickly as possible so that they can provide for their families. I have met many women over the course of this period who have lost their jobs. Labor is out of touch. This Government stands with all the workers across New South Wales.

PUBLIC SECTOR PAY FREEZE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (14:22:09): My question is directed to the Premier. This morning the Premier said that during difficult times, "people tend not to spend and that has contributed to the lack of economic activity". Why then is she taking money out of the pockets of over 400,000 workers?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:22:34): I will remind the member for Coogee of the facts. The Treasurer and I and many on this side of the House sadly have had to repeat on the record that economic activity is generated when people feel confident about spending, when people have a job or feel they have a secure job. In New South Wales there are now 221,000 fewer people who have a job and hundreds of thousands of others who are on JobKeeper who are worried they may not have a job. That is why the Government is working day and night, working our guts out, to give people a sense of security to get a job or to keep their job so that they can feel confident to buy the basics.

We are not even talking about consumption in a broader context. We need to factor in that families are doing it so tough they are contemplating where their kids will attend school next year and what they will buy in the supermarket. When one does not have a job, the basics become important and one has to consider everything. The Treasurer conveyed to the House an example he struck when he was at a food bank. He articulated a recent case study of a family whose young child took some food out of their lunchbox and gave it to their mum in case their mum needed it because the family had been doing it so tough. The child had obviously heard conversations in the household that things were tough. This is the task we have ahead of us. I cannot stress this point enough: Yesterday's figures on the contraction of the New South Wales economy—the greatest in the nation—is to the end of the March quarter. That is largely as a result of the impact of the bushfires. The major impact from COVID will not be felt at least for the June quarter. The figures that come out for April, May and June will not be pretty for New South Wales.

Ms Jodi McKay: Which is about the time when you are ripping wages from 400,000 people.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is serious. The Leader of the Opposition will remain silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: These are the difficult times that we face. Probably when one holds my role or a senior role in government, one appreciates every day the role of public servants and the contribution they make to the State. In fact, one of the Premier's Priorities is that we probably have the most flexible workplaces through our public service to give women, especially, the flexibility to work from home or work different hours to ensure that they can progress through the senior ranks of the public service. We do what we can in that regard and every year we try to make sure we are—

The SPEAKER: Members will remain silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am not sure what is funny about this.

Ms Jodi McKay: It was you looking for support.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are more than ever committed to supporting our public service to ensure that all 410,000 employees, no matter what role they play—whether they are in a call centre, on the front line or are providing important advice—know that they have a job because 90 per cent of all employees in New South Wales do not know whether they have a job.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: At least every single public servant knows they have a job and they also know that at the end of the 12 months—

Ms Jodi McKay: You just threatened their jobs. You've told them they do not have a job.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The basic tenet of our wages policy is to ensure that every single public servant knows that they have a job for the duration of the wages freeze. Unfortunately, the vast majority of our citizens do not have it. Job security is not only critical to people for being able to spend on those things that keep them going and those things that will create economic activity, but also essential for us to get through this very difficult time. We cannot stress that enough. As I said, yesterday's figures were a good wake-up call, but they will

be nothing compared with the likely figures that we will get at the end of the June quarter. Once JobKeeper finishes at the end of September, we will have literally hundreds of thousands of extra people in the State who perhaps will join the Centrelink queue or will be forced into taking a pay cut or reducing their hours because their employer cannot afford to keep them on. That is what our State is facing. We do not apologise—I certainly do not apologise—for having to make those difficult decisions. That is what governments are elected to do.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We have gone through every option we have before us and there are a number of considerations that the Government is making about how it can create more jobs and provide that job security.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: But we also must ensure that we appreciate the importance of building infrastructure and supporting small businesses. I commend the Treasurer and all the Ministers who have been involved in those grants that have gone to small businesses. I also commend the Deputy Premier for the work he has done in the bushfire recovery because that has meant businesses in the bush have been able to redo their activities.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I ask members opposite to take the politics out of it and to think of the citizens because our State is going through a very difficult time and we all have to stick together.

MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (14:27:47): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. This morning he denied the existence of evidence from an independent witness regarding last year's road rage incident but in a signed police statement the witness says he heard the Minister swear at the young man, reduce him to tears and say, "I work for the police and they are coming." Does the Minister still maintain he was not impersonating a police officer?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (14:28:23): I thank the shadow police Minister for her third question in five years. Her productivity astounds even me. I think that everything that can be said about my small car accident last year has been said. I refer the member for Auburn to the statement from the police.

MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (14:28:50): My question is directed to the Premier. Given what she has just heard, how does she respond to this interaction between her Minister and the young man involved, "He said 'I am police. I am going to put you in jail.' My mum, who was on the phone, asked me to pass the phone. The man said, 'I couldn't give a fuck who is on the phone. I'm a cop.'" How does the Premier respond to that exchange between her Minister and the young man?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:29:45): First, I say to the member for Auburn that this is a matter that was the subject of investigation. That matter is now closed. I have nothing further to add but I will make this comment: At a time when our State is going through a number of difficult issues—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Premier has only just started to give her answer. I will hear the point of order taken by the member for Swansea, but it had better be good.

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat.

Ms Yasmin Catley: No, this is the report. Has the Premier read the report?

The SPEAKER: I place the member for Swansea on three calls to order. Any more noise from the member for Swansea and there will be a substitution.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I was simply making the point off the back of that question, which has already been considered and on which public comment has already been made, that I urge the Opposition—we should be accountable for everything—to focus on the issues that matter to the people of New South Wales.

COVID-19 AND REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (14:30:49): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. COVID-19 has hit our already-hurting, drought-impacted regional New South Wales economies. When will the New South Wales Government assist regional New South Wales to return to full agricultural production through a cash-based re-sowing and restocking grant package?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:31:12): I thank the member for Barwon for his important question. Over the past few years, especially 2020, we have come out of drought. We have come out of the darkness of the fires and now we are faced with the global pandemic. The events of 2020 come straight out of the Old Testament. It is a way of testing the resilience of regional and rural communities, not just in New South Wales but also in the regions that have done it tough. I am proud of the investment of the Government over the past couple of years in supporting our drought-affected farmers. That includes water infrastructure. I note that the water Minister is in the Chamber. The Government has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in protecting communities and farmers through measures such as freight subsidies and waiving of Local Land Services [LLS] fees, registration fees and car fees. The Government has supported our farmers to get through one of the worst droughts on record.

The good news is that there has been some rain and the rivers are flowing again but we are still in a green drought. About 90 per cent of the State is still in drought and about 10 per cent is in intense drought. In the south-east we are always the last end of the drought and the last out. There is no question that farmers are doing it tough. That is why this year through the Expenditure Review Committee and the support of the Premier, the Treasurer and the primary industries Minister the Government was able to extend the drought support package by an additional \$300 million to support our farmers. The Government has extended the support around LLS waivers and the extension of waivers around registration fees, especially truck registration fees. We have extended the support in excess of about \$118 million for freight subsidies because farmers are restocking now and they will be able to use that freight subsidy to do exactly that.

In one way, we are putting money back into the pockets of farmers so that they can get up and run. Fingers crossed, we will get winter rain—for the first time, I hope the Bureau of Meteorology gets the forecast right. It will not end the drought. We believe the State will be in drought until the first quarter of next year but we will come out. Those measures have overlapped with the Government response in supporting our communities that have struggled with COVID-19. That is why the small business support packages that went out to the regions were no different to Sydney supporting small businesses through the \$10,000 grant. The Treasurer ensured that regional communities did not miss out and that there was no disadvantage for small businesses. There was a threshold of 70 per cent impact, but the Treasurer acknowledged that for a lot of small businesses in the regions, with a low base because of the drought, that would have been difficult to justify.

Therefore, he allowed those businesses to go back pre-drought and show the difference in drop, which meant that they were eligible for the \$10,000 package. That is a significant support. I congratulate the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance and Small Business in the other House, the Hon. Damien Tudehope, who understood exactly what was required in the unique circumstances of those in regional and rural New South Wales.

Mr Roy Butler: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The question relates to the time frame for cash-based re-sowing and restocking grants in regional New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier is being relevant.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In case the member missed it, we put in place a \$310 million package of drought support, which includes freight support. We could end freight subsidies today because they were aligned to feed and fodder. But we know many farmers will not need feed and fodder because what they are going to do is restock. They could use the freight subsidy in relation—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will allow the Deputy Premier to answer.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Again in relation to supporting our farmers, when registration truck fees are waived for many of our farmers we know they can save \$10,000 to \$20,000. That support has been available right throughout this period.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: You give them a truck full of hot air.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The member for Maitland, who is the shadow Minister for Primary Industries, opposed support for the right to farm. I am not going to be lectured by her and I am not going to be lectured by the Labor Party. If the Labor Party genuinely wants to support farmers it should give them the right to farm.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: What about all the letters I have written to farmers who you have been left high and dry?

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The member for Maitland said that she would bring Labor's version of the right to farm to the House, and we are still waiting. We are just hearing crickets. We are hearing the locusts that are being seen in the far west. The crisis that we have seen in the regions is of biblical proportions when we add in a pandemic, bushfires, floods, drought and locusts in the far west. It is clear that the \$3 billion in support from this Government will continue to support our farmers throughout this period. As they recover, the Government will be with them.

Committees

STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

Membership

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

That Mark Raymond Speakman be appointed to serve on the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee in place of Andrew James Constance, discharged.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

RESIDENTIAL APARTMENT BUILDINGS (COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT POWERS) BILL 2020

Returned

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I seek leave for the Legislative Council's amendments to be considered forthwith.

Leave granted.

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 4 June 2020

No. 1 GRNS No. 1 [c2020-068B]

Page 2, clause 3 (1). Insert after line 20—

Building Commissioner means the Building Commissioner referred to in section 60A.

No. 2 GRNS No. 2 [c2020-068B]

Page 4, clause 6 (b), line 17. Omit "6 years". Insert instead "10 years".

No. 3 GRNS No. 3 [c2020-068B]

Page 4, clause 6. Insert after line 18—

- (2) The regulations may provide that a specified provision, or specified provisions, of this Act extend to other classes of buildings (within the meaning of the *Building Code of Australia*).

No. 4 GRNS No. 4 [c2020-068B]

Page 8, clause 11, definition of *authorised officer*, line 5. Omit all words on that line. Insert instead—

authorised officer means—

- (a) the Building Commissioner, and
- (b) any person appointed under Division 2.

No. 5 GRNS No. 1 [c2020-083A]

Page 18, clause 41 (3), line 25. Omit "fail to comply". Insert instead "refuse or fail to comply".

No. 6 GRNS No. 5 [c2020-068B]

Page 24. Insert after line 31—

60A Building Commissioner

A Building Commissioner is to be employed under the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*.

No. 7 **GRNS No. 6 [c2020-068B]**

Page 25, clause 62 (a), line 13. Omit "any person". Insert instead "the Building Commissioner and any other person".

No. 8 **GRNS No. 7 [c2020-068B]**

Page 27, clause 68, lines 34-41. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

68 Review of Act

- (1) The Public Accountability Committee of the Legislative Council is to review this Act—
 - (a) to consider the functions exercised or delegated by the Secretary, and
 - (b) to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain effective for securing those objectives, and
 - (c) to consider the desirability of establishing an independent NSW Building Commission to instead exercise the regulatory and oversight functions under this Act and other Acts relating to the construction of buildings.
- (2) The review is to be undertaken as soon as possible after 30 March 2022.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in the Legislative Council by 30 June 2022 (or by a later day determined by the Committee).
- (4) The Minister is to table in the Legislative Council a written response to the report within 3 months after the tabling of the report.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:38:23):

I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

I thank all the members in this place and in the Legislative Council who have contributed to debate on the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Bill 2020. A number of amendments were made in the Legislative Council. I make comment on a couple of those amendments. The Greens amendment No. 2 on sheet c2020-068B calls for the extension of the application of the Act from six years to 10 years. For the sake of ensuring the smooth passage of this important bill through the Parliament, the Government will not oppose this amendment, which expands the scope of the Act to buildings that have been completed within the last 10 years. However, in accepting this amendment the Government makes clear that it intends to put in place a clear policy of how the legislation will operate outside the six-year period that is proposed.

The Government drafted this bill to apply to residential apartment buildings that were not completed—for example, that were under construction—or completed not more than six years from commencement of the Act. That was to ensure consistency with the statutory warranties that apply under the Home Building Act 1989, which allow six years for major defects and two years for all other defects, commencing from the date the work was completed. The Government will be mindful of ensuring that the extension avoids creating an inconsistency between the two laws that inadvertently has the effect of requiring a developer to rectify building work outside of the current recognised warranty period. The Government is concerned that the proposed extension may be used as a mechanism to assist in a discovery process to support litigation for an owners corporation or a developer. That is not an appropriate role for Government.

I now refer to amendment No. 3, which extends the scope of the bill to other classes of buildings. Recent building incidents have emphasised that residential home owners are particularly vulnerable to building defects. To respond to growing community concerns and provide the greatest benefit to home owners, the bill was targeted to address concerns in class 2 buildings, which are multistorey and multi-unit residential buildings. The Government considers that the focus is needed in this sector as consumers are less likely to be able to protect their own interests and regulatory intervention may be required. Recognising that many modern apartment buildings have a combination of apartments, shops and offices in the one building, the bill extends the definition of a residential apartment building to include any building containing a part that is classified as a class 2 component. This ensures that mixed-use buildings are regulated by the reforms.

The commercial sector was never the focus of these reforms because it involves individuals who are typically a party to the contract and who use commercial and legal expertise to develop contracts with comprehensive provisions that protect their interests and manage liability. The reforms were also never intended to apply to class 1 buildings as owners of those classes of buildings have existing protections within the Home

Building Act 1989, including through the statutory warranty provisions in that Act. While the Government has been clear that its focus is on class 2 buildings as the immediate concern, it supports providing a head of power for the regulations to expand the scope of the bill to other classes of buildings in the future. The bill will be subject to a review from the date of assent to determine whether the policy objectives remain valid and whether the terms of the bill allow for those objectives to be met. That review can consider whether the powers should be applied to any other classes of buildings.

The bill further arms the Building Commissioner with the power to proactively detect and rectify defective building work and to prohibit occupation certificates and the registration of strata plans. The Building Commissioner has further powers that will be delegated to him under the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019. A significant number of those powers are mirrored in this bill. This development of the bill was expedited to present a comprehensive building reform package for consideration by the New South Wales Parliament and the public alongside the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019. The bill reflects only the first tranche of reforms that the Government expects to make as part of the overhaul of the New South Wales building sector.

Through the release of the Government's six pillar plan, the Building Commissioner has developed a strategy to regain public confidence and create a new customer-focused construction industry by 2025. Together with the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019, which passed through this House yesterday, the new legislative schemes will ensure that home owners in existing buildings are adequately protected. There has been strong support for both bills across the Parliament. Only a few weeks ago both Labor and The Greens called on the Government to urgently pass both bills. The member for Swansea, who is in the Chamber, only yesterday stated:

The Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Bill 2020 clearly demonstrates a well thought out and seamless process through notification and awareness of completion of a build, investigation of the building work and a comprehensive scheme to be able to promptly and effectively address building defects. The bill, together with the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019, is only part of the first tranche of important reforms in the building and construction sector that will provide New South Wales with a built environment where transparency, safety and quality are a priority. Now is the time for change. I commend the bill to the House.

I could not have said it better myself.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Obviously.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Correct. I hope I said it in the right tone. The cooperation between all members of the House, particularly the member for Swansea, who is the shadow Minister and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, is appreciated. We believe that is how the Parliament should work. I thank those in the upper House—The Greens, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, One Nation, the Christian Democratic Party and the Labor Party—for the great support in coming to an arrangement that will benefit the people of New South Wales. Yesterday the member for Sydney stated:

As the member with the largest proportion of apartments in their electorate, I thank the Government for this bill and look forward to working together on further reforms. I commend the bill to the House. I am pleased that the Government is now taking this critical action. I strongly support the appointment of the Building Commissioner and the design and building practitioners' legislation and now strongly support the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement) Bill.

The Government also thanks the member for Sydney for his input, given the fact that his electorate has the most number of high-rise residential apartments in the State. His insightful feedback and input into getting the reforms right was gratefully received. The Government is taking a no-nonsense approach to regulation in this State. The bill will reflect a new era in the industry. It is about putting public safety first to ensure that New South Wales has a leading system of design and building regulation that delivers well-constructed buildings into the future. I thank all members of Parliament who have been so actively involved in the discussion and refinement of the package of bills that we have passed this week. The bills mark the start of a new era of the design and construction of buildings in New South Wales.

I also thank the many external stakeholders—from various building elements and those who are involved in the construction and building industry in New South Wales from top to bottom—for the many roundtable discussions that we had across New South Wales. We thank them for their input and landing where we are today. This is a new era of design and construction of buildings in New South Wales that will provide better consumer protections for home purchasers and lift the standard of work across the building and construction sector. Lastly I thank the great work done by my chief of staff Gavin Melvin, policy director Harriet Platt-Hepworth and office whip Rowan Carter. The Parliament has many fathers today because success has many fathers. It is about accountability, transparency and quality. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:48:16): On behalf of the Labor Opposition, I speak on the Legislative Council amendments to the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers)

Bill 2020. First I will deal with amendments Nos 1, 4, 5 and 6, which relate to the Building Commissioner. The amendments will ensure that the Building Commissioner is an official position under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013. It goes some way towards ensuring that the Building Commissioner is an independent position with independent powers, which the Opposition supports. Members will remember that it is Labor's policy to have an independent Building Commission, which Labor would like to have full independence. This is a compromise position but one that Labor thanks The Greens for pursuing.

Amendment No. 2 relates to residential apartment building work that applies to the Act. Labor also supports the extension of time from six to 10 years, which the Minister referred to. It will give comfort to apartment owners who may not be able to seek a resolution to issues within a six-year time frame. I am very pleased to see the member for Charlestown in the Chamber. She knows only too well about the Landmark building in Charlestown and how the legislation would have been able to assist the home owners in that building, who have sadly gone through the mill and back. I acknowledge the hard work of the member for Charlestown for her advocacy for the residents of that building and other apartment buildings in her electorate. I have been part of those discussions. In fact, it was on the recommendation of the member for Charlestown that those residents appeared before the inquiry to give evidence. It was terribly sad to hear their plight. We are pleased that we are addressing the issue today. I am thrilled that the member for Charlestown is present in the Chamber during the debate.

Amendment No. 3 is about the extension of scope. Labor is supportive of the move to include classes of buildings that may not be high-rise apartments. We hear regularly of dodgy building work in homes, not just apartments. I said it yesterday and I will say it again today: I know that the Building Commissioner has a deep interest in the issue because he has met with me about building matters in my electorate of Swansea. I am grateful for it. I know that the Minister is also serious about wiping out the dodgy building practices across the State. We have heard from many home owners about significant defect issues that have not been resolved satisfactorily. The office of Fair Trading has not been able to work directly with the builders but now it can work with the Building Commissioner to resolve those issues. That is a great advancement.

It stands to reason that where development works around particular classes of buildings become so problematic the Minister has the power in the regulations to extend the Building Commissioner's powers to include other classes of buildings. In the future it will include class 1 buildings, which are houses or semidetached houses, particularly when developments are built en masse by large developers and the owners have significant defects and are powerless to resolve those issues directly with the developer or builder. That is another excellent amendment, which Labor supports. It also supports amendment No. 7 relating to the statutory review. The Opposition is thankful for a shorter statutory review. It will be of great assistance.

The Minister, other dedicated members in both Houses and I will keep an eye on ensuring that these are real changes and have practical outcomes for people in the building sector. I know the commitment of the Building Commissioner as well. We will come back to this place in March 2022 and see the good work that has been done. If improvement is needed, I know that with the cooperation from all members of the Parliament we will put that in place, remembering that the building industry is a significant economic pillar of the State. It is critically important that we get it right and that people can live in their homes with the confidence that they are safe and of a quality build.

I also thank all members who have participated in debate on the two bills over the past two days. As I said yesterday, this is the way we would like to see legislation debated and delivered: with agreement, consultation and great outcomes. I thank the Minister for his genuine dedication and attempts to make it the best bill that it could be. I thank his staff, who are in the Speaker's gallery, for their cooperation both with me and my office. I thank also Mr David Shoebridge for working so cooperatively on the bill. Most importantly I thank the stakeholders, who have been terrific. Their assistance has contributed to this bill, together with the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019, becoming a significant piece of legislation that will have a positive impact on the lives of people in New South Wales. I commend the amendments to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

PETROLEUM (ONSHORE) AMENDMENT (COAL SEAM GAS MORATORIUM) BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (14:55:45): It is fair to say that the light on the hill for the Australian Labor Party is completely extinguished. The actions of members opposite today and the actions of Labor Party members in the Legislative Council last

night would have people like Ben Chifley rolling in their graves. I cannot believe that members opposite, after spending the entire week in this place talking about protecting jobs, would go out of their way to create a piece of legislation that would extinguish the Narrabri gas field project after it has been assessed by the Independent Planning Commission. It is rank hypocrisy. Today the empress on the other side of the Chamber has no clothes on. It is unbelievable that every member opposite has spoken about the importance of jobs and then, when presented with the first bill of the week focused on creating job-generating investment, they walk away from every worker whose job relies on gas and cheaper electricity.

The Labor members do that at a time when the State is trying to put in place stronger regulations around gas exploration, as clearly identified through the NSW Gas Plan. Probably no better example of that is the reduction in coverage of the petroleum exploration licences under that plan, from 60 per cent to 6 per cent of the State, because this Government wants to make sure that gas is extracted out of the ground in an appropriate fashion with appropriate environmental regulation. In fact, the plan includes rigorous assessments for all gas-producing activities and their potential impacts, exclusion zones to prevent approvals of new coal seam gas activities within two kilometres of residential zones and provisions for setting and enforcing stringent controls and regulations for gas producers, including through water access licence requirements.

People want us to get the balance right and to ensure the environmental protections, the water protections and the opportunity to extract the energy resources that we need. That is exactly what this Government was putting in place. The Narrabri gas field project should be allowed to go through a transparent and independent assessment process. The actions of the Australian Labor Party over the last 24 hours are as anti jobs as one can get. It is as clear and simple as that. Its support of this bill clearly represents its anti-jobs position. Labor's decision risks the jobs of workers at the Tomago aluminium smelter who need access to energy. It risks the jobs of workers in Prospect in western Sydney. Only yesterday the member for Prospect spoke about the importance of manufacturing and long-term gas contracts to the people who work in his electorate. This bill is anti jobs in the Prospect electorate and the member for Prospect knows it. Labor's decision jeopardises long-term contracts for steel manufacturers in Bankstown which produce steel on projects like Bankwest Stadium, the steel for which is produced by the Southern Steel Group in Milperra, and the member for Bankstown knows it.

The internal division of the Labor Party in this State is out there for every person to see. Labor members have spent their time listening to the public sector unions, rallying members in this Chamber and trying to create division across the State when they have been divided on the issue of jobs in their own party room. The simple fact of the matter is that if a worker is not a member of a public sector union, no member opposite cares about that worker's job. If a worker is part of the 90 per cent of the workforce who do not work in the public sector, no-one in the Australian Labour Party gives a rats about their job. That position has been made clear by the actions of members opposite over the past few days. We have heard a lot of rhetoric about supporting manufacturing. Rubbish, complete rubbish! If they believed that, they would make decisions to ensure we have good, long-term gas supplies in this State and are not reliant on importing gas from other States or overseas. We would do so by making sure that we have appropriate environmental regulations.

I do not understand those who want to make an environmental argument about this. As New South Wales makes massive strides to include more renewable energy across its energy grid, the one thing understood by anyone with the most remote knowledge of energy production and the movement towards renewable energies is the need to firm up those renewable energies. The two easiest and most efficient ways to firm up renewables in this State are pumped hydro and gas. Together with the Commonwealth Government, this Government has backed in Snowy 2.0 to lift our capacity to pump hydro and firm up renewables during periods when the wind and sun are not generating the energy we need. It is a fantastic way of driving energy prices down and supporting jobs across the State. But it takes time to build that infrastructure.

The one thing we have available to us right now, a resource readily available to the people of New South Wales to support their jobs, is gas. If we put in place environmental protections to enable the safe extraction of gas in a way that protects our watertables and provides an opportunity to secure long-term gas supplies, the one thing that it will do over the long term is allow more renewable energy to be put into the New South Wales energy market. When those two things happen at the same time, the price of energy goes down. When the price of energy goes down, household electricity bills go down and people spend more money in the economy because they have more money in their pockets. But more importantly the price of energy for energy-intensive businesses also goes down.

Mr Justin Field, the member in the other place who introduced the bill, is having an absolute field day mucking around with members opposite, knowing how divided they are over the bill. He would have been sitting outside the Labor party room meeting this week rubbing his hands together, knowing how much of a ruckus he has caused amongst them. They are a complete rabble. The right-wing members who remotely support manufacturing jobs, such as the member for Bankstown and the member for Prospect, are wondering what type of Labor party

they are part of. Joel Fitzgibbon knows how much of a rank joke those people are. He knows how important strong gas supplies are to anyone who represents communities in the Hunter. He knows how important that is. He would be absolutely shocked by what the New South Wales division of the Labor Party is doing today, absolutely shocked, because he knows what a strong gas supply does. It lowers energy prices, it lowers electricity prices, it creates jobs and it provides businesses with cheaper energy which enables them to compete internationally on the things that we want to be able to compete on, particularly in the manufacturing space.

If we want to transition to things like hydrogen for future energy production or even produce things like green steel, more gas is needed to make that happen. More gas! Members opposite want to turn their back on the one project that is still being independently assessed. The light on that hill is gone. The once great New South Wales Labor Party is not even a reflection of its former self. It has abandoned everything that it believed in. Right now, today, the people who work in manufacturing and in factories right across western Sydney know Labor is not on their side. Labor has never been on their side since it lost its soul and its values. They are never coming back, either. They are never coming back. When you get up in the morning, wave goodbye to your family and go to work in that factory in western Sydney, know one thing: This bill is about the Labor Party members in this Chamber supporting their vested interest mates and supporting the people who put them into this Chamber at the expense of every single worker who relies on lower energy.

Ms Kate Washington: Shame you sold the poles and wires.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: Here we have it, as clear as day follows night. [*Extension of time*]

I was going to finish, but the gaggle coming from the other side of the Chamber encouraged me to stay just a little bit longer. I find it utterly remarkable that over the past couple of days the true colours of this version of the Labor Party have come to the fore, whether it is in talking about the politics of marginal electorates and how many votes people have got, and won and lost rather than talking about the jobs that people have lost over the past three months, or whether it is people in the Labor Party wanting to run their own protection racket across their own vested interests rather than making sure that we make decisions to lower the price of energy and secure long-term energy supply in New South Wales. All of those things are gone. The Labor Party in this State now is a complete rabble. It has lost its moral compass. It has lost the set of values that held the party together. Every single worker who is involved in energy-intensive industry knows that the Labor Party is not on their side today. Even the Australian Workers Union knows that the Labor Party is not on its side today. The people who the Labor Party used to believe in and the people who it used to support have been thrown away for political expedience.

To the members of the Labor Party who really believe in New South Wales and really believe that we should be a State that can generate our own cost-effective industries and cost-effective energy production, and to the people in the Labor Party who think they believe in renewable energy and want to have firmed-up renewable energy, I say this: Walk away from this vote. Come over here and support people with a real job. Come and support manufacturing. Come and support the concept of New South Wales being a confirmed renewable energy powerhouse, not just in this country but also right across the Asia-Pacific. The buck stops with bills like this. The energy and environmental protections exist. They exist in a framework that we have set up. The independent assessment exists through the Independent Planning Commission. If members opposite want to walk away from that, all they are doing is walking away from the people who work in manufacturing and energy-intensive industries right across the State. Like I said, the light on the hill that used to exist for the Labor Party is firmly extinguished. This absolute mockery of a bill that they have decided to support is the single greatest example of that.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:08:22): I strongly support the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019, which will help protect environment, biodiversity, health, food and water from the destructive risks of coal seam gas [CSG] mining. The bill would impose a moratorium on new and extended coal seam gas mining across the State and introduce much-needed CSG mining no-go zones in the Northern Rivers, major urban water catchments, national parks, residential areas and agricultural land. The bill would also establish an expert advisory board to advise the Government on the moratorium, and on the impacts and risks of CSG, and would reintroduce the public interest test for petroleum title development assessments. The bill is vital to securing the future sustainability of this State.

Coal seam gas mining is a heavy-duty industrial activity with significant risks. The process involves drilling through rock strata and injecting sand, water or chemicals into wells to fracture coal seam gas so the gas can float to the surface. The water extracted from the process can contain toxic and radioactive compounds and heavy metals. I have heard reports of devastating impacts from coal seam gas mining on the Pilliga State forest. The forest is an important biodiversity region and is the largest surviving remnant of temperate woodland in eastern Australia. The destruction must stop and I oppose plans to expand mining in that area. The potential for

CSG mining to contaminate water sources through, for example, overflows and seepages from holding ponds is of great concern. Sydney is the only city in the world that allows coalmining in its water catchment. Studies show mining results in the loss of up to 34 million litres a day from our dams. Sydney's water capacity dropped to around 40 per cent and Sydneysiders were asked to reduce their water use. Despite a temporary freeze on new and expanded mining in the catchment, two new longwall mines beneath Woronora Reservoir were approved in March.

Protecting our water and food supply, our biodiversity and our health should be above party politics or city versus country arguments. All major parties have had inconsistent policies around mining, particularly CSG, depending on whether they are in government or opposition. There are people in both the city and the country who profit and loss from mining operations. These arguments are tired and irrelevant. We must do better if we are going to address the serious future challenges of environmental and economic sustainability. It is time we all work together. Regional jobs do not rely on risky mining practices. Indeed, loss of water from mining prevents the expansion of many industries. Failure to diversify jobs in mining regions has put them at risk of future economic stagnation when the market changes, including shrinking global thermal coal demand. We cannot assume that gas will be around forever. Gas uses can be electrified and this change will happen as electricity becomes more sustainable. Liquid hydrogen from renewable energy is being developed as a potential gas alternative.

If we continue to expand mining unchecked, it will be difficult to diversify regional economies and they will lose in the long term. The Environment and Planning Committee is looking at employment opportunities in coal communities and we are learning about significant growth in sustainable jobs, such as renewable energy technology, manufacturing, agriculture and green chemicals. We need to start focusing on a smooth transition for those communities to prevent future economic and unemployment shock. Our planning framework has proven that it cannot prevent the destruction of important native bushland, the loss of drinking water during drought or the removal of vital agricultural land. Its aim is to manage risks, not prevent them. A CSG moratorium is now appropriate. The bill provides a way forward and I thank Independent MLC Mr Justin Field for introducing it. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (15:12:31): I take this opportunity to put on record my opposition to the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019. I went into politics because I wanted to see a New South Wales that was more free and more prosperous and that offers our citizens more opportunities every day of the week. Our country has gone from strength to strength over the years because we have made evidence-based and fact-based decisions—not decisions based on fear, but decisions based on facts.

I also believe that we have a responsibility to hand over our planet to our kids in a better state than we found it. That is something that I hope everyone in this Chamber would support. I want to see our environment improve for the benefit of our native wildlife, but most of all I want to see our environment improve for the benefit of our people. The best way to grow our economy, and to protect and improve our environment is to trust and follow the science. That is why this Government commissioned the chief scientist to look into the coal seam gas industry and to make sure that we had the appropriate protections for groundwater, human health and the environment. It is also why we have a system in which each individual project is assessed on its merits.

Let us call it what it is. This bill is about an individual project; it is about the Narrabri Gas Project. Like other projects and developments around New South Wales, that project should be considered on its merits. I know that a lot of people have concerns about coal seam gas. They are legitimate concerns. I know that a lot of people have legitimate concerns about the project being proposed in Narrabri, in particular. The best way to address those concerns is to work through the science and the evidence, and to put our best minds onto the issues that are being raised. The issues are around our environment, groundwater, prime agricultural land and human health.

We should not be holding communities or our economy back based on fears that do not hold water when scrutinised by the best scientific minds. Likewise, if our scientists and engineers identify real risks to the environment, water supply or human health, those risks clearly need to be managed and addressed properly. That is why the chief scientist made 16 recommendations to put systems and processes in place to protect our groundwater, to protect our environment and, most importantly, to protect human health. We need to make decisions based on facts, not fears. That is why I oppose the bill. We need to be confident that our environment will be protected by science and facts, not by hopes and best wishes.

I do not support the bill because it is not based on outcomes. It is not based on maximising our opportunities. The bill is based on concerns that do not stack up when properly considered and assessed by those who have the facts and the expertise. Too often in politics today we see politicians trying to get political mileage based on fear and on populist ideas that divide us. We only need to look around the world at the moment to see exactly the impact that that brand of politics is having. This country and this State has handled the current health

crisis better than the rest of the world because we acted on facts, not because we acted based on hope or gut feelings. We have acted based on the science.

I want to see strong and decisive action on the issue of climate change not because that is my ideology, because that is my fear or because that is what my emotion tells me to do, but because that is what scientists, engineers and economists tell us we need to do. When did we become politicians who decided that we will not listen to those who are qualified to provide the best advice and help us make the best decisions in the interests of our State and our country? That is not the kind of State that I want to support. I want to support a government and leadership that listens to facts and evidence, and makes decisions in the best interests of the community. This bill will not achieve that.

I do not support the bill because I think the fate of the Narrabri Gas Project should be decided by science, not politics. That is why it is going through a rigorous independent planning assessment process, like every project should when there are considerable concerns about the impacts that it will have on our environment and on the community. That is not an outrageous view; it is one that we use for similar projects. This project should be no different. The bill is about politics and ideology, and that is why I cannot support it. I will continue to stand up for the science and the facts, whether they be about climate change or coal seam gas. We have had the chief scientist of New South Wales—someone eminently qualified—advise us on whether this project will have adverse impacts on our environment. We should be acting based on evidence, not emotion.

I will finish by saying that the human mind is an amazing thing. It has seen us do extraordinary things such as reduce poverty, raise our living standards, and travel the world and beyond. I have no doubt that some of the best scientific minds in this State can make a sound, fact-based decision on this project. That is exactly what we should enable them to do. We do not need a populist piece of legislation from people who are well intentioned but who want to stop this project and who hide behind emotion. I do not support the bill because I care about our environment. I want the decisions we make regarding our environment and our communities to be based on evidence and science. That is when I am standing up for. All members who care about science and facts should stand up for the principle of making decisions based on evidence and facts. That is why I ask them to consider opposing the bill.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:20:21): In his speech the Deputy Premier let the cat out of the bag straightaway when he went to the politics of the issue. We have been hearing members on the other side talking about the politics all afternoon. I admire the speech of the Minister for Energy and Environment but I cannot come to his conclusion. He talks about looking at the evidence and looking at those 16 recommendations of the Chief Scientist and Engineer. The inquiry in the other place clearly said that only two have been implemented and that, of the other 14, eight had been ignored and six had been only partially implemented. Earlier in the debate when that was raised the member for Dubbo said, "The chief scientist's report is irrelevant because we are not talking about starting the unconventional gas industry; we are just talking about one gas well." When he stood for election to this place he made the ultimate nimby move, calling for Dubbo to have its petroleum exploration licences deleted.

It is alright to rape and pillage the Pilliga and Narrabri but it is not okay to do it to any other areas. I am interested in the views of those who have not spoken in this debate: the member for Clarence, the member for Tweed, the member for Oxley—who is the water Minister—and the member for Coffs Harbour. None of them have spoken. I bring word from the member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin, who put out a release today. We have been in conversation with her to promote the views of her community. We have to remember that it was her community that showed the way on this. They stood against The Nationals. They went to Labor because they know that it stands for the environment and for real jobs. The Minister for Energy and Environment talked about the politics of fear. The politics of fear is being used in this debate but it is about economic outcomes. The Government is speaking to people who are worried and concerned—rightly so—about their jobs. That is correct. But the Government is not protecting those jobs.

In this Parliament I hold the roles of shadow Minister for Primary Industries and shadow Minister for Investment and Tourism. Where are the jobs plans for those portfolios? One-tenth of our State's workforce is employed in tourism and hospitality. Where is the road map back? The Government cannot seriously be saying that it is going to secure the economic recovery of New South Wales from COVID-19 on the back of some jobs. The modelling of how many it would create in reality is doubtful. In other States and other places where the mines have gone ahead it has not been the local regional workforce that got the jobs. It has certainly not been the young female workers that the Treasurer was such a champion of during question time.

It is not those people who are getting the jobs; it will be fly-in fly-out workers. They will have a short-term contract for construction and then the jobs will fade away. We will have ruined the agriculture in one of the most agriculturally pristine areas in our State. We will have put the Great Artesian Basin at risk. We will have put our tourism industry at risk. For every job in the unconventional gas industry, 1.8 jobs are lost in agriculture and

0.9 jobs are lost in tourism. The Government is happy to throw agricultural workers under the bus. The Nationals and the Liberals are happy to throw tourism workers under the bus. Government members talk to us about vested interests. What is the vested interest in people who work our land to make our food, make our fibre for the clothes we wear, showcase our regional communities and provide employment for regional communities? What is the vested interest in the environment? That is pretty important. It is something we should be talking about.

It is interesting that only Ministers representing Sydney electorates have spoken to the bill—the jobs Minister and the environment Minister.

I have not seen the agriculture Minister in the Chamber during this debate. That is really interesting. As a fairly new shadow Minister in the Primary Industries role I try to talk to the stakeholders very carefully on all of these issues to get their views. I heard shock in the voice of the Country Women's Association [CWA] representative this morning when I said the bill was coming to the House today. NSW Farmers has been blindsided. There are no members from The Nationals in the Chamber now, only Liberals. The Nationals members do not want to stand in this place and say that they have blindsided the CWA—the biggest advocate for rural voices in New South Wales—and the NSW Farmers with their position on the bill. I will read this letter so all The Nationals members hiding in their offices can hear. I can see them.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

I will give them a wave. This letter from the CWA arrived in the electorate office inbox of The Nationals members today. If they have not read it, they can read along with me. It states:

Dear Member of the Legislative Assembly:

Support for CSG Moratorium Bill

The letter was sent to all members. It was not just The Nats that were picked on, but we know that is who the CWA is talking to. The letter continues:

The CWA of NSW is writing to advise of our support of the above Bill currently before the Legislative Assembly.

In 2014 the Chief Scientist and Engineer of NSW presented 16 recommendations to the NSW Government to tackle the many challenges and risks posed by the coal seam gas industry. The report on the progress of those recommendations noted that whilst the NSW Government had claimed that the recommendations were either complete or in progress, that was not in fact the case.

We support a ban on unconventional gas extraction like coal seam gas, in NSW. This position is a result of voted-upon democratic process within our organisation that allows our members to have their say on the matters that are important to them. It is a totally member-driven position. Our concerns centre on many of the Chief Scientist's recommendations that have not been properly addressed, despite the NSW Government having almost six years to do so, and to decreasing community confidence in the safety and transparency of this industry. This Bill does not seek a ban, but sensibly, a moratorium. This is highly appropriate in light of the current situation, where there are clearly too many unanswered questions around the safety of this industry.

There are still too many unknowns and risks to natural resources and water resources to be confident with this industry. We believe that we cannot proceed with CSG in NSW at the current time.

On behalf of our members, who are members of the largest rural-based advocacy group in NSW and who are the voice of country NSW, we urge you to support this Bill.

Every member of The National Party should read that letter. If they do not believe the CWA and want to blindside NSW Farmers, they should think about Ben "Fracker" Franklin in the other place, who seconded a motion at The Nationals conference moved by the member for Clarence—one member who will not show his face in this Chamber today because he is too scared—to buy back the PELs that had been allocated due to the risk that they posed. I do not remember The National Party having another conference position that said, "Yes, it's okay now: just go after the Pilliga. We are all over that." I cannot remember seeing that position stated.

Members opposite want to talk about jobs. They have done nothing about jobs for agriculture and tourism in my region through the last three years of drought and seven months of catastrophic bushfires, floods and now COVID-19. I talk to tourism operators. One said to me today that he has written 30 emails to Ministers of this Government seeking help for his tourism business to get back on track after the bushfires. This Government has ignored him. He has not heard back from one Minister, including the tourism Minister, the Hon. Stuart Ayres. The Minister is quite happy to talk about jobs in this Chamber but he does not talk about it down there. I went to the firegrounds in early January, in February and March. I spoke to people. I went to the tourism local government conference; the Government did not turn up. This lot talks about jobs when it suits their agenda, but never at any other time. *[Extension of time]*

One in 10 people in the tourism and hospitality industry across our State have been affected by COVID-19. Where is the Government's tourism plan? It only agreed to open the snowfields—one of our premier tourism destinations in New South Wales—after I harangued the Minister to give them a date. There is no date for the opening of our night-time economy. There is no time frame for reopening bus and group tours. Those operators are going to fall off the cliff in September and this Government has got no plan for them. I have had tourism

operators say to me today that if they do not get back in business by September they will not have work until March. I know that; I did that job for 20 years before I entered this place. I know that those people will lose their businesses and we will have massive unemployment.

If members look at what is happening across the ditch they will see Jacinda Ardern is a leader on jobs. She is spending some \$1.1 billion to create 11,000 jobs on—oh!—the environment. She is putting money into the environment, creating jobs not just for her government's friends and their mates but also jobs for the future. It made me sick to my stomach hearing members opposite having the temerity to talk about manufacturing when their Government has offshored every major manufacturing contract or job that it could get its hands on. Using the ferries and trams is just a disgrace—it is not right. The Government is not for manufacturing in New South Wales. It is not for manufacturing in this country. It wants to take that work offshore.

The other thing Government members are talking about in this debate is the need for gas. The Government has not managed to do anything about a gas reservation policy on the gas we already export, so why would we trust it on this? It has not done the work on the Chief Scientist's report, so why should we trust it on this? Australia is the major exporter of gas in the world. Gas produced in Australia should meet our energy needs first. If this lot had any courage, if they had any ticker they would be saying to Scott Morrison, "Mate, how about you fix this?" We have heard from the member for Barwon about the cost of the gas that will come out of those wells. That is our issue. Government members are trying to put this as a panacea and we know that will not happen.

Then there is electricity prices. I have been in the Chamber most of the day. I heard the member for Wallsend talking about electricity and the number of jobs. Remember what the Government said was going to happen when electricity privatised? It said prices would go down and employment would be maintained. We know that they have not done that. We know that as at 19 December the numbers were under the Government's 2016 guarantee. The electricity sector only had 3,228 workers, fewer than the 3,570 that is required by law and far fewer than the 4,300 that the Government claimed. It told us that the sector had lots more workers after the storms in March and after the bushfires—and rightly so. If members drive down to the South Coast or Batlow—any of those areas—they will know why they needed those people. Those communities were at very grave physical risk because of the damage to the powerlines. Of course the electricity sector had to put workers on for that, but why did it have to wait for the Government to get it going?

Why were the workers not there in December when our State was burning? It is because this Government cannot run things properly. There are pests and weeds. Farmers would love to have some help controlling pests and weeds. It does not matter if the Government has fixed them in the national parks, State forests, private lands or Crown lands. It is a massive problem out there. The member for Port Stephens, the shadow environment Minister, said that the Government needs to re-employ all the sacked national parks workers and then there will be no need for the gas project because all those jobs would be there. I will end my contribution by talking about the most important thing—water. This Government can add the killing of the Great Artesian Basin to its long list of sins and crimes concerning water, such as water theft that, according to the draft report the Government did not want, sent us into drought. Shame, shame, shame!

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (15:35:41): I begin with a quote from the Hon. Kim Beazley Sr to an Australian Labor Party State conference in 1970:

When I joined the Labor Party, it contained the cream of the working class. But as I look about me now, all I see are the dregs of the middle class.

How true. That was in 1970. It has got a whole lot worse. Now the Labor Party is the dregs of the dregs. I love moments when bills such as the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019 come to the House expose where members stand. In politics, you cannot be all things to all people. Over time as the Labor Party has grown and fallen away from the great party of the past, it has tried to be all things to all people. It has tried to be something to those in the inner west—the basket weavers of Balmain—but it says something completely different to the coalminers in the Hunter. Debate on the bill has exposed the Labor Party. At the next election campaign we will distribute comments from Labor members to various electorates around the State. At the 2023 election we will run the Labor Party against itself.

The bill is not about a project; it is about a principle. As the environment Minister eloquently pointed out, it is about the science and the evidence of the Chief Scientist in dealing with those concerns. Why would you rule something out before the project has even begun? The member for Maitland talked about who has made contributions to debate on the bill. I note that the member for Bankstown did not make a contribution. I do not know where the member for Rockdale is. Mr Kamper is probably hiding under his doona upstairs. The member for Wollongong has gone silent as well. Those members believe in something and have principles.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Over the past 24 hours during the course of this debate we have seen that it is going to be a difficult time economically for our State and the nation. But yesterday, the day the Federal Treasurer announced that we are entering into a recession, at three minutes to midnight the bill passed in the upper House. The bill seeks to ban an industry prior to any work or science being considered. It will cost thousands of jobs and damage our economy further. That is the reality of the new Labor Party: It stands for the public sector unions more so than for the workers across the State whom it was formed to represent. It has turned its back on those people. It is not just us saying it; now Labor has private sector unions after it as well.

Daniel Walton seems like a pretty reasonable chap. He is standing up for his workers, who will no longer have the opportunity to participate in the economy. They are Labor voters, blue-collar workers, who used to be the heart and soul of the party. They are the heart and soul of our State. Labor's decision to support the bill in lieu of any evidence or science shows how far it has come. We are entering into a recession and at this time the Labor Party wants to turn the recession into a depression. As the environment Minister quite rightly said, this is not a time for politics; this is a time for unity and for both sides of the House to come together and make the tough decisions to get our State and economy working.

The bill is not about a project—a process is underway; it is about a principle. There is no doubt that the gas industry can offer significant economic benefits to our State—an estimated 300,000 jobs rely on gas supply. The industrial sector accounts for 45 per cent of total gas demand in New South Wales. The New South Wales manufacturing sector, which is approximately 84 per cent of the State's industrial load, is important to the New South Wales and Australian economy, employing 253,000 people in our State, with 26,120 businesses adding \$33 billion in value and exporting \$2.4 billion in value. The gas project can result in job creation for field development—construction of wells and associated infrastructure with 1,300 jobs. Over the project's life of 25 years, there will be 512 direct and indirect jobs in New South Wales. That is a lot of jobs here. The Narrabri project may provide a minimum of \$233 million in New South Wales petroleum royalties, in addition to the corporate and payroll taxes and GST that the \$11.9 billion investment will generate.

The opportunity is substantial. That is why one needs to be open to the science, the process and the principle of allowing industries such as this to get on the ground to function and drive economic growth and jobs growth in the State. Interestingly, yesterday the Federal Treasurer said the recession will need a business-led recovery. It is up to State jurisdictions and the Federal Government to do what they can to cut red tape and regulation and allow the business sector to flourish and employ people. But on the first day of the recession, we have an attempt for a State ban and moratorium on an industry when we want to give an opportunity to businesses to thrive and industries to get off the ground so that they can employ people. It is indicative of how out of touch the Labor Party has become. It has become a taker, not allowing businesses to thrive. Having as many people as possible employed during this time will rely on governments getting out of the way and becoming enablers, not blockers. It means that we have to get the planning system engaged to help streamline processes so that businesses can get involved and invest, which will drive business and consumer confidence and get us back to where we were before. It will not be a public sector union recovery. It will be led by the wealth creators in the private sector, who will drive economic and jobs growth in the nation.

I have some faith in the Labor Party because clearly some people in the party understand economics and the importance of industry and getting business off the ground. I look forward to the day that the Australian Workers Union joins the Liberal Party and realises that it is the Liberal Party that stands for the workers and has put more people in work than ever before. New South Wales has had the lowest unemployment rate in the nation. The Government has created more jobs. Every time it has tried to create jobs in whatever industry and field, the New South Wales Labor Party has stood in its way. They are the blockers. They are the job killers of modern-day Australia. They are the worst representatives of the Labor Party in this entire country and almost in its entire history.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 76. The Treasurer has strayed very far from the bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Treasurer is still being relevant. He is talking about jobs.

Ms Kate Washington: But—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens will not argue with me. The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Politics is not easy and tough decisions must be made to get the State moving. I cite the example of the WestConnex project. When it came to populism Labor opposed it but now Labor

members are driving on it every single day to get to work. It has become a tourist attraction in its own right. *[Extension of time]*

Major infrastructure projects are difficult to get off the ground but those projects create jobs that allow families to put food on the table. Unfortunately when it comes to Labor, as the member for Ku-ring-gai said, they have become the blockers. They support what seems to them to be the populist approach but in reality is the wrong approach. Labor has opposed infrastructure projects and assets recycling that has unlocked billions of dollars in capital that can be invested in further infrastructure. I recall during the 2015 election campaign that Labor said assets recycling and the poles and wires transaction would not have any impact on economic growth. How wrong it was. Look at where New South Wales sits as a State coming into this pandemic compared to any other State in the country. Our State's debt position is by far in the best position. That allows us at this time to borrow more at lower rates so that we can invest more where it matters. That has occurred only because of the transactions this Government has undertaken—transactions that have built up the asset base of the State and at the same time has resulted in more people working than ever before.

But Labor is always there to block this Government's projects and always takes what Labor perceives to be the populist line. At the next election Labor members will soon see that their support for this bill will come back to bite them. People know at this time in a one-in-one-hundred-year moment that what we need right now—and not just for the sake of it—are programs, reforms, the cutting of red tape and regulation and policies that maintain an environment in which businesses thrive, flourish and employ people so that they can support their families. That is what leadership is. That is what this Government will continue to do.

I cite the example of a good man, Daniel Walton, who is the champion of the people. It is great that there are still people like Daniel Walton in the New South Wales Labor Party. He says Labor is selling out its blue collar mates. He is so right. He is a man who is in touch with his workers. He is a man who knows and understands that factories in New South Wales are buckling and folding under high energy prices. He said, "I cannot believe we are seeing New South Wales Labor prioritising the made-up worries of a noisy minority over the very real employment of manufacturing workers." And he is right. What Labor members have not worked out yet is that if they see something on Twitter, that generally means it is not the actual right decision and that is not where popular opinion lies. It is interesting that this Government will soon be heading into its fourth term and soon after that its fifth term. After that, Labor still will not have worked it out.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Maitland she is already on two calls to order. I call the member for Ku-ring-gai to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Labor still has not cleared out its deadwood members of this House and clearly has no intention to do so. As The Greens come through and start taking Labor seats in the inner west and the Coalition parties come through and start taking Labor's seats in the outer west, the Hunter and Wollongong, where people know that the Coalition parties stand with the workers of New South Wales, very soon Labor will have only a few members left and they probably will be sitting on the crossbench.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: And then into this House will come Daniel Walton. He will lead the new resurgence of the Labor Party, probably with Steve Kamper, who might develop a bit of ticker and speak on this bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Treasurer does not need the help of the member for Ku-ring-gai.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: But I have faith that Labor will be back because having a strong opposition is good for government. It keeps the Coalition parties in form. During this pandemic we tend to become a bit softer. I have faith that clearly there are good members in the Labor Party who know that pandering to the inner-city elites is not the way forward for their party and is not the way forward for a strong State and a strong nation. The Liberal Party will always stand for strong economic growth and strong jobs growth because we know that at the end of the day people cannot be workers if they do not have a job. We want to ensure that many people across this State are in a position to provide for their families, stay in work and put food on the table. We know that what makes a great State and a great nation is the opportunity for prosperity that it can provide for its people.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:50:53): I support the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas Moratorium) Bill 2019. I speak on behalf of and as a member of the Country Women's Association [CWA]. The CWA was formed in about 1922, so it has been around for a long time. The CWA has a lot of procedures and processes to formulate motions and express points of view and is highly respected by governments, particularly conservative governments. I am a member of the Barellan branch, which is one of the oldest branches of the CWA. After the CWA was formed in 1922, the Barellan branch may have been formed in 1923. One of the aims of the CWA is to improve the welfare of women and families, especially in country areas. The association

also aims to encourage development in regional areas to improve the vitality of rural communities and to improve the environment. Today I received an email from Danica Leys, who is the highly regarded chief executive officer of the CWA.

Mr Alister Henskens: My constituent.

Mrs HELEN DALTON: Yes, so you must agree with me. The New South Wales CWA advised that they support the bill before the House. Danica Leys wrote:

In 2014 the Chief Scientist and Engineer of New South Wales presented 16 recommendations to the New South Wales Government to tackle the many challenges and risks posed by the coal seam gas industry. The report on the progress of those recommendations noted that while the New South Wales Government had claimed that the recommendations were either complete or in progress, that was not in fact the case.

What I am saying to members is that there are some glaring omissions in dealing with the issue of coal seam gas. Danica Leys continued:

We support a ban on unconventional gas extraction like coal seam gas in New South Wales. This position is a result of a voted upon democratic process within our organisation that allows our members to have their say on the matters that are important to them.

Clearly the member for Ku-ring-gai has not been listening to his constituent members. He has ignored them. Danica Leys went on:

It is a totally member driven position. Our concerns centre on many of the Chief Scientist's recommendations that have not been properly addressed, despite the New South Wales Government having almost six years to do so and has led to a decrease in community confidence in the safety and transparency of this industry.

So the Government has not been listening. If you have got good health, you have a fortune and that is the issue with coal seam gas extraction. Ms Leys further stated:

This bill does not seek a ban but sensibly a moratorium. This is highly appropriate in light of the current situation where there are clearly too many unanswered questions around the safety of this industry.

If the member for Ku-ring-gai had been listening, he would have heard the member for Barwon explain about the issues with the Great Artesian Basin. The member for Ku-ring-gai obviously does not draw water from that. Ms Leys went on:

There are too many unknowns—

absolutely too many unknowns— and risks to natural resources, water resources and our health to be confident in this industry. We believe that we cannot proceed with CSG in New South Wales at this current time. She continues:

On behalf of our members, who are members of the largest rural-based advocacy group in New South Wales—

that is the people of the members opposite—

and who are the voice of country New South Wales, we urge you to support the bill.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (15:55:15): In reply: I have listened to the contributions made by members from both sides of the House. I expected to hear "jobs, jobs, jobs" and "economic development" from the Government benches and that by pushing this we would be crulling economic development in regional New South Wales. I tried to present balanced and non-emotive information about the importance of and necessity for groundwater. It is important to say that not everyone appears to have sought to understand the effect of the moratorium.

The bill does not impose a ban. It says: If you follow the best science and implement the recommendations of the Chief Scientist then you can consider progressing with coal seam gas. A standing expert advisory group will monitor and ensure compliance with the expectations of the Chief Scientist. I am not trying to kill an industry. I am simply saying that if we proceed with a coal seam gas industry, we must do everything in our power to protect groundwater. That seems to be the message from the Government benches—that we need to rely on the best science. If the current science is better than the 2014 science, then we should implement that better science.

I thank members who have contributed to the debate, representing the electorates of Monaro, Port Stephens, The Entrance, Upper Hunter, Ballina, Maroubra, Penrith, Sydney, Hornsby, Maitland and Epping. I will address briefly some of their concerns. It should be no surprise to anyone that I should introduce a bill about putting controls on coal seam gas exploration. I campaigned on the issue prior to the election and since then I have spoken about it consistently. Of course I would take an opportunity to do something about coal seam gas. Otherwise, the people of my electorate would think I was telling them one thing and doing another thing in Parliament.

As the Deputy Premier said, all projects carry risk. That is why it is so important to follow the scientific recommendations. The Chief Scientist has identified 16 things that will make coal seam gas exploration safer. We

need to implement those 16 things and appoint a standing expert advisory group to oversee it. Of course I support job creation in regional New South Wales but, as I said earlier, we should stimulate agriculture to create those jobs. A whole lot of dormant jobs are waiting there. We have had some water and we just need—

Business interrupted.

Petitions

WORONORA DAM CATCHMENT AREA

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

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:58:12): Firstly, I recognise the valiant effort of all petitioners. It is no mean feat to get 10,600 signatures on a paper petition. It took months. I congratulate everyone who signed the petition and thank them for doing so. Unfortunately the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces is unable to be present for debate on the petition due to a family emergency. I apologise for his necessary absence. Again, I thank everyone who has taken the time to sign the petition on the Woronora Dam area mining. As all members know, water is precious. Indeed, earlier today members were debating the issue of water clarity in the far west of the State. Water is one of our most precious commodities and we must look after it. I am confident that the restrictions around water for this mine will preserve water quality. The conditions put forward by all the experts are strict indeed.

The Metropolitan Mine is the oldest mine in Australia. It is 160 years old. Its mining practices are second to none. I believe it is one of the only mines that backfills when longwall mining. I am not saying I support one or the other but I must consider the people in my electorate who depend on coalmining, which includes metallurgical coal. It is not coal to burn in power stations. It is important that the mine continues its operation with BlueScope in Wollongong. My colleagues in the Wollongong area would agree that if the mine closes 3,500 BlueScope jobs would be decimated, which would definitely—

Mr Paul Scully: The best steel in the world.

Mr LEE EVANS: Indeed. The best coal goes into that steel mill. The closure of the coalmine would be a major blow for BlueScope. Again I congratulate everyone who took the time to sign the petition. In particular I acknowledge the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre, which has done a stellar job in getting those 10,600 signatures. I thank all petitioners.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (16:01:38): I speak to the petition presented by the member for Heathcote. It is always a privilege to speak on a petition because a lot of effort, time and energy always goes into getting 10,000 signatures. I thank and congratulate all participating community groups. As shadow water Minister I have had the opportunity to speak to a number of those community groups, some of the mine developers and environmental groups as well as individuals who have a vested interest in the issue. Undoubtedly the questions about employment, environment and similar issues to be considered by the planning commission, the water Minister, the shadow water Minister and the resource Minister are tricky.

Early on I made a decision with my colleagues that the legitimacy of the independent planning process would be the absolute key to the decision-making. All members come to this place with good intent but the truth is we do not always have the necessary skills to make the decisions that are required. We have to leave those complex decisions in the hands of specialists who are experts in their fields. In trusting the science, the evidence and the experts as much as possible, our fundamental responsibility as politicians is to look at the process and the people involved in it and ask ourselves whether or not they are legitimate, robust, transparent and sufficiently specialised. In this instance my colleagues and I on this side of the House decided that they were, that the question had been asked of multiple experts on a number of occasions and that we must trust the experts to make the right decision.

I know a little bit but not a lot about coalmining and I understand a little bit but not a lot about longwall mining. I completely understand the concerns of the community with regard to the impact that longwall coalmining might have on the surface. But I also understand that in coalmining what you do not want is a wet mine because a wet mine is really hard to work. So from the mining perspective, what they do not want is a water problem; they do not want to crack the surface and create a water problem. Understanding those elements of the whole process has been crucial, in part, to my landing on my position about being satisfied that the process would inform us and that the experts involved in making the decision were important.

There are going to be people out there who are disappointed with the outcome of this decision, but the responsibility of the water Minister and the shadow water Minister and Sydney Water and WaterNSW is absolutely 100 per cent to take all responsibility for making sure that the water that we provide to our communities through our catchments and through our pipes, tunnels and taps is 100 per cent quality, ready to be drunk and safe

and secure. In that regard I realise that a lot of the conditions that have been put on this coalmining event are about the quality and the transparency of being able to see the quality of the water, and that is really important. We on all sides of this Chamber have to hold our mining companies to account. This is not an approval for coalmining at any cost, under any conditions, no matter what. This is an approval where we trust that the companies have the processes and policies in place that we are going to be able to watch and monitor to ensure that there is no harm. It is a really important responsibility for politicians on all sides to make sure that we do that. I commend the petition to the House.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (16:06:46): The Government welcomes the opportunity to consider and discuss this petition today. I make the Government's position very clear right from the start. We recognise the concerns held by the many members of the community who have signed this petition. We are just as concerned about ensuring the safety and integrity of Sydney's water supply and we will continue to closely monitor all environmental impacts on mines in the catchment area. I can say with confidence that no government, least of all ours, would want to see quality drinking water compromised in any of our communities.

I assure the House and the people of Sydney that the Minister would not take any decision that threatened the safety and integrity of our water supply. The petition asks the House to "stop further threats to our water supply and rescind the development consents that permit mining" in the Special Areas of the water catchment. As someone who has always been mindful of the facts and respects the science, I understand that there have been a number of inquiries that have looked at underground mining in the catchment and its actual and potential impacts, including on our water supplies. The most recent and most comprehensive inquiry was established by this Government in November 2017. This led to two reports of the Independent Expert Panel for Mining in the Catchment.

The very reason we established this inquiry was that we also wanted robust answers to these important environmental questions, just as the petitioners do. The inquiry was undertaken by five recognised, highly qualified and independent experts in their fields, together with the New South Wales Deputy Chief Scientist and Engineer. The panel produced an initial report in November 2018 and a second and final report in October 2019. Both reports have been released and are available through the Chief Scientist's website. The panel looked very clearly at the Metropolitan Mine, which is the mine that is the subject of this petition. The panel's final report concluded:

Losses of water from the Woronora Special Area due to mining impacts associated with Metropolitan Mine are negligible, with a water make between 2009 and 2017 that has averaged at 0.09 ML/day and, with the exception of May 2011, a 20 day average water make below 0.5 ML/day.

For clarity and context it is important to consider the history of the approvals at the Metropolitan Mine. First, I note, but will not dwell on the fact, that the mine's development consent was granted by the former Labor Minister for Planning, the Hon. Kristina Keneally, in June 2009. Members opposite should remember that fact. But this approval was granted after an independent inquiry by the then Planning Assessment Commission, now the Independent Planning Commission of New South Wales. That inquiry was convinced that the risks of mining beneath the reservoir were not such as to stand in the way of a development consent. The then Department of Planning was also convinced and so was the Minister.

Now, while the Government has limited ways forward because a development consent was issued by the then Labor Government, we have to manage the way forward as best we can, and that is through monitoring the environmental effects and taking action if necessary. Following the initial report in November 2018 and a second and final report in October 2019, the extraction plan was approved to continue mining at the Metropolitan Mine. The Government fully understands and respects the concerns of the members of the community who have signed this petition. The Government particularly understands the concerns of those members of the community who live in southern Sydney and receive their drinking water supplies from the Woronora Reservoir. The Government does not dismiss or neglect these concerns in any way.

The safety and reliability of Sydney's water supply continues to be an extremely high priority of this Government. I take it seriously and I know that the local member takes it very seriously. That is why we will continue to closely monitor mining operations in the catchment and ensure that it continues to be the case. I further acknowledge that each new mining proposal or mine expansion upgrade in and around catchment areas is separate and has different circumstances and issues to consider. Those proposals should be rigorously investigated and subjected to public consultation and scrutiny. I commend the petition.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:11:39): I thank the petitioners for their efforts in bringing this petition to the Parliament. It is important that all voices have the opportunity to be heard and given an appropriate airing in this, the oldest Parliament in the country. I can understand the disappointment of many petitioners that this debate has come after a decision on the extraction plan for Metropolitan Mine's longwall panels 305 to 307 has already been made. It has been suggested to me that this was a deliberate act by the Government in an attempt

to avoid scrutiny, but that is a charge for Government members to address. I have discussed this issue with people on both sides of this debate.

Metropolitan Mine is the oldest continually operating coalmine in Australia. It has operated since 1888 and since the Port Kembla steelworks—located in the electorate I represent—commenced its operations in the last century, it has been supplying coking coal to make steel, and around 60 per cent of its production still does. In recent years the mine has been subject to a number of independent reviews, including by the Woronora Impact Assessment Panel and, more recently, by the Independent Expert Panel for Mining in the Catchment, convened by the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, led by Emeritus Professor Jim Galvin—one of the world's foremost experts on underground mining and subsidence—and expert water researchers like Dr Ann Young, who has a PhD in upland swamps on the Woronora plateau.

It must be noted that during this debate, after considering considerable amounts of data and submissions from agencies, experts and the public, the Chief Scientist and Engineer's independent panel did not—and I emphasise did not—recommend, find or conclude that current mining in the catchment should cease. I do not consider the panel to have reached its conclusions lightly or without thorough examination of all the available scientific and engineering evidence from domestic and international sources. I note that the mining plans were approved under an existing mining approval that requires continuous approvals of mining plans under an "adaptive management" approach and was approved in consultation with WaterNSW, the Dams Safety Committee and the independent expert panel. It improves a number of monitoring and trigger action response plan requirements.

I also note that the independent panel found that current mining techniques at Metropolitan Mine were conservative and have resulted in "no evidence of a connected fracture regime to the surface". In simple terms, that means that the mining operations did not cause cracks that extend from the longwall panels to the surface. I am advised by engineers that this is because the panels in question are deeper and narrower and the pillars between the panels are wider, which acts to limit surface effects.

When it comes to the assessment of mining under the catchment, Labor has also adopted a conservative, precautionary approach. We suggested—and the Government adopted—the position that new approvals should not be granted while the review by the independent panel was considered. The recommendations have been adopted and, to my knowledge, implemented in full. Monitoring is in place in relation to subsidence, groundwater, swamp and water balance. The process of requiring progressive approvals of already approved mining operations provides opportunities to review extraction plans prior to mining activity taking place, and to have that assessed by the Department of Planning and examined by technical experts, including agencies such as WaterNSW. The science has been listened to and adhered to.

I understand the concerns. I grew up in Mount Kembla, where there is also a mine under a catchment. I used to work for Sydney Water. When the Dendrobium mine was reopened, I was involved in active discussions with the mine operators and my community. I am not a miner but I learned a lot more about the mine operation through those conversations. Those discussions led to changes to the initial mining plan. With that experience in mind, I strongly encourage Peabody Energy and the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre to engage in similar and ongoing discussions. I do not know whether the member for Heathcote has already done so, but I urge him to actively facilitate such discussions between the parties. That is what a responsible local member would do and that is what I would do in his position. I suggest that the depth of feeling conveyed by this petition warrants renewed and proactive consultation and communication activities by all parties: the mine and the community.

The member for Heathcote has brought this petition to the Parliament. As a local member, is he doing anything further or is he just trying to be seen to be doing something with the petition? NSW Labor supports a safe, sustainable, responsible and well-regulated mining industry in New South Wales. We believe there should be high environmental standards coupled with strong compliance activities and that planning decisions, like this one, should be based on the best available science and evidence and supported by strong, ongoing monitoring, reporting and compliance activities. After all, we want to transition to a low-carbon economy. To do so, we need resources to help develop and build low-emission technologies and that must be underpinned by a stringent planning, approval and compliance framework. I thank the petitioners for bringing their concerns to the attention of the House.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSON (Upper Hunter) (16:16:33): As the members who have spoken before me have made clear, the Government welcomes the opportunity to consider and discuss this petition today. The Liberal-Nationals Government recognises and respects the concerns held by the many members of the community who have signed this petition. We are just as concerned as they are about the safety and integrity of Sydney's water supply. Our Government will continue to ensure that the people of the Sutherland Shire and, in fact, the rest of Sydney have reliable, good-quality drinking water supplies at all times. The Government's Independent Expert Panel for Mining in the Catchment looked very carefully at the Metropolitan coalmine. The panel's final report concluded:

Losses of water from the Woronora Special Area due to mining impacts associated with Metropolitan Mine are negligible.

It is important to understand, in the simplest of terms, how that can be so. The answer lies in relatively straightforward geometry and engineering. The longwall panels of coal that the Metropolitan Mine extracts are quite narrow by current industry standards. The thickness of the coal seam is also thinner than in some other mines. The pillars left between the extracted panels are wider and the mine itself is quite deep. This means there is less subsidence and less cracking of the overlying rocks. The cracking does not reach the surface and therefore the surface water does not travel down to the mine. Importantly, the cracks that can be seen at the surface are formed by compression and are disconnected from the cracks reaching upwards from the mine.

It is also important to recognise that the two mines operating in the special areas provide hundreds of jobs in the Illawarra region. In addition, the coking coal from those two mines is essential for the ongoing operation of the BlueScope steelworks in Wollongong, which employs a further 3,000 people. Mining has occurred in the catchment for over 160 years without any major impacts on Sydney's drinking water supplies. Mining continues to be a major employer in this State and a major economic driver. I am advised that in 2017-18 the total value of mining production was around \$27.4 billion.

In that same financial year, the export value alone of the minerals and processed metal products, including aluminium, was \$25.3 billion. That is around 45 per cent of the State's merchandise export revenue. It is worth noting that coalmines under other bodies of water across the State have managed similar factors previously, including the Centennial Coal mine at Myuna—which I have toured—under Lake Macquarie. By taking a sensible, risk-based approach we can allow mining to continue without threatening Sydney's drinking water supply. The Government's prudent approach protects both local jobs and our water supply. I thank the member for Heathcote for bringing forward this petition and for the opportunity to clarify a number of elements of mining in New South Wales.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (16:19:53): The Government welcomes the opportunity to consider and discuss this petition today. I thank members representing the electorates of Wollondilly, Upper Hunter and Camden for their contributions. The New South Wales Government recognises the concerns held by the many members of the community who have signed the petition. I can even highlight that one of my agencies commented on the risks involved if this was not done right. As water Minister, I, too, could not support any practice that does not consider the safety and integrity of Sydney's water supply. That is why it is so important to listen to the experts and maintain integrity in the planning process and, at the same time, listen to the people who have put their names to a petition—as is their right.

I acknowledge the work of Lee Evans, the member for Heathcote, in being a great local member. I remind the House that this development consent was granted by the former Labor Government and by the former Labor Minister for Planning, the Hon. Kristina Keneally, in 2008. Now the applicant has a legal right to mine coal in the area. Although the decision was made more than a decade ago, I assure the House and the people of Sydney that I would not allow my department to take any decision that threatened the safety and integrity of our water supply. We are not debating an underground thermal coalmine where the product is being exported overseas. This mine provides critical metallurgical coal, for which there is no replacement, to the last remaining steelworks on the east coast, in the fabulous city of Wollongong. It provides more than 340 direct jobs at the mine and \$435 million of direct and indirect economic benefits per year.

A number of inquiries have looked at underground mining in the catchment and its actual and potential impact, including on our water supply. The most recent and most comprehensive inquiry was established by this Government in November 2017. That inquiry led to the two reports of the Independent Expert Panel for Mining in the Catchment. The very reason we established the inquiry was that we wanted robust answers to these important questions, as do the petitioners. The panel for that inquiry looked very judiciously at the Metropolitan coalmine, which is a subject of this petition. The panel's final report determined that:

- Losses of water from the Woronora Special Area due to mining impacts associated with Metropolitan Mine are negligible, with a water make between 2009 and 2017 that has averaged at 0.09 ML/day and, with the exception of May 2011, a 20 day average water make below 0.5 ML/day.

That inquiry was convinced that the risks of mining beneath the reservoir were not significant enough to stand in the way of development consent. [*Time expired.*]

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:23:26): In reply: I thank my colleagues, members representing the electorates of Cessnock, Wollondilly, Wollongong and Upper Hunter and Minister Pavey, for taking the time to speak to the petition today. Again, I thank all those who petitioned on this subject. I know that the debate will not necessarily have answered all your questions, but let us put it bluntly: Your message has been heard quite clearly and I thank you all for the time that you have taken to bring the petition. I ask that the House take note of the petition.

Petition noted.

Bills

PETROLEUM (ONSHORE) AMENDMENT (COAL SEAM GAS MORATORIUM) BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:24:50): In my inaugural speech I said that I would talk to anyone in this Chamber or the other place about working on issues in Barwon. I have spoken to the honourable member who gave me the bill to bring to this House. That is not a surprise. I am not playing politics; I am taking the view of the majority of people I speak to in my electorate. I want groundwater to be protected. The Deputy Premier said that this is going to cost jobs. Over the last seven years I have seen many jobs leave the Barwon electorate—public service jobs in small towns that were centralised into larger regional towns. A lot of them left the bush altogether and went to Sydney. I will not cop that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask members who are coming into the House to do so quietly. I also remind members about social distancing requirements. The member for Barwon will be heard in silence.

Mr ROY BUTLER: Both NSW Farmers and the Country Women's Association—groups whose opinions I imagine the Government would be interested in—have grave concerns about coal seam gas when it comes to something as important as water. In response to the Deputy Premier's comments about an "unholy alliance", I do not think we need to call it that. It is no different to when The Nationals have voted with The Greens on greyhounds or native vegetation. If there is something that we want to pursue and there are members who want to pursue it with us, we are going to partner with them to do it.

I still have not had an answer about how this project delivers cheaper energy to the consumer. The Australian Energy Market Operator price that is being put forward is \$7.25 a gigajoule. How does that result in cheaper energy when that is more than twice the price of wellhead gas in other parts of the country? Coming back to the comments from the member for Upper Hunter, it is important to stress that the bill does not ban coal seam gas. It does not stop coal seam gas forever. It says that the Chief Scientist's recommendations need to be fully implemented and that a standing expert advisory panel needs to confirm that they are fully implemented. Then the project may be able to proceed.

I do not think that asking for strong protection of groundwater and letting an independent group of professionals assess the level of compliance is a bad thing. I implore members to ensure that the highest level of protection is involved for the most precious resource that we have, which is water. I also ask that members seriously consider what people in their electorates want. Do the people they are here to represent want to see coal seam gas go ahead? When members go back to their electorates they will have to face them and talk to them about it. I am trying to look after my communities, who have been through one of the worst droughts in living memory and who have totally relied on groundwater throughout that, for both domestic supply and agriculture. Without that groundwater they would not be there. We need to make sure that the best protection possible is in place to keep that groundwater safe. Let us confirm that the Chief Scientist's recommendations are fully implemented. The member for Upper Hunter said that they are almost done. If that is the case then let us get an independent panel to confirm it. I commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes36
Noes38
Majority.....2

AYES

Aitchison, J
Catley, Y
Daley, M
Donato, P
Greenwich, A
Hornery, S
Lynch, P
McKay, J
O'Neill, M

Barr, C
Chanthivong, A
Dalton, H
Doyle, T
Harris, D
Kamper, S
McDermott, H
Mehan, D (teller)
Park, R

Butler, R
Crakanthorp, T
Dib, J
Finn, J
Harrison, J
Leong, J
McGirr, J
Minns, C
Parker, J

AYES

Piper, G
Tesch, L
Washington, K

Scully, P
Voltz, L
Watson, A (teller)

Smith, T
Warren, G
Zangari, G

NOES

Anderson, K
Berejiklian, G
Constance, A
Crouch, A (teller)
Elliott, D
Griffin, J
Kean, M
Marshall, A
Perrottet, D
Roberts, A
Sidoti, J
Taylor, M
Upton, G

Ayres, S
Clancy, J
Cooke, S (teller)
Davies, T
Evans, L
Henskens, A
Lee, G
O'Dea, J
Petinos, E
Saunders, D
Smith, N
Toole, P
Ward, G

Barilaro, J
Conolly, K
Coure, M
Dominello, V
Gibbons, M
Johnsen, M
Lindsay, W
Pavey, M
Preston, R
Sidgreaves, P
Speakman, M
Tuckerman, W

PAIRS

Atalla, E
Bali, S
Car, P
Cotsis, S
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Lalich, N
Mihailuk, T
Saffin, J

Wilson, F
Williams, R
Bromhead, S
Gulaptis, C
Provest, G
Stokes, R
Hazzard, B
Singh, G
Hancock, S

Motion negatived.

Private Members' Statements

ALBION PARK RAIL BYPASS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)
(16:42:07): One of the reasons I stood for Parliament was to fix the Princes Highway. A little over a week ago I could not have been prouder to stand on the first of 13 bridges that has been completed as part of the Albion Park Rail bypass project. The work is a real credit to the efforts of the hardworking team at Fulton Hogan and Transport for NSW. This has been one of the largest battles of my time as a local MP. Given that this is the largest ever single investment in the history of the Princes Highway and the largest infrastructure project in the history of our region it is no wonder it was such a challenging project to secure. However, the meetings, speeches and the anxiety were all absolutely worth it as I strolled across what will become the southbound entry ramp into Albion Park and gazed upon the upturned earth that cut an industrial swathe through the lush and expansive green paddocks.

I remember walking into the office of the then roads Minister Duncan Gay in my first term as a local member. I brought maps, population projections and planning documents. I thought I had done all the research and had all the answers. I was like a kid who had prepared hard for the HSC: nervous but confident. Duncan took one look at me and said, "Son, you've already got more money for roads in your electorate than anyone else. Are you seriously telling me you want more?" I simply stared at him in utter amazement and disbelief and said a simple but emphatic, "Yes, I do". He laughed and said, "I'll hear you out". I did not back down in that initial meeting. I walked out of his office with a commitment to start the planning work which would get the ball rolling on this vital project. The last time anyone had talked about this bypass was in the early 1990s when the project became a line on a planning map. I am sure planners and the community believed it simply would not happen.

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

Mr GARETH WARD: Time passed and no property acquisition or planning occurred until I mustered the courage to do my best Oliver Twist impersonation and be audacious enough to ask for more. This project will return local streets to the residents of Albion Park Rail. For residents of Albion Park and further south, this project will remove the only sets of traffic lights on the Princes Highway between Bomaderry and Heathcote. As the local MP this project is the cherry on the Illawarra infrastructure cake. Once it is completed I will have duplicated the Princes Highway throughout my entire electorate, with projects like the Gerringong upgrade, South Nowra upgrade and the Berry bypass now complete and the Berry to Bomaderry upgrade and the Shoalhaven River Bridge now under construction. Of course, my friends in the Opposition have been an utter disappointment when it comes to supporting my community and its infrastructure needs. As members know, Labor voted against allocating funding for the Albion Park Rail bypass in this place.

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

Mr GARETH WARD: I take it they would prefer the funding to go towards some time and motion study for the more efficient production of wind chimes or the rights of workers in inner-city boutique Balmain hemp manufacturers. In any event, the record will forever show that Labor not only voted against funding this project but refused to match my commitment for this vital infrastructure. Labor was simply more interested in the needs of Sydney and not the South Coast. Labor had 16 long years in government and did nothing to progress the project. It is wonderful to see the member for Shellharbour in the Chamber. When I make a promise to our community I get it done. I went into politics to get things done. The Government has a record of getting things done and the project is emblematic of its commitment to making the tough stuff happen.

But the tough stuff has come at a cost to not just New South Wales taxpayers but also local people. I acknowledge the Tate family. Dairy farmers in Albion Park for generations, the Tates had to give up their family home to see the project progress. The Tates have had to relocate their dairy and livelihoods as a result of the project. It was not an easy decision. I thank the Tate family for dealing with immense pressures that have come with negotiating an outcome to ensure that our community is able to realise a project that will make a considerable difference. Had urban planners taken a different approach many years ago, the Tate family may have been spared the challenges that they have faced, but I cannot underscore how grateful our community is to them and other property owners who have negotiated with the Government to ensure that the project can commence. As the project comes to life, as the Super T girders are secured, the concrete poured and the surfacing complete, not only will I have come good on a promise I made to our community at the election, but the Government will also have delivered a project that will make a real difference in the lives of local people. That is the reason I went into politics in the first place. Now, let's get it done.

ILLAWARRA WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:47:02): I am delighted to report that on Monday 16 March 2020 I stood alongside Ms Sally Stevenson, General Manager of the Illawarra Women's Health Centre, and Dr Patricia Cullen of the University of New South Wales to make an important funding announcement. The Illawarra Women's Health Centre has received \$50,000 funding to support the development of a business case for its proposal to establish a domestic and family violence trauma recovery centre in the Illawarra. In other words, a domestic and family violence trauma recovery centre in the Illawarra is officially one step closer to becoming a reality. If fully funded, the centre will be the first of its kind in Australia. Victims and survivors will finally have a support resource that focuses on their long-term holistic recovery.

The \$50,000 funding will be used to establish a design for the centre. The design process will involve hearing from, and collaborating with, women who have lived experience of domestic family violence, service providers and policymakers. The final design will form the basis of the business case for the centre. As members may be aware, the Illawarra Women's Health Centre has been lobbying State and Federal governments for funding since its campaign to establish a domestic and family violence trauma recovery centre in the Illawarra was first launched last year. I am delighted to say that I was able to play a role in helping secure the funding for the project after lobbying the New South Wales Minister for Health and Medical Research. I sincerely thank the Minister for funding the proposal. Projects such as this need real bipartisan support. Domestic and family violence is plaguing our communities. Right now victims and survivors are struggling to navigate their recovery in an underfunded and outdated system.

The centre will be a lifeline for those who need it the most. This is not a political issue. The centre could be a turning point in our history. I thank Sally Stevenson and the outstanding team at the Illawarra Women's Health Centre again for their work in our community and their inspiring vision for the future. It is a delight to work alongside them in our community. I am glad to have been able to contribute to the project. The business case that the Illawarra Women's Health Centre can now develop thanks to the new funding will be reviewed ultimately by NSW Health and interagency partners before a final decision is made about whether to fund the project in its entirety.

I believe in the proposal and the team behind it. I will do everything I can to see it is funded fully in the future and to see that the domestic and family violence trauma recovery centre is delivered for the people of the Illawarra. Unfortunately, there is a high incidence of domestic violence in my electorate. The Illawarra Women's Health Centre in Warilla helps more than 1,500 women every year, so it is all the more important that we as a community wrap ourselves around those women and children and do everything we can to protect them and help them heal. The time for vigils and rallies against domestic and family violence has passed; that is over. The prevalence of domestic and family violence in our society brings shame to every member of the House and every member of our communities. The time for action is now. The centre is a step in the right direction. Once again I thank Ms Sally Stevenson and her team at the Illawarra Women's Health Centre for their outstanding work on the project so far.

I look forward to continuing to work alongside them and support the project in whatever capacity I can in the future. I again thank the Minister for Health and Medical Research for his support for the project. I look forward to continued, bipartisan support of the project in the future. I also look forward to the day in the future when I am standing in the Chamber, announcing that the project has been fully funded, and then, not long after that, announcing the centre's official opening. Finally, I look forward to updating the House on the impact that the centre has made on my community in the not-too-distant future.

LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE ROADS

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:51:20): I speak again of the undesirable and unacceptable consequences that will flow from the banning of right-hand turns from Dorrigo Avenue into Hoxton Park Road and from Hoxton Park Road into Dorrigo Avenue at Hoxton Park within the electorate that I represent. I raised the issue of the intersection in this place in November last year. At that stage business owners at the Hoxton Park Shopping Centre and nearby residents of Dorrigo Avenue, Colong Close and part of the southern side of Hoxton Park Road were made aware of a State Government proposal to alter traffic conditions on Hoxton Park Road to allow a rapid bus transport service between Liverpool CBD and the western Sydney airport. In passing, I note that the State Government is proposing it because it will not fund the extension of the south-west rail link to the airport despite that being cheaper than the north-south link, which it favours.

As part of the proposal, the Government wanted to ban right-hand turns at the intersection of Hoxton Park Road and Dorrigo Avenue. When I spoke previously on the issue I explained that it would impose significant inconvenience on residents and business owners. It would obviously also potentially endanger the financial viability of some of the businesses. There is an obvious likelihood that some people will no longer patronise businesses at Hoxton Park Shopping Centre if they cannot access them conveniently. Additionally, by forcing commuters who currently make right-hand turns there onto other roads, the amenity of nearby suburbs that become the alternative routes will be affected adversely. The proposed changes will also affect Hoxton Park Community Health Centre and the 1st Hoxton Park Scout Group adversely.

When I previously raised the issue in this place, a so-called consultation period was commencing about the proposal. We all found out the results of the consultation several weeks ago. The results were publicly available on a website before anyone was told specifically that they were being released. I also observe that the results were released in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. "Insensitive" does not cover the description of this Transport for NSW behaviour. The Government rejected the wishes and concerns of residents and business owners summarily. It also rejected the view of local, State and Federal representatives: me; Ann Stanley, MP; and councillor Nathan Hagarty in particular. I cannot find anyone in public office in Liverpool who supports the proposal. The dishonesty of the consultation report is that the Government claims improving safety as the reason for banning the right-hand turns. At best, that is disingenuous. There are other equally effective solutions to the intersection if safety is a concern. The problem for the Government is that the other solutions cost money. However, the cost of the present proposal will be borne by business owners and residents.

Since the release of the report following the so-called consultation process, local opinion has been unanimous: Before the consultation, no-one supported the banning of right-hand turns; after the consultation and report, no-one has changed their minds. There is still not one local who supports the banning of right-hand turns. The Federal member for Werriwa, Anne Stanley, and Councillor Hagarty have restated their opposition. I still cannot find any councillor who supports the State Government on the issue.

Lance Lagudi, who operates the Hoxton Park Newsagency wrote, "I feel that all our submissions and concerns have gone unheeded and they have not listened to or care about the concerns and issues that were raised with them. I am asking that the decision be reviewed again as there are other intersections where a right-hand turn is permitted." Nam Lam from Hoxton Park Cellars also contacted me to set out his disappointment with the decision to proceed with the plans unchanged, ignoring the submission to the contrary from local residents, representatives and business owners. I think the word "disappointment" significantly understates the depth of feeling on the issue.

Mr Michael Schirripa also wrote to me. He found the decision to go ahead with the original plan to be very disturbing and disheartening. He correctly points out that the decision to proceed will cause hardship and worry to shop owners and business operators as well as local community members. He makes the point that the addition of the specified bus lane and banning right-hand turns had been unheard of until comparatively recently. He goes on to state, "Accordingly people who had invested in the shopping centre took out loans to run businesses. The owners expanded and upgraded the centre and now find a serious threat to their financial position." Those who wish to proceed with this proposal must understand that it is utterly opposed by those who are directly affected and by those who represent them.

The shopping centre started as a small neighbourhood centre in 1978. People have made plans and decisions since then on the basis of existing road structure. Overturning those assumptions in such a cavalier way to save government agencies money might be typical bureaucratic arrogance but it remains unacceptable to my local community. The Minister for Transport and Roads should rule out this proposed change. There are two issues here: one is a substantive decision about the future of the intersection. I think the Government is wrong and there are alternative approaches. The second issue is the wanton and implacable attempt to ignore what the community wants. As I say, the Minister should ensure this proposal does not happen.

WORONORA RIVER BRIDGE

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:55:57): For many years now the bridge that crosses the Woronora River on the Heathcote Road at Heathcote has been a site of several accidents and deaths. This bridge was built during the war by the United States Marine Corps so they could access the beaches and surf in the Royal National Park and the bridge opened in 1943. Currently there is community consultation on a project that proposes to widen the existing bridge for safety—however, still only two lanes. There is no foresight in spending inordinate amounts of time and funds to replace the existing bridge's two lanes with two lanes.

Since being elected I have advocated strongly for duplication of this bridge. There must be four lanes. Once the Moorebank Intermodal project is completed there will be even more pressure on Heathcote Road with increasing numbers of heavy vehicles utilising the arterial road. A bridge built by the United States Marines 75 years ago will not cope. Similarly, with the completion of the M5 Extension linking to WestConnex, Heathcote Road will become the preferred option for people from the south travelling north, which is another reason why widening this bridge needs to be favourably considered. We must get on with the build as soon as possible.

The proposed two-lane extension will only cause inconvenience for road users for a period of time when replacing a two-lane bridge with—you guessed it—another two-lane bridge. It is proposed that the road will be closed for up to six months. The ultimate plan would be to bypass this piece of road entirely with a possible best scenario plan of a high-level bridge taking out the need to go down and then climb back up the valley, duplicating the entire Heathcote Road and separating traffic into four lanes. This would be a best-case solution. However, with time lines I imagine it will be a decade or more before all the regulations and studies could be completed—and then, of course, there is the budget.

Criticism has been made over the length of time this project has taken but may I point out to the Opposition that prior to my election Heathcote had been a Labor seat in several forms for over 50 years. I note that nothing had been done by those opposite when last in government for 16 years. The Heathcote Road Bridge is being rebuilt and I am extremely proud of the project. I stand by my preferred option of a four-lane bridge, which will futureproof this length of road for at least a decade or until another option has been scoped and budgeted. I also have requested an urgent review of this project knowing that the people of Heathcote want and deserve four lanes on the bridge over the Woronora River on Heathcote Road.

I thank the Minister for Transport and Roads who is in my corner in relation to getting this bridge duplicated. It has been a hard, long fight against bureaucrats who believe that two lanes is wide enough. I personally have suffered the loss of people I know who passed away as a result of accidents on the bridge. It is time that focus was brought to bear on the project. As I said, consultation is open until 7 June and I urge as many people as possible to engage in the consultation to make their thoughts known. We need a four-lane bridge over the Woronora River on Heathcote Road.

TRIBUTE TO UNCLE DICK CARNEY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:59:50): I pay tribute to Uncle Dick Carney, who sadly passed away last month aged 77, and convey my deepest sympathies to his wife, Aunty Ruth. Dick was a well-respected Aboriginal Elder in the Narromine community—a very gentle and very quiet man who was completely generous with everyone he met. Dick lived a humble life, but he grew up in an amazing and somewhat troubling time in Australia's history. This is not the first time Dick's story has been told: It has been made into a stage show and a

book. But it is certainly appropriate to share some of his life again. I thank Aunty Ruth for the permission to do so.

Richard Carney was born at Warren, north-west of Narromine, in 1942 to parents Bill and Josie Carney. He was the third eldest of 14 children. His father, Bill, worked on properties around the district. The children spent most of their time in the bush, hidden away from the authorities, who they were warned could take them away. When they went into town to visit family, the kids knew that if they saw a car approaching they should hide up in the fruit trees. Dick used to tell a story about the Warren Debutante Ball of 1960 at which his cousin was to make her debut. Dick bought some second-hand white trousers, which his mum dyed black, and he also got a brand-new pair of shiny leather shoes. He pressed his shirt, tied a Half Windsor and set off on the hour-long walk into town with his brother, Bill. But the doorman turned them away, which broke Dick's heart. He said he did not feel much like dancing after that.

When Dick and his brothers got much older they all went away and became shearers. In reality, there probably was not much else on offer for young Aboriginal men in 1960s Australia. They travelled around regional New South Wales, only returning home on weekends, and it was on one of these weekends that he met Ruth, a country girl from Narromine. Dick's brother was dating Ruth's sister at the time and they went on to get married, too. On this particular weekend, Dick, his brother and Ruth's sister were driving in Narromine when they noticed Ruth and her cousin walking in the opposite direction. They pulled over to talk. Ruth leaned in the window and Dick was struck immediately by her charisma. To Ruth, Dick looked like a rock star with his thick, shiny black hair. The fact they both remembered the moment so vividly tells how important it was for both of them. Dick and Ruth were soon married and while they did not have a lot, they built a pretty special life together at Narromine.

One of their favourite things to do together was dance. Dick used to say, "We always dance together. When I'm too fast, she pulls me up. When I'm too slow, she goes 'Come on!' But we do it together." They did everything together. Dick and Ruth were never able to have children and that was something they felt very deeply, but it did not stop them from throwing themselves heart and soul into the community. Dick drove the Narromine Preschool Kindergarten bus, and the kids absolutely adored him. Over four decades Dick also guided hundreds of kids from teenagers to adulthood through their debutante balls, teaching them ballroom dancing and even becoming emcee. He had come full circle.

Dick was a truly warm, caring and generous person who went through plenty of testing times, but was never hardened by that. In recent years Dick and Ruth shared their amazing story with the world through a stage show developed with the help of Mudgee artist and writer, Sam Paine. It is called *A Little Piece of Heaven*, starring Dick and Ruth. It played in Narromine and played in Dubbo and toured to Melbourne as well. Sam also helped Dick and Ruth turn their story into a book. I thank Sam for some of the insights he provided to help me reflect on Dick's life today. While Dick was nervous at first, in the end he was very proud to share his story and to see how people responded to it.

One of Dick's favourite sayings was, "Don't get bitter, get better." It was something his dad had told him growing up and I think it is safe to say that Dick absolutely nailed it. He did not just get better; he truly was one of the best. Towards the end Dick battled cancer but very few people were even aware of that. He never wanted anyone to treat him any differently. In the end he decided to discontinue treatment, and he and Ruth made the most of every day together. As I said, they did everything together. My deepest thoughts and prayers go out to Aunty Ruth and to all of Dick's family and friends for their loss. The death of Uncle Dick Carney has left a massive hole in the Narromine community but every one of us is better for having known him. The number of people who lined Narromine's main street on the day of his funeral was a quiet testament to that. Vale, Uncle Dick Carney.

TAFE NSW

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:04:52): Unfortunately for the people of New South Wales, this Government's abysmal record on TAFE is an undeniable truth. It is disgraceful, it is shocking and students in our State are suffering. Between 2012 and 2016—when the figures were last reported—the Liberal-Nationals Government has bled 234,300 enrolments from TAFE. Not only is TAFE bleeding but also it has been absolutely gutted. We have seen it all before. The Liberals and Nationals are allowing yet another public institution to crumble and fall into disrepair so that they can sell it off to the highest bidder. Currently we are in a period of uncertainty and recovery. Many sectors have experienced large-scale job losses and many workers will consider retraining. This should be TAFE's time to shine but, unfortunately for the people of New South Wales, TAFE budgets have been slashed. Thousands of jobs have been cut, hundreds of courses have been axed and campuses around the State have been shut down.

For example, Dapto TAFE campus was closed back in January 2016. It was once a bustling campus with 111 staff members on site, catering for up to 700 students. That campus has been replaced with a small shopfront in Dapto CBD, with a couple of staff members and space for a maximum of 20 students. When it opened, students

were instructed to walk to nearby shopping centres or a train station to use toilet facilities. It did not have a bathroom then and it still has no bathroom. It is a small facility without basic amenities, without a library. It is unable to offer practical trade courses. That is the reality of TAFE today. It is a far cry from the incredible public institution it once was.

Our State is experiencing a skills shortage and growing unemployment. We desperately need renewed and improved investment in our TAFE system. Labor believes courses in areas of skill shortage should be free. We should not force more students onto Higher Education Contribution Scheme style systems and saddle them with more debt. We should be doing everything we can to encourage them to undertake study and fill the gaps in the current job market. Members opposite have cut an estimated \$140 million from TAFE. Likewise, an estimated 4,000 TAFE jobs have been made redundant since 2012. Introducing private providers into the sector has resulted in higher fees for students, lower quality education and fewer course opportunities. The people of New South Wales are paying more and getting less.

To walk further down the path of private provision is a mistake. I share the concern of members on this side of the House that the review into TAFE will give the Government yet another excuse to make cuts and push for privatisation. Also I am concerned about what that will mean for young people not only in New South Wales but also in our rural and regional areas. TAFE is an invaluable resource, especially in our regions. It has been undercut and overlooked for far too long. Our youth unemployment rate remains unchecked. I promise to do everything I can to help "Rebuild Our TAFE". I urge every individual in New South Wales who has been involved in TAFE and every individual who knows someone who is better off for having been involved in TAFE to sign Labor's petition. I share the fears of many people in my community about what yet another review of TAFE will mean for the future of the public provider of skills and training.

The review should not be an opportunity to take a hack to the institution and continue down the road of gutting TAFE. Instead the review should be an opportunity to expose private providers and prompt additional funding and investment to make sure that TAFE thrives and is accessible to all. I ask members opposite to start supporting TAFE finally, especially in these trying times. Their blind trust in private providers and the outsourcing of TAFE jobs and TAFE funds to the private sector will spell disaster for the people of New South Wales. We need stability, we need hope and we need TAFE.

HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:09:50): I am excited to announce that my electorate has received a \$300,000-plus investment boost through the latest round of Community Building Partnership [CBP] grants. All grants go towards highly committed community groups, ranging from local sporting groups to disability services to local school P&Cs. Due to COVID I have not had the opportunity to visit those groups to announce the grants. I look forward to visiting them all to see the positive impacts the funding has had. I know it will make a huge difference.

In particular I mention Holsworthy Preschool, which received \$20,000 for a flooring refurbishment. The preschool prides itself on providing a comfortable and hygienic area where children sit, play and learn. The new flooring will provide a more aesthetically pleasing environment for the children and will reduce cleaning costs and allergens. That will make a difference, particularly during the current pandemic. The grant is in addition to earlier funding I secured for the preschool which provided a much-needed playground upgrade. The kids are particularly happy there now. That funding was used to add a disability ramp to the playground. Importantly the ramp encourages inclusion by enabling all children to use the new playground. I had the pleasure of visiting Holsworthy Preschool last year to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary. It was a great day. In particular I congratulate the director of the centre, Linda Thorpe, on running a beautiful preschool that provides an amazing learning environment for our local community.

Our Men's Sheds have a special place in the Liverpool and Sutherland shire communities. I am happy that Liverpool District Men's Shed and Menai Men's Shed both received funding in the latest grants round. Liverpool District Men's Shed received \$25,000 to help refurbish its new home. That funding will improve its newly acquired facilities, after such a long search for one, and provide a safe place for men to come together and interact while working on projects for the wider community. Members have heard me mention the love that the late John Jewell had for the Liverpool District Men's Shed. I am pleased to provide this money in his name also.

Through the CBP program the Menai Men's Shed received \$3,500 to purchase a new security system. That funding will ensure the facility and its equipment are protected through real-time and remote monitoring. The centre is somewhat isolated, which has posed some risk, so I am pleased the grant will make a difference to it. I am grateful to both Menai and Liverpool District men's sheds for their contribution to the local community in encouraging men's involvement with meaningful projects that promote wellbeing and social interaction with other members. That work is particularly important during the COVID pandemic.

The Wattle Grove Public School received \$40,100 to replace the synthetic grass area with rubber wetpour surfacing. That will provide the school with a safe, enhanced environment that both staff and students can enjoy. It will enhance community engagement also, as many community groups and activities utilise the space on weekends and during school holidays. It is something everyone can enjoy. I have worked closely with the Wattle Grove Public School P&C over the past nine years. I thank the P&C for the amazing work it does and look forward to the next school fair. The fair is held every two years and I love supporting it. Other funding recipients in the Holsworthy electorate include Al Amanah College, which received \$50,000 to conduct a playground transformation; Casula Rural Fire Brigade, \$8,578 to purchase a ride-on mower and a water bottle filling station; Moorebank Anglican Church, \$4,535 to install a disability ramp; and Liverpool South Anglican Church, almost \$15,000 to refurbish its bathroom facilities.

Further recipients include Moorebank Air League, \$8,000 to purchase new band equipment; Australian Foundation for Disability [AFFORD] at Lurnea, almost \$13,000 to install an adult disability change table; AFFORD at Prestons, over \$20,000 to install a new cooling system; Fairfield Liverpool Cricket Association, \$13,000 to purchase a ride-on lawn mower; Fellowship Baptist Church, \$23,000 to build a new basketball court and upgrade its security; St Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, \$12,000 to demolish and renovate its stage room; Holsworthy Girl Guides, \$10,000 for improvements and repairs to its facility; St Christopher Parish at Holsworthy, \$12,100 to upgrade its church's audiovisual and lighting system; and Young Men's Christian Association Hammondville, \$10,000 for a children's outdoor environment upgrade. Clearly a lot of money is going out to many different places in the electorate. One of the most important parts of my job is working to make our community better and stronger. I thank all the community groups that applied and that are working with us to improve the services and safety of people who live in the Holsworthy electorate. I wish them all the best in spending that money.

TAMWORTH ELECTORATE TOURISM

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (17:14:58):

As the cloud of COVID lifts, it is time to move around regional New South Wales—with caution and social distancing. It is time to visit the hundreds of small businesses and tourist spots in the Tamworth electorate. This weekend is the Queen's birthday long weekend and there has never been a better time to take a trip out to the regions. Drop into a local cafe, grab lunch at a country pub and buy a gift from a small business in the bush. New South Wales has had it tough this year; we have had bushfires, COVID-19 and farmers are still feeling the bite of the drought. We are inviting everyone in the metropolitan area in Sydney to come and visit regional New South Wales.

While it is great news that we are seeing COVID-19 restrictions easing, now is the time to take a look. We have a message for anyone in the city: There has never been a better time to visit the Tamworth electorate and surrounding districts. The roads and businesses are open and we hope to see as many visitors as possible. Our region has so much to offer anyone looking for a break this weekend. Just like in the poem, we are a land of rugged ranges and sweeping plains, and the ranges and plains are looking pretty good, with green grass and sprouting winter crops—a beautiful place to drive through. Visitors to Tamworth will have plenty of attractions to take in this weekend: the Tamworth Visitor Information Centre, the Big Golden Guitar, the Tamworth Regional Art Gallery, and Tamworth Marsupial Park and Adventure Playground—get up close to animals and stop for a picnic lunch. Get outdoors and take the kids for some fun at Tamworth's Bicentennial Park, one of Australia's best free fun parks.

Hopscotch cafe is open for a hot drink and lunch too. There is the Powerhouse Motorcycle Museum or Tamworth and Kootingal Horse Riding Adventures. For those who love to take a relaxing walk, there are the sights and sounds of the Peel River levee bank track and beautiful Peel Street, Tamworth—the main street of the city, which was voted one of the best in regional New South Wales. You will see banjos too if you walk along Peel Street—you never know who will be playing a tune on the famous Boulevard of Dreams. The Oxley Scenic Lookout provides visitors with more of a challenge and panoramic views of the city of the Tamworth River valley. The lookout is surrounded by natural bushland and is the base camp for the Kamilaroi Walking Track, which winds its way through the bushland of Oxley Park, linking to the botanic garden. There is the Marsupial Park, the Oxley Scenic Lookout and Flagstaff Mountain—all over a distance of just a few kilometres.

If camping and boating is your desire, there are three major dams in the region open for campers and day visitors: Chaffey Dam is to the south of the city, and Split Rock and Keepit dams are an easy drive to the north and north-west. Gunnedah, just 80 kilometres to the west, also has plenty of recreational areas for walkers and cyclists. To get an even better view of Gunnedah and the Namoi-Mooki river valleys, people should head off to the Bindea Walking Track. The track starts from the top of Porcupine Lookout and offers a range of walks of varying lengths. If you are staying in Gunnedah and have a love of bicycles, it has the ultimate circuit for you and your family. Enjoy the picturesque scenery and abundant wildlife, discovering the charm of this beautiful country

town. And there is plenty to immerse yourself in in the historic areas of Tambar Springs. Discover the linkages to the largest known marsupial to have roamed the country or there is Poets Drive, inspired by Gunnedah's iconic landmarks and local heroes.

Travel Poets Drive and explore the essence of bush life and challenges and adventures of rural Australia. Take the time out to stop and read each poem. In Nundle the Nundle goldmine is open during the long weekend, as is the Drunken Trout Cafe and Nundle Woollen Mill—the award-winning woollen mill. Check out Nundle's Riverside Walk. Just beyond the Hanging Rock village near Nundle Rock is Sheba Dam. On the way to the Barraba silo stop in to Manilla and Buralow. Take a look at a completely unique place of Australian rail history, with a maritime rail viaduct and a massive piece of timber engineering that was opened in September 1908. The viaduct is now closed but stands as a heritage to our great region.

Molly May's cafe is open over the long weekend, as well as Warm Discussions cafe. Walk along the Namoi River and check out some of the unique shops like Burrell's Bazaar and the Manilla Folder. Barraba's grain silo is now the canvas for three massive murals of a water diver. Visit Walcha—a magic place to visit, with the town's historic buildings, camping grounds, trout fishing opportunities, nearby national parks and remarkable natural attractions. Werris Creek is a great place to stop for train spotters. Stop at the Australian Railway Monument and Rail Journeys museum. The Werris Creek railway station is a beautiful sight to see. We would love to see you in regional New South Wales. Come and pay us a visit and fall in love with the Tamworth electorate.

FORMER NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE COMMISSIONER SHANE FITZSIMMONS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (17:20:09): I place on record my gratitude and respect for the immense contribution made by NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons during this horrific bushfire season. This summer Commissioner Fitzsimmons has led the greatest volunteer firefighting force in the world through the most difficult and dangerous bushfire season in our history. He is a valued member of the Hornsby community and I am proud to count him as a friend. Shane has devoted his life to the RFS, joining at the age of 15 as a volunteer in the Duffys Forest brigade. He was elected brigade captain at the remarkably young age of 19 and since then has fought fires in almost every corner of our State. His commitment to the work is legendary.

Fireys will tell you that Shane has never shirked the dirty and tedious job of extinguishing spot fires after major conflagrations, doing his part and more. But more than that, over his three decades with the Rural Fire Service he has become a master of organisational deployment. He understands that you cannot control the wind, or the rains or the land tinder-dry from drought, but you can forge a strong and resilient team of volunteers and you can create durable and effective partnerships with other agencies. He has proved that it is a model that can prevail over the worst fires in living memory. Like many families in our State, the Fitzsimmons family can boast successive generations of proud involvement in the RFS. Shane's father was a volunteer, and Shane met his wife, Lisa, when her father was the local fire control officer. When he says the RFS is his family, he means it to his very core.

Thankfully, there are few RFS families who have endured the tragedy suffered by Shane, who lost his father, George, to a prescribed burn that went tragically wrong. It is part of the reason for his unwavering dedication to the welfare and safety of RFS volunteers. It is why he championed the adoption of the latest technology to make the job of fighting fires safer for everyone involved. Shane will tell you that the strength of the RFS lies in the diversity of its volunteers. It can pass unseen unless you are at the face of a fire. But perhaps his greatest legacy is the teamwork one sees between members of the RFS from different walks of life—resourceful, knowledgeable and capable, working together to bring even the worst fires under control. Last month a reporter from *The Australian* asked an exhausted Bundanoon firefighter for their thoughts about Commissioner Fitzsimmons. "We'd follow him anywhere", came the response.

Beyond the RFS, as this relentless fire season wore on, with our cities shrouded in smoke and ash, the broader community came to rely on the commissioner for clear and reliable information and steadfast leadership. He did not falter, even when faced with the devastating loss of three RFS volunteers and the deaths of the American aerial firefighting crew aboard the C130 tanker that crashed outside of Cooma. Shane, thank you for your extraordinary service and sacrifice. You really do represent the best in our community and the very best of our country.

Of course, no recognition of Shane can be done without acknowledging the amazing support of his beautiful family. Lisa, Lauren and Sarah, we are so grateful for the sacrifices you have made so that Shane could keep us all safe. I know that you are the motivation that keeps him going. Thank you so much, Fitzsimmons family, and, most importantly, thank you so much, Shane, for your incredible leadership and heroism during your

time as the commissioner of the RFS. We wish you every success in your new role as the Commissioner for Resilience in New South Wales.

KOGARAH WAR MEMORIAL POOL

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:24:22): I wish to make the House aware of the incredibly disappointing decision by Georges River Council to demolish the Kogarah War Memorial Pool at Carss Park. The Kogarah War Memorial Pool has been an important institution in the St George region since it was dedicated in 1966 as a memorial to the Australians who had served our country in war. The pool was where thousands upon thousands of St George locals learned to swim—not least among them Olympic gold medallist Michelle Ford, who has been very active in opposing the pool's destruction. Sadly, at a meeting on 25 May and again earlier this week when the motion was reconsidered, Georges River Council chose to disregard the important history of the pool and its benefits to our community by resolving to destroy it without any real regard to the consequences.

The community has made clear that they want Georges River Council to keep the Kogarah War Memorial Pool open at its current location. When the closure of the pool was first considered at a council meeting in March last year, more than 10,500 local residents signed a petition within a matter of weeks demanding that the pool be kept open. The local RSL has been vocal in its support for the pool. Kogarah RSL sub-branch Secretary David Johns told the council, "The Kogarah War Memorial Pool is more than just a pool. It is a legacy to our fallen soldiers and a legacy to our currently serving soldiers." Community activists have shown up to council meetings in huge numbers many times to tell the council that it is making the wrong decision. Until online council meetings were held, councillors had voted unanimously in favour of keeping the pool open. I can only wonder whether councillors would have been willing to vote against the interests of residents if they had been staring their constituents in the eye at meetings in the past two weeks.

The pool has not just received support at a local level; it also received substantial commitments from candidates during the May 2019 Federal election campaign. Foremost among those was a \$5 million cash contribution promised by Prime Minister Scott Morrison towards a refurbishment or rebuild of the pool at its current location. As members would be aware, councils across the State are crying out for support from State and Federal governments to deal with revenue shortfalls. Georges River Council, in particular, has been crying poor. Only four months ago the council tried to implement a massive increase in residential rates through a special rate variation. When that failed, the council's general manager warned of significant staff layoffs. Forgive me if I am sceptical of those claims when the council feels it can walk away from \$5 million in external funding.

Despite the commitment from the Prime Minister, it has been extremely disturbing to see that some politicians have publicly supported the campaign to save the pool at Carss Park, while in the background they have urged the council to close it down. All politicians across the St George region need to come clean on whether they support our local residents so that the public can know where their representatives stand when they go to vote. The entire decision-making process around the Kogarah War Memorial Pool has looked completely rotten from the outset. In March 2019 the council officers produced a report supporting the closure of the pool due to its ongoing operational costs. When residents made it clear on the floor of council that they wanted the pool kept open, not a single councillor supported its closure. However, just a few months later a water leak into the Georges River was conveniently discovered and the pool was shut down administratively. It was a betrayal of the local community and a complete dereliction of the democratic process.

Now, with the pressure of in-person meetings and public attendance removed, the council has voted to investigate a new pool location at Todd Park in Blakehurst. This proposal is opposed by pool users at Carss Park and users of existing sporting facilities at Todd Park. It appears to be nothing more than a smokescreen. Council is hoping to distract the community long enough that they will forget about the issue. When reports into Todd Park come back showing that the site is unfeasible or that council is unwilling to fund the project, councillors will simply be able to wash their hands of the issue. Georges River Council is trying to pull a con job on the local community and local residents will not stand for it. The council needs to immediately reverse its decision and proceed with the refurbishment or rebuilding of the war memorial pool at Carss Park.

TUGGERAH LAKES FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:29:27): The State Emergency Service Act 1989 states that New South Wales SES is responsible for establishing flood warning systems in the State. Those requirements of the Act are met by New South Wales SES by issuing flood warning products and identifying the need for flood warning classifications and the associated warning systems. With that in mind, I discuss the flood that occurred around Tuggerah Lake in my electorate in February. At 10.48 p.m. on Saturday 8 February 2020, the New South Wales State Emergency Services issued a minor flood warning for Tuggerah Lake. Under the SES classification system, the minor flood level for the lake is 0.90 metres. No other flood warning was issued for Tuggerah Lake. Floodwaters reached that level on Sunday afternoon and continued to rise. By Tuesday 11 February they had

reached 1.673 metres, before falling after council excavated around The Entrance Channel, relieving a blockage that had been created by the sand berm in that location.

Many people around Berkeley Vale, Killarney Vale, Long Jetty and Chittaway Point saw their homes inundated by floodwaters. Many homes were inundated above floor level and many cars were inundated in driveways. Mr Terrence Schofield of North Entrance advised me that his mobility scooter was flooded. He approached the council for reimbursement and was declined. A lot of people in my electorate were asking why the flood warning was not more predictive of the actual level that floodwaters reached. They expressed concern about the flood's severity and they have a general view that the flood warning system could have been better managed. With that in mind, I undertook to make more inquiries on behalf of my community to make sure that flood mitigation around Tuggerah Lake is given the best attention and that we improve the warning systems that are in place.

When people move into the area, they expect flooding to occur around Tuggerah Lake. But I am concerned that the warnings are not adequate to give my constituents the time they need to prepare for and respond to floods. With that in mind, I am concerned that the local flood plan was due to be reviewed by 2018 and it has not been reviewed. I am also concerned that the flood warning classification levels for Tuggerah Lake specify that a minor flood is 0.9 metres and a moderate flood is 1.7 metres. However, a lot of residences around Tuggerah Lake have floor levels that are much lower than 1.8 metres. A moderate flood under the classification system is one that starts to inundate floors and impact on main roads. We know that when the flood reached around 1.9 metres, floors around Tuggerah Lake started to be inundated with water and main roads such as the Central Coast Highway at Long Jetty were reduced from two lanes to one. That is a moderate flood, but we were only given a minor flood warning.

Something has gone wrong. I have written to the State Emergency Services Minister, asking him to urgently respond to my concerns. I have yet to receive a response from him. The council, to its credit, has responded to the concerns I raised about the need for more flood warning markers around Tuggerah Lake and for markers to show the flood classification levels so people can relate the predicted level with the warnings that have been given. The council has said it will do that, so we are moving in the right direction. However, the State Emergency Services is a State Government authority and it should be getting its act together. I expect a response on this matter. We should be doing better to prepare the area around Tuggerah Lake for flood.

COVID-19 AND KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:34:43): COVID-19 has brought economic, health and societal disruption on a scale not experienced in the past 100 years. But in the darkest of recent times a light has shone through because of the civic-mindedness of the Ku-ring-gai community. To protect ourselves, our families and our loved ones we have self-isolated, worked from home and done what we can to stay indoors as much as possible. Three months ago many businesses closed and schools were largely without students—rightly so, given the infectious potential of COVID-19, which has devastated most of the world. Despite how far our State has come in only a few months, the virus is still out there. Although our lives are going back to some degree of normality, the seniors in our population and those with pre-existing health conditions must still be very cautious.

When the pandemic reached our shores we saw the number of cases increase by hundreds each day. Our seniors were told to stay at home for their own safety and I saw a threat to our local voluntary organisations. Before the pandemic, the organisations that gave help to the most vulnerable in Ku-ring-gai were largely populated by volunteers who were seniors. We urgently needed a group of younger volunteers and I came up with the idea of a civilian army. For over 40 years KNC—a not-for-profit organisation formally known as the Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre—has been providing social support services to our local seniors and to people with a disability, including personal shopping, transport, phone check-ins and other community care tasks.

I reached out to Michele Bell, CEO of KNC and the 2020 Ku-ring-gai Woman of the Year. Michele agreed that we urgently needed younger volunteers and liked my idea of forming a civilian army. I contacted the principals of our local independent schools, who immediately wanted to be involved. We partnered with the schools under the leadership of the KNC team, who liaised with our voluntary organisations. We recruited students, staff, parents and alumni as volunteers to assist the members of the Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby communities most impacted by COVID-19, and to reassure the vulnerable that they were not alone if they needed help.

In conjunction with this focused recruitment we put out a general call for volunteers to the community through social media. It was amazing to see the selflessness of community members wanting to help. In only a week the civilian army was formed, and was up and running. Our first task was to letterbox every home in my electorate with a person over the age of 70 to increase community awareness about the services that were available to the vulnerable. We did this with the assistance of families, students, alumni and cadets from

Abbotsleigh School, Barker College, Knox Grammar School, Loreto Normanhurst, Pymble Ladies' College and Ravenswood School for Girls. Almost immediately, KNC received calls from people who required assistance.

Over the past few months KNC and the civilian army have helped many vulnerable people and families in our area by collecting and delivering pharmaceutical supplies to individuals, performing grocery shopping, putting out garbage, collecting and dropping off library books, and packing 80 to 100 boxes of donated fresh fruit and vegetables each day. The boxes of fresh produce were distributed amongst numerous charities that saw an influx in requests for help, including Fusion Sydney North, Meals on Wheels, Hornsby Connect, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter and a number of churches. Some boxes were also diverted to support the homeless. In Turramurra, Kipling's Garage Bar changed its normal business to provide low-cost meals for seniors. All who received the donated goods were extremely grateful for the kindness shown and some of our volunteers received tearful thanks.

Volunteering during this crisis has allowed our community to work together on a common objective to help others. It has also alleviated the loneliness experienced by both volunteers and clients alike. In addition to helping the vulnerable in our community, I spoke to many local business owners and managers over the course of three days. With a group of volunteers, we delivered information bundles to the small businesses in the commercial and retail hubs of the electorate. Those small business packs provided information on rent reduction, mediation services and government grants that were available. It was an opportunity for me to understand the economic impact of the shutdown on small business owners and to see that they were clearly struggling. I hope I was able to give them some moral support during what has been an extremely tough time.

The overwhelming community support for the civilian army did not come as a surprise. I acknowledge and express my appreciation to Margaret Selby, Maddy Fox, Rowena Dudgeon, Luke Hicks, Helen Clarke, Libby Parker, Mariel Lombard, Annabelle Osborne and Laura McGilvray from the participating schools. I thank KNC, its staff and volunteers led by Michele Bell, and the students, staff and adults involved for making such a positive difference in our community. As Winston Churchill once said, "We make a life by what we give."

COVID-19 AND COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:39:56): I acknowledge the response of rural communities in the Cootamundra electorate to the COVID-19 pandemic. This global pandemic has caused a disruption in our daily lives in a way not seen for a century. Australia has thankfully been spared the large-scale tragedy felt by other nations. We must acknowledge the actions of our leaders at all levels—and the cooperation of our people—for moving quickly to reduce the nation's exposure to coronavirus. The Cootamundra electorate is known as the seat of small communities and it is particularly vulnerable to this illness. A large percentage of our population is elderly and, while over the past nine years access to health services has improved, the tyranny of distance still impacts on medical care.

While some are nervous about restrictions easing, they are reassured that their health is in good hands. I commend the two local health districts that service the communities of my electorate: the Murrumbidgee Local Health District [MLHD] and the Western NSW Local Health District [WNSWLHD]. Both organisations provide exceptional health services to a diverse community and manage the difficulty of distance. Before the pandemic began both districts operated 11 intensive care unit [ICU] beds. The overall ICU capacity across the State has doubled in response to this virus. The number of staff who have the skills needed to support those beds has also increased through training and development programs that help staff upskill to ICU. To date, 49 WNSWLHD staff and 116 MLHD staff have undergone this additional training.

In addition to growing the number of ICU places in hospitals, 300 wearable devices have been acquired by MLHD. They constantly record the oxygen levels, blood pressure, heart rate and temperature of the wearer, which allows suitable people to be monitored at home. This investment has the potential to keep those in self-isolation connected while also keeping staff safe. An additional 53 Hospital in the Home beds can now be supported in WNSWLHD. If required, ambulatory care services and support to residential aged care can be activated, including in-reach and telehome monitoring. Monitoring kits have been created to meet the needs of an upsurge in COVID-19 cases. Both health districts have been running scenarios with their staff to prepare them for a range of worst-case outcomes if an outbreak were to occur. This vital training is honing the response to these situations should they arise. Our health districts are absolutely prepared for any increase in cases. Our communities should look to their health authorities with confidence and pride.

We all have a role to play in maintaining social distancing by staying home if we are unwell and getting tested if we have symptoms, but many businesses and individuals in the Cootamundra electorate have gone above and beyond to adapt to this challenging time. In Cowra a local manufacturer that normally builds perspex aircraft windscreens found that, with access to China closed, its work had dried up. Instead, Brumby Aircraft Australia adapted its machinery to produce perspex safety screens to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. This fantastic

local business saw a demand for a product that would protect our communities and has kept its workers in jobs during this challenging time. In Junee a business known for its sweet treats and smooth spirits recalibrated its distillery to instead produce hand sanitiser. The Junee Licorice and Chocolate Factory now sells its hand sanitiser next to its freeze-dried strawberries.

In Young the Bluestill Distillery has also swapped spirits for sanitiser. In Narrandera the Manildra Group's flour mill has been working around the clock to meet the increased demand brought on by home bakers trying new skills. The mill is building additional retail packing capacity that will allow this family-owned Australian business to produce an additional 50 million kilograms of locally made flour every year. Local cafes have adapted to takeaway, pubs have focused on food and pharmacies have risen to the challenge. This is just a snapshot of the local businesses that have joined the fight against COVID-19. While the phrase "regions are resilient" may seem like a cliché, it cannot be denied that our communities continue to defy the odds by innovating, adapting and supporting one another through drought, fire, flood and now through fever. I congratulate our communities, health authorities and workers from all walks of life on their responses.

COVID-19 AND SMALL BUSINESS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:45:00): We Australians do not leave our people behind. We look after our own and our communities. We always strive to achieve the best, but not at the expense of the vulnerable. In New South Wales these values have been put to the test. We have done well protecting our community from the COVID-19 virus. It has not been perfect, and I acknowledge the pain of those who have suffered and lost loved ones. But we have saved lives as we worked together. I thank our leaders and all of those on the frontline: health workers, teachers, police, those in government agencies and also those in shops, pharmacies and other service industries that have kept us going.

But we have paid a price. Thousands have become unemployed and businesses have been put on hold or folded. It has been a period of real anxiety, of isolation—of people on the edge. While I acknowledge the New South Wales Government's role in supporting small businesses, there are many that have missed out in my electorate and in New South Wales; that is why I speak today. I speak for the couple-run businesses and sole traders who were told by Service NSW they needed to contact their local MP because they and thousands like them were not eligible for any financial aid, other than the Federal Government's JobKeeper and JobSeeker allowances. I also speak about the small business property owners and self-funded retirees who have been heavily impacted by the tenancies code of conduct.

Firstly, couple-run businesses and sole traders have found themselves ineligible for the State's small business COVID-19 support grants. Why? Because they do not pay enough wages for an employee. As a result, businesses like Wagga Wagga's Junction Motor Inn fell through the gaps. Owners Peter and Jill Lees shared with me their disappointment after they discovered they were ineligible for this funding. Their business is only small. They do most of the cleaning, administration and labour themselves. Unfortunately, they were both listed as business owners and found the combined working hours of their casual staff were not sufficient to qualify them for support. It was the same for sisters Heather and Tanya Shaw, who own and teach at a dance studio in Wagga Wagga. The JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments were only enough to sustain day-to-day expenses. Without clients they still had rent, bills and other charges to pay. I call on the Government to support this group of small businesses.

The second group of constituents that have seemingly fallen through the gaps of the Government's financial support include self-funded landlords of investment and commercial properties. It follows the New South Wales implementation of the code of conduct, which largely protects tenants. I acknowledge the need to assist tenants during these very difficult times. Most landlords have been willing to negotiate and find a fair resolution, but we must recognise that these property owners are actually supplying a line of credit. No other industry or lending body has been required to do this. Ultimately, property owners are reducing their revenue and in some cases waiving it entirely while being expected to continue to pay their normal outgoings.

In addition to this there are bigger businesses whose profits have grown in the COVID-19 restrictions. These tenants are large corporations who rent premises from small business owners or retirees. Many of these tenants have been taking advantage of the current situation to seek rent reductions or deferrals. In one example, a couple explained to me how they had sold their business—a fitness centre that they had owned for more than 20 years—to a large city-based company with millions of dollars of turnover. The couple retained ownership of the building and it became their only source of income. They relied on the cash flow from that building to live. However, following the compulsory closure of gyms their tenant said rent would simply not be paid.

While I understand the need for the implementation of the code of conduct, I just question its fairness and sustainability for these small business property owners and self-funded retirees. It has been a concern raised with me in my electorate by many, many people. Ultimately it will also affect the value of those properties going

forward, and that is an important component in avoiding an ongoing and deeper recession. We have done much in the current crisis to look after each other. I congratulate the leadership of the Government in tackling the health crisis and the support of the Opposition in working with the Government to achieve that. I think what we have done is world's best practice. But there are people being left behind. We as Australians believe in a fair society. With these values, let us make sure that no-one falls behind. Let us address these anomalies and help our community members.

MIRANDA ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:50:01): Today I bring to the attention of the House the successful 2019 Community Building Partnership grants from the Miranda electorate. By way of background, the New South Wales Government is investing in infrastructure projects that deliver positive social, environmental and recreational outcomes while promoting community participation, inclusion and cohesion, with \$300,000 allocated to each electorate in 2019. The 11 projects from the Miranda electorate will deliver much-needed improvements to our local facilities.

Gymea Technology High School is receiving the largest grant, being \$50,000, to refurbish toilet facilities in the school auditorium. Upgrading these amenities will invigorate a dated space to provide greater versatility and functionality for students, teachers and visitors alike. I thank P&C president Rob Russell for bringing this matter to my attention. I also acknowledge principal Peter Marsh and school captains Rhys Thomsen and Ellen Marsh, with whom I met to announce the grant earlier this year. St Joseph's Junior Rugby League Football Club has secured \$35,000 to refurbish its clubhouse. The renovation of change room and toilet facilities will provide a more functional and inclusive environment for players, volunteers and supporters as well as promote participation in sport. I acknowledge club registrar Peter Sertori, who applied for the funding on behalf of the organisation.

A canteen refurbishment will be made possible at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School with \$30,000 from this program. Refurbishing the school's canteen will ensure a hygienic and food-safe environment that is able to service students and cater for events throughout the year. Prior to COVID-19 restrictions coming into force I was pleased to announce the project's success and meet with principal Rosemary Andre and members of the student leadership team, including school captains Christian and Laila, vice-captains Xavier and Kate, and Cameron, Karina and Selena. At Como West Public School students will benefit from a \$29,000 revitalisation of before and after school care facilities. Revitalisation of facilities with landscaping and garden beds will teach children about sustainability and provide a transformed space where children can play. I acknowledge principal Danielle Scott and P&C treasurer Gabrielle Humphreys, who spearheaded the project.

Jannali Anglican Church secured \$25,000 for its children's playground project. The new playground will provide a space for children to play and use their imagination in a safe place while allowing parents to build stronger relationships. I acknowledge the ongoing commitment of senior minister Reverend Neil Fitzpatrick as a leader in the church and thank administration manager Mel Balhatchet for bringing the importance of this project to my attention. With \$22,000 Como West Community Garden will be able to carry out its repairs and safety upgrade project. Completing essential repairs to Como West Community Hall and erecting a boundary fence to improve site safety will ensure that the space is utilised to its full potential by our local community. I commend Steve Batley, who is the president and a landscape architect of over 20 years' experience, for recognising the urgent need to pursue these upgrades.

Sutherland Shire Football Association has secured \$22,000 for its canteen refurbishment and barbecue area. The refurbishment of the existing canteen and installation of a new barbecue area will ensure a hygienic and food-safe environment for players, volunteers and supporters during sporting events. I acknowledge president Matt Brady, vice-president Keith Ward and treasurer Giulio di Stefano and extend my best wishes for the upcoming resumption of children's community sport. St Luke's Anglican Church Miranda will benefit from \$21,000 for a building upgrade. The installation of air conditioning in the children's ministry building as well as surrounding fencing will ensure that children are able to play and use their imagination.

For Southern Districts Rugby Club, some \$18,000 in funding will expand existing gym facilities to ensure that the club is able to meet the diverse and growing demand for gym usage from players. I acknowledge president Ken McKay and director of rugby Michael Osmond for their ongoing commitment to the many members of the club. Finally, I am pleased to announce that Bonnet Bay Football Club has secured \$7,500 for its lighting project. With a lighting upgrade Bonnet Bay Football Club will ensure that Lakewood Reserve meets the current Australian standards. I thank president Peter Burgess, vice-president John Watson, treasurer Ian Petrovski and club secretary Michael Elliot for their dedication to the "Bombers" and this project.

I look forward to seeing how these projects make a real difference to our community. With this in mind, I encourage all incorporated not-for-profit organisations in the Miranda electorate to consider applying for the 2020 Community Building Partnership program and note that applications close on 12 June 2020.

COVID-19 AND MAITLAND ELECTORATE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:54:58): Today I will talk about the issue of investment after the COVID pandemic and bushfire recovery in my electorate. We have been dealing with the drought for three years, the bushfires for seven months and COVID-19 for three or four months. I want to make some suggestions to the Government around infrastructure projects in my electorate. I also want to drill down into one of the issues raised in question time today. I put on the record the suffering of people in my electorate because of the COVID-19 shutdown, especially young women.

During question time today the Treasurer acknowledged that young women have been impacted disproportionately. About 65 per cent of public sector employees are women and they have been forced to look at the pay cut proposed by the Government. In my electorate the tourism industry was seen as the hope of recovery from the bushfires, floods and drought. I was disturbed when I received an email yesterday from the travel agency in my electorate that I used to work with when I had my business. The owner asked me how she could tell somebody in Government—the Premier or the tourism Minister—to back our travel agents when they promote tourism.

Every time the Premier or the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney talks about tourism, they ask people to get online and book a trip. Travel agents have been working their guts out to change people's travel plans but there has been no acknowledgement of their role. It has been devastating for them to undo itineraries that sometimes took weeks of work to put together. It is a real problem. Most of the travel agents and workers in the travel industry are women, especially young women. When the Government is looking at a recovery package for our communities, tourism should be looked at because of the focus on the regions.

Last night the member for Canterbury made a case for Bankstown Hospital, which is a great project. But issues such as regional roads and transport issues have been missing from the discussion. My electorate has the fastest growing area in the State outside of Sydney. Our roads are dangerous. Many schools in Maitland are ghost schools and have never been funded. They have been sitting on a budget paper as a thought bubble or an idea of this education Minister or the previous one. It is time for the Government to put the rubber on the road and get those projects up and running. Half of the schools in Maitland are at more than 100 per cent capacity, including 22 public schools, nine primary schools and two secondary schools.

The Government has consistently denied that overcrowding in schools is an issue in my electorate but booming numbers of people are moving into northern, central and southern parts of Maitland. Ashtonfield Public School in eastern Maitland has many demountables but no start on the long-promised extension. My school safety survey revealed that small projects such as traffic calming or decongesting of roads could be taken up. The Parliamentary Secretary has committed to the roundabout at the railway station in my electorate. I urge the Government to review this project quickly and to take steps if there is potential to improve it. No work has been done on the Raymond Terrace Road, which is holding up development in the north of our community. Testers Hollow is still awaiting action. All electorates have similar issues but I urge the Government to think about small regional areas such as Maitland and help them.

COVID-19 AND NEWTOWN ELECTORATE

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:00:01): Oh, Newtown; oh, dear and wonderful folks of Surry Hills, Redfern and Waterloo; generous people of Enmore, Marrickville and Lewisham; kind hearts of Stanmore and Petersham; and lovely humans and hounds of Erskineville, Darlingtown, Camperdown and Chippendale, the past few months have been intense and incredibly tough for so many people. In the electorate of Newtown in our local neighbourhoods, where so many of our residents are renters, young people, artists, creatives, musos, international students and non-citizens and so much of our community is about vibrant and busy bars, cafes, cinemas, venues and retail outlets, things have been particularly tough.

So many people have lost their incomes and livelihoods. So many have struggled with insecure housing, the closing of businesses and ever-increasing pressures. Therefore, it has been truly heartwarming and inspiring to see that at a time when there is so much cause for despair and when people could have become more selfish, self-centred and protectionist, our community has come together and united to not just look after each other but to also extend that care and compassion to others in need. At a time when they could have chosen fear, the good people of the Newtown electorate have chosen kindness. That is community at its best. That is why I am so privileged to stand here on their behalf to put our gratitude on the record.

From the very first signs of what was to come, the COVID-19 Inner West Mutual Aid support group was mobilising to ensure that no-one fell through the cracks. Within days of restrictions and lockdowns being announced, the group had organised hundreds of volunteers to pick up groceries and medication, walk dogs, set up video calling, pop by for chats through windows to prevent isolation and do whatever else they could, no

questions asked, for anyone in our community who needed assistance. More and more support groups started appearing from every neighbourhood and community in the electorate, including in Redfern, Surry Hills and Lewisham and the #StrongerTogetherStanmore Facebook group. Neighbours dropped everything to help each other.

The Newtown Blessing Box became a beacon of the generosity and compassionate spirit. Every day more and more people dropped off essential items and restaurant vouchers for those in need with nowhere else to turn. The community has popped up around the old cupboard turned food pantry, which is overflowing with support and encouragement as well as basic supplies such as toilet paper, soap, tampons, toothpaste and deodorant for people to drop by and get what they need. Before the pandemic our already established and highly connected local neighbourhood centres and community services were going above and beyond. Teams of staff and volunteers at the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, RedLink and Counterpoint Community Services have all doubled their efforts, providing food, clothing, communication devices, advice and emotional support to whoever needed it the most.

The Addison Road Community Centre has quickly become a critical lifeline to members of our community with no other access to support. For many international students, migrants, people on low incomes and those who had lost their jobs, Addi Road has been the only place to get food on their table during the pandemic. The Asylum Seekers Centre on Bedford Street, relying mostly on donations from incredibly generous people during the difficult time, also rallied around its community, delivering packages of food and essentials boxes to temporary visa holders, who have received no government support. I note that the Asylum Seekers Centre is pleased this week with the announcement of government support for its work and the work of other centres and organisations that support migrant and refugee communities.

So many artists and musicians lost everything but they turned to Facebook and Instagram to offer free concerts and performances from their front porches and through their open windows. Even though cafes, bars, pubs and restaurants had to close, they opened up without a second thought to provide free meals to those who had lost their jobs. They had special call-outs for hospital industry workers to drop by and get a free feed and bulk warm lunches for our hospital workers and those living in insecure housing or vulnerable situations.

Meanwhile, our local nurses, teachers, ambos, early childhood educators, carers, bus, train, tram and taxi and rideshare drivers, the posties and delivery drivers, hospital staff, and all the emergency and frontline workers kept everything safe and working in the essential areas that we needed—and a massive thankyou to all of them. In a time of unprecedented crisis, when everyone lost something, our community stood up. The good people of the electorate of Newtown certainly deserve a pat on the back but, as current restrictions do not allow me to provide that, I hope the sincere gratitude, appreciation and respect I now place on the record shows them how wonderful I think they are.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (18:05:17): This afternoon I raise an issue of profound importance to my constituents and thousands of people across New South Wales and that is the serious recession this State finds itself in on the afternoon of 4 June 2020. Yesterday we found out that our 29-year unbroken run as the world's only developed economy without a downturn was over. No fanfare, no trumpets—just a dull depressing thud. I speak today in a nearly empty Chamber due to the coronavirus pandemic. Social distancing means there is virtually no-one else here. It is the same story in Coffee on Regent, where Lucy and her dad have worked diligently to cultivate a wonderful, loyal customer base. The biggest threat to our country and economy since World War II, 75 years ago, requires a comprehensive and serious response from the Government to save jobs and save the economy.

My constituents are asking: What is government going to do about it? What is Parliament going to do about it? I have to tell them what the Treasurer's plan is. If you look at it through *The Australian Financial Review* and the front page of *The Daily Telegraph* it looks to be a combination of three things: a broad-based land tax applied to everybody; a cut to public sector pay; and privatisation of more community assets. That is the exact opposite of what we need to do in the economy right now. Let me get this straight because I cannot quite believe it. The Treasurer, in response to one of the greatest economic challenges the country has seen in 75 years, is proposing a great big new tax on everybody, a pay cut for 400,000 people, and more charges, more tolls and more fines on privatised toll roads. I realise that pubs and clubs have reopened, but someone needs to devise a sober plan for economic recovery in New South Wales. A few days ago *The Australian Financial Review* stated:

Another option being pushed by economists consulted by the [New South Wales Government's] review ... is to move faster to an annual land tax system for everyone.

To soften the impact, the government could pay a credit for stamp duty to anyone who bought a home in the past five years.

Under the plan being considered by this Government and this Treasurer, anyone who has not bought a home within the past five years can expect an annualised land tax bill to be sent to every household in the State. At a time when the nation has recorded a recession bordering on a depression, that is this Government's approach. The article goes on to state, "A sudden switch that is revenue neutral, you get all the efficiency gains." The article also states that it would require bipartisanship to get the proposal up. I say it would require a lobotomy to get up because it is exactly the type of economic malady that will hurt New South Wales when it desperately needs help.

At the same time, Victoria is considering an opt-in annual land tax for new homebuyers. That sounds pretty good if we can secure the lost up-front payments to the Treasury's bottom line, but that does not seem to be the situation in New South Wales. Now Liberal Party backbenchers are saying, "This is not going to work. It not only will be deeply unpopular but also will hurt our economic recovery." Is it any wonder we are in this malady when we read a report dated 22 April in *The Daily Telegraph* headed "Our Roaring Twenties"? It cites the Treasurer saying:

NSW has always been Australia's engine room and we're going to come roaring out of this and drive our state to the next level.

We're going to get our state back in business, the budget back in the black and together beat this thing.

A couple of days later it was revealed that there is a \$9 billion hole in the New South Wales budget in recurrent terms and net debt is spiralling to \$40 billion. Two weeks after that the Commonwealth Government revealed New South Wales final demand dropped by 1.5 per cent. Victoria is only 0.1 per cent. New South Wales is the worst-performing economy in the country presided over by the New South Wales Liberal Party. At a time when we desperately need economic stimulus the plan is to impose a land tax, a complete refusal to increase wages and privatisation of government assets. We need to do better.

-19 AND MANLY ELECTORATE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:10:26): It is with pleasure that I draw the attention of the House to an important matter. In the darkest and most challenging period when the COVID restrictions took place across New South Wales, amidst the anxiety there was no shortage of goodwill and community spirit. That goodwill and community spirit shone brightest across the electorate of Manly, and indeed the entire northern beaches. The restrictions placed on businesses were severe; however, they were required at the time. Without fuss, many local business owners and operators followed the guidelines and the public health order to do their part to beat this pandemic. The shuttering of businesses has put them under immense pressure. It is with great pride that I update members of the House on the support network and initiatives that pulled together in Manly. It presents a model for all communities across New South Wales.

I place on record my gratitude and thanks to Melinda and Ben Graetz and the team at Grassrootz, who, with the support of Roger Allen, spearheaded the most impressive development of a digital platform for our local businesses. All three of them will be embarrassed that I have mentioned them as they have been so generous and community minded in their endeavours to support our local economy. It was through the generosity of their time and expertise that they built backyourlocal.com.au. Back Your Local is a collaborative partnership between passionate community members, local charities and the Manly Chamber of Commerce. It provides a free gateway for local business owners and operators to communicate how their business had changed or evolved through COVID. For example, many restaurants that had not previously provided takeaway very quickly changed their operations and were able to deliver food and beverages to keep cash flow going and ensured they were able to keep people employed.

Whether it was the restaurants reworking their menus, gyms moving online or professional service providers, the importance of a digital connection or presence became a lifeline. Back Your Local was developed in quick time and immediately strengthened the digital presence and capability of many local businesses. The feedback from business owners has been heartwarming, to say the least. Times were difficult then and they are probably going to get tougher. None of this is the fault of the wonderful, hardworking business owners and operators—the people who support our local clubs and organisations, who employ locals and make our community a vibrant place.

Now more than ever we should thank the community members who have stood up and, at a time when they were most needed, made an outstanding contribution to their fellow citizens and the communities in which they live. To that end, I extend a huge thanks to the Manly Chamber of Commerce, led by Luke Atkins, and the Social Dingo crew, including Brad and Nicole Browne and Mel and Ben Graetz, all of whom are the most wonderful Manly constituents and who between them will no doubt have saved jobs, livelihoods and dignity for people who were doing it tough during the worst of these difficult few months.

PYRMONT PENINSULA

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:13:45): Pyrmont is one of Australia's most densely populated and liveable areas. It is socially vibrant, diverse and cohesive. It supports good jobs and services, including the creative industries. It is close to the city and is surrounded by a beautiful harbour. Pyrmont's success is the result of early collaborative planning between experts and the community to get the right scale, location and mix of built form and inclusion of social and affordable homes. But successive governments have abandoned this responsible approach and have split the peninsula into different jurisdictions with fragmented planning decisions that have not benefited the community.

The Government has promised to address this challenge and harmonise Pyrmont planning. It has asked the Greater Sydney Commission to review the existing planning framework and is now developing a Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy. However, the community is understandably concerned that the process is about squeezing more towers onto the peninsula. The review was initiated in response to the Independent Planning Commission's responsible decision to reject The Star's proposal of a 237-metre hotel and residential tower, leading many to conclude it is geared towards ensuring the proposal can be approved in the future. The tower had no strategic planning justification, would have cast shadows throughout the Pyrmont public domain and was opposed by the community, the council and by me as the local member.

Furthermore, the planning strategy will not integrate Pyrmont's planning framework as promised. Any site that is the subject of an existing process will not be assessed. The Powerhouse Museum and Blackwattle Bay specifically are expressly excluded. Indeed, it is unclear from existing material exactly what parts of the peninsula will be included. Blackwattle Bay includes the former Sydney Fish Market site. Early concept plans for the site earmarked towers close to the waterfront of up to 45 storeys—higher than the Anzac Bridge pylons. That represents gross overdevelopment of the harbour. The heights are completely out of character with the rest of Pyrmont and would dominate views between Pyrmont and the harbour, including from Anzac Bridge. There is no reference to past visionary work on Blackwattle Bay through, for example, the Bays Precinct Task Force, the Bays Precinct strategic framework and the community reference group, all of which concluded that the waterfront should be protected from overdevelopment and be retained for publicly accessible open space.

The community engaged in the process in good faith but its work has now been sidelined. Redevelopment of the Sydney Fish Market site should not be assessed separately from the planning strategy because there are significant risks of burden to Pyrmont facilities and services. With around 2,500 new homes crammed onto the existing site and no new public open space on site, other than the boardwalk, even more residents will rely on crowded Wentworth Park for recreation. The existing transport network will not cope, given that roads and buses are already congested and are expected to worsen when the WestConnex Rozelle Interchange opens. The proposed affordable housing targets of 5 per cent to 10 per cent fall far short of the minimum 15 per cent needed to address this State's homelessness crisis.

How can the community assess the merits of the Blackwattle Bay redevelopment without completion of the place strategy? If the two are not coordinated, we risk a repetition of past mistakes, especially failing to deliver adequate social infrastructure, such as schools, childcare centres and libraries. The recently released draft directions for the place strategy represent important planning principles, which should be applied across the entire peninsula, not certain sites only. One vital direction calls for a coordinated planning approach, but that would not be possible if Blackwattle Bay, the Powerhouse Museum site or any other sites are excluded. In response to my questions in Parliament, the planning Minister promised meaningful community consultation on Pyrmont's planning framework. However, there is no community representative on the steering committee. Also it is unclear how community input will ultimately be used to make decisions.

Pyrmont residents have been through hollow planning consultation processes before. Their primary request for the Darling Harbour redevelopment was improved pedestrian access through Darling Harbour to the city. In countless meetings with project officers they were told, as was I, that their suggestions would be addressed. The redevelopment is complete and Pyrmont continues to have poor pedestrian links with the CBD. We now have a proposal for a helipad at Darling Harbour, which has come out of nowhere and threatens the neighbourhood amenity. Pyrmont should not be treated as a cash cow for developers. It is already contributing significantly to Sydney's residential density. No further development should be permitted without completion of a comprehensive planning assessment that includes transport, social structure and affordable housing. Blackwattle Bay is an interconnected part of Pyrmont and should not be planned in silo. I call on the Government to harmonise planning across the peninsula through a holistic planning process that does not relinquish sites.

THOMAS HASSALL ANGLICAN COLLEGE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (18:18:55): I am pleased to deliver another private member's statement in 2020. I was reflecting on how long it has been since I delivered a private member's statement about my community.

Mr Adam Marshall: A very long time.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: It has been a long time. I acknowledge the Minister's interjection. In fact, it has been three months to the day since my last private member's statement. Since that time our community has been ravaged by COVID-19 and the impact of the Government's measures to keep people safe. I am pleased to be back in this place, delivering for, and speaking on behalf of, my community. I am pleased to update the House on an amazing school in my electorate, which recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary. I congratulate Thomas Hassall Anglican College on its anniversary, celebrated on 20 February this year. The college, located in Middleton Grange, was established by the Anglican Schools Corporation in 2000. It commenced with only 150 students from kindergarten to year 7 and has grown to house nearly 1,800 students from prep to year 12 and to employ 250 full- and part-time staff.

On Thursday 20 February 2020 the college community, alongside students, staff, the college council and other special guests from local, State and Federal governments, held a thanksgiving service, officiated by Bishop Peter Lin of the Georges River region. It was a very special occasion dedicated to thanking God for His goodness and celebrating the progress and achievements of the college over the past 20 years. Furthermore, it was an opportunity to look forward to the future possibilities for Thomas Hassall Anglican College as the south-west of Sydney continues to grow, develop and expand. Many people have played critical roles in the growth of the school over the past 20 years and I take this opportunity to acknowledge a few of them.

Leaders of the school in its earliest days were Bishop Ray Smith, who laid the foundation stone on 8 August 1999; Dr Bryan Cowling, who was the founding principal until 2007; and Dr Geoff Huard, the founding college council chairman. In 2007 Mr Ross Whelan took over the role as principal and remains in his position today, alongside Mr Craig Moore, who is the current college council chairman. Perhaps the most influential individual in the school's history is Reverend Thomas Hassall, after whom the college was named. Reverend Thomas Hassall was born in 1794 and died in 1868. In 1798 he arrived in New South Wales with his missionary parents, Rowland and Elizabeth Hassall. As a young man Thomas established the first Sunday schools in Australia, which taught reading, writing, mathematics and the Christian faith. He returned to the United Kingdom to complete training as an Anglican clergyman and upon returning to Australia with his wife, Anne Marsden, founded a number of Anglican churches and schools.

The college is the only school in Australia named after the Reverend Thomas Hassall. To this day the school remains very connected to the almost 10,000 members of the Hassall family, who are scattered throughout Australia and the world. Thomas had a passion for teaching and learning and was known for his warm heart for people. He was a staunch advocate of the connection between education and Christianity, and was therefore an inspirational namesake for the college. The strong example from Reverend Thomas Hassall has shaped the foundations of this great college and his morals are at the forefront of the education, community and friendships Thomas Hassall Anglican College provides. It has become a school of choice for many families in the south-west as it seeks to foster a vibrant learning community in which Jesus Christ is honoured and where every student is valued, develops high standards of character and is encouraged to create positive relationships. The college seeks to grow and nurture excellence in learning, wisdom and service in the south-west of Sydney.

It was an absolute pleasure to celebrate this milestone anniversary alongside the school and Middleton Grange community. I congratulate all past and present staff and students on all they have individually and holistically contributed to the life of Thomas Hassall Anglican College for the past 20 years. I have no doubt that the college will go from strength to strength. I look forward to seeing all that the school community will continue to achieve over the coming years. The school also planned and started another Anglican college at Oran Park in response to population growth there. I congratulate the Anglican Schools Corporation, which thinks proactively about the growing communities being established across New South Wales and takes action well in advance to ensure that educational choice is available to citizens of New South Wales, wherever they may call home.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:24:02): Now is the time to invest in social and affordable housing infrastructure to stimulate the economy. The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear the importance of social and affordable housing now more than ever, along with highlighting how under-resourced our system is. New South Wales has a desperate shortage of social housing, with over 51,000 applications on the waiting list and many waiting as long as 10 years. As more individuals are struggling with the financial impacts of COVID and cannot

afford to rent or buy a home, there will be more demand for social and affordable housing. Those unable to secure housing will be forced to turn to crisis accommodation, couch surfing or sleeping rough. Prior to COVID, specialist homelessness services were already at capacity and demand will only increase, with rising unemployment projected to leave between 7,905 and 16,140 people homeless in New South Wales. Now is the time to act.

I am disappointed that the Government has not taken the opportunity to invest in the construction of social and affordable housing, which would be a great boost to the economy. Earlier this month the NSW Council of Social Service [NCOSS] released a report highlighting how an investment in social and affordable housing could stimulate the economy and drive New South Wales' economic recovery. NCOSS modelling shows that the construction of 5,000 additional social and affordable housing properties would support 18,000 construction jobs. We know that building and construction is a very effective way to generate jobs and to stimulate the economy. Now, more than ever, we must prioritise investment in public infrastructure, including in social and affordable housing. The construction of those properties would mean more jobs and more long-term social and affordable housing, which is so desperately needed.

I am disappointed that the Government has failed to take advantage of this opportunity and is investing in only one property for every 510 people on the social housing waiting list through its Fast-tracked Social Housing Pilot Program. Instead, as NCOSS has suggested, we could be investing in 5,000 new social and affordable housing properties, which would fill the woeful gap we have. The program will build only 100 new social and affordable housing properties. Clearly, that is just a drop in the ocean. The Government must increase its investment in social and affordable housing, not just to address our growing homelessness crisis but also to create jobs and apprenticeships. Now is the time. In New South Wales one in four jobs is associated with the construction sector and, with a building slump on the horizon due to the collapse in migration, we need to keep people working.

The opportunity exists to stimulate the economy, to save and create jobs and to make a serious dent in the spiralling public housing waiting list by building new social housing right across Sydney, New South Wales and, of course, in the electorate of Swansea. My office frequently receives inquiries from constituents in social housing who have been on the waiting list for excessive amounts of time or have been left waiting for an unacceptable period for maintenance to be conducted. During the past few months my office was contacted by a constituent who had been waiting five months for their shower to be repaired and was forced to visit a family member's home to access a shower. Another constituent with mobility issues is waiting for flooding damage to be repaired, including the repair of vinyl flooring that has begun to dislodge. It is not only dangerous but also completely unacceptable.

Unfortunately, these are not isolated cases. In the past I have raised in this House many examples of crucial maintenance problems waiting to be fixed that created safety issues within public housing. Now the Government has the opportunity to get on top of that maintenance problem for social and affordable housing properties. Now is the time to give those tenants the dignity and respect they deserve. I call on the Government to take up this opportunity and invest in 5,000 new social and affordable housing properties, as NCOSS has suggested, to help stimulate the economy and, in particular, the construction industry, while also tackling the spiralling public housing waiting list times and homelessness crisis in New South Wales.

RYDE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (18:28:51): Community is needed now more than ever and, as we cautiously approach a COVID-19 safe future, infrastructure and building will be at its centre. At a local level, the Community Building Partnership is one step that will offer our community a new set of infrastructure. In Ryde the projects are immensely diverse and reach every corner and industry. Two projects in the Community Building Partnership grants program directly improve infrastructure available to child health services. KidsXpress Ltd is a service that provides expressive therapy to trauma victims, combining art and psychology. The service received funding for the fit-out of a creation and therapy space in order to provide better services to its child patients. The National Centre for Childhood Grief helps children deal with grief in their lives through many different avenues, in addition to counselling. The Community Building Partnership grants program has provided improved storage facilities to assist in business operation and community service.

As well as health services, local school communities will also receive portions of the grant. North Ryde Community Preschool will have an entrance repaired and new pavers to contribute to its "belonging circle". Ryde Public School P&C has received a grant to bring the school into the energy community of the future by installing solar power modules, contributing to facing energy challenges in a responsible and sustainable way. Churches in the area will also be enjoying infrastructure to bring their congregations together. Operable room walls and capacity upgrades are on the table for Macquarie and North Ryde, while air conditioning and a new organ have been granted to Holy Spirit North Ryde, my old school. Available infrastructure is important in keeping

us happy, active and healthy at all ages. North West Sydney Football is receiving funding for new scoreboards at Christie Park, ensuring that one of people's favourite past-times is well looked after into the future.

Furthermore, the Girl Guides Association of New South Wales has engaged younger-generation women in practical skills and physical activity since 1910, and repairs and upgrades to the Eastwood guide hall will ensure that these important activities are around and at their best for many more years to come. Two immensely unique institutions in Ryde are also set to be expanded. Evan Lister runs the Sydney Live Steam Locomotive Society, with operations in West Ryde, running a miniature steam train ride as an engineering passion project and acting as a unique drawcard for train enthusiasts and nostalgic history buffs alike. It is receiving facility upgrades to improve the experience.

FoodFaith and Judy Friedlander recently introduced the B & B Highway to improve pollinator populations and to better engage Ryde with ecology. This grant will extend the program to our shining new colosseum of learning at Smalls Road, further establishing and integrating the school in the wider community. I look forward to seeing the face of Ryde change and improve through the passion and hard work of my neighbours and friends. We are always moving forward and the community is always building a better world that is different but familiar in all the best ways.

Bills

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2020

Returned

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

Community Recognition Statements

EMILY SHERLOCK AND ZOE SUTHERS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (18:32:36): I congratulate year 6 students Emily Sherlock from Middleton Grange Public School and Zoe Suthers from Mamre Anglican School, who are recognised for their compassion in interpreting kindness at a ceremony for the Fred Hollows Humanity Awards in October last year. Emily was nominated by her year 6 teacher, who described her as a selfless student constantly showing her peers and teachers that she values them by treating them with the utmost respect. She befriends students who feel lonely and goes out of her way to ensure that others develop a positive sense of self. Well done, Emily.

Zoe was also nominated for the award by her teacher as an all-round great student constantly helping around her school and volunteering in any way she can. Zoe was a key part of her school's PALS—Playing and Learning to Socialise—Program, where year 6 students volunteer to be pals with the new kindergarten children. Zoe is always an immediate and reliable choice for her teachers as she is eager to assist, happy to be at school and very resilient. Congratulations, Zoe.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE TEACHERS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:33:33): I speak in praise of Maitland's principals, teachers, administrators, cleaners and support staff for the dedication and agility they have shown while helping our young people and their families navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. Our community deeply appreciates the way that our educators upskilled and adapted at incredible speeds and delivered remote learning to Maitland students while still providing a safe school-based haven for the children of essential workers. Switching to the remote delivery of entire curriculums would usually take months, but it was achieved in just weeks. In addition, many students required extra support due to poor internet connectivity, access to computers and mental health needs; yet our teachers and our support staff managed to do this while navigating their own health and family concerns, adding a whole new layer of challenges. On behalf of the grateful community, I thank and commend each and every one of our educators for their role in nurturing and developing our precious young people each and every day, but most especially in these extraordinary and difficult times.

BARELLAN GENERAL STORE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:34:43): I acknowledge the amazing work being done by local businesses in my electorate during the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst we quite often hear stories of communities rallying together in some of our larger townships and cities, the smaller towns often go unnoticed: towns like Barellan, which is a little over 50 kilometres north of Narrandera with a population of 538. Dan Clark bought the Barellan General Store a little over 12 months ago and has seen firsthand how many have struggled during this time—particularly the elderly in his area. Dan and his staff increased operating hours to be more accessible for those in need and to cope with an increase in demand, despite it being a challenge to order unavailable stock.

Whilst his store has been impacted by the various restrictions placed on community members during COVID-19, he has maintained a positive approach to business and become a role model for those in and around Barellan. I congratulate Dan and his team at the Barellan General Store.

KOGARAH WAR MEMORIAL POOL

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (18:35:45): I use the brief time I have to state unambiguously that I support the more than 10,000 people who opposed the closure of Carss Park war memorial pool. I absolutely oppose also the desecration of Todd Park, which should be preserved for future generations. The aquatics centre that is being proposed there by Georges River Council is completely unacceptable and unwanted by the community. The community must be listened to when councils across New South Wales ask for community feedback. In this instance, they have not been. I thank the organisers of the Save Carss Park Pool group. Please do not give up the fight. Together the community will be listened to.

COVID-19 AND FRONTLINE WORKERS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:36:30): I thank the frontline workers who have shown such dedication to their roles in protecting the health and lives of our community during the COVID-19 period. They put their own health and safety on the line to serve others. Their great work has played a large part in flattening the curve and allowing our community to gradually return to some normality. The Hawkesbury community is one very resilient community. From bushfires to floods and the COVID-19 crisis, like many other regions in this State we have faced one disaster after another. However, tough times demonstrate the best attributes of our community. We have seen people put their lives at risk as many volunteered to defend their homes and then their neighbours' properties during the bushfires. Then the Hawkesbury community gave their support generously to the neighbours and volunteers who constantly looked out for one another during the floods and the COVID-19 crisis—especially those who were vulnerable, such as the elderly and less mobile. Hawkesbury is blessed with being one of Sydney's most selfless volunteer communities and recent times have been testament to that.

COVID-19 AND HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:37:45): It is not just the nurses and midwives in New South Wales who have gotten us through a pandemic. Tonight I acknowledge and thank those other healthcare workers such as the wardmen, the cooks, the cleaners, the administrative people and everyone who works behind the scenes at all of our hospitals, who have gotten us through this pandemic. On the other side of that, it is astounding that they have received a massive kick in the guts from those opposite—the Government slashing wages after the fantastic work that those nurses, midwives and unsung heroes in the back rooms have done. I fully support, as do my colleagues on this side of the House, all of those who work in public hospitals. I support their fight for their fair and decent wage increases.

YANTRA DE VILDER

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:38:45): I congratulate Yantra de Vilder, a member of the 5 Lands Walk community, on successfully receiving \$5,000 from the New South Wales Government's Celebrating Diversity Grants Program. The 5 Lands Walk is a fantastic annual event in my electorate of Terrigal. It consists of a bushwalk stretching from Macmasters Beach to Terrigal, as well as a celebration of the numerous cultures that the Central Coast is home to. For a number of years, Yantra has organised and coordinated the most fantastic cultural celebration on the Friday night before the 5 Lands Walk is held. The \$5,000 grant will contribute towards the "Voices of Sound", which consists of the opening and closing ceremonies. In light of the COVID-19 crisis, the 5 Lands Walk is no longer being held in June this year. I understand that Con Ryan, as President of the 5 Lands Walk, will ensure that the weekend is still marked in some way. Again I congratulate Yantra de Vilder on successfully receiving \$5,000 from the New South Wales Government. To the whole team at 5 Lands Walk, I say keep up the great work.

TRIBUTE TO DR BRUCE MESSMER

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:39:48): I acknowledge the recent passing of Dr Bruce Messmer and send my condolences to his wife, Marie, and family. Dr Messmer was a general surgeon who worked in Maitland. In 1963 he joined a growing practice in Morpeth, performing up to 100 house calls a day. Dr Messmer was a consultant surgeon in High Street and ended his medical career at his Church Street practice in 1995. Over the years he cared for hundreds of families and became a trusted member of their extended families. Dr Messmer's obituary in the *Maitland Mercury* observed that he was quietly spoken but loved medicine and looking after his patients. Even at the end of his career, it was not uncommon for him to still be at hospital at midnight. I thank Dr Messmer for his passion and for his dedication to the medical fraternity and to the Maitland community. I pay my deepest respects to his family on behalf of a grateful community. Dr Messmer made a positive impact on many patients and his warmth and professionalism will never be forgotten.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): I draw members' attention to Sessional Order 108A (1) (a), which states that community recognition statements must not contain matters of policy. We are straying very close to that at this point in time. I caution the member for Shellharbour for straying into those areas again.

TRIBUTE TO LYALL MUNRO SENIOR

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:41:03): I recognise Moree's Lyall Munro Senior for his invaluable contribution to progressing Aboriginal land rights in Australia. Lyall Munro Senior was one of Moree's most prominent Aboriginal advocates. Alongside his wife, Carmine, he championed the cause of equal access to employment, education and a life free from discrimination. Uncle Lyall Senior's campaigning resulted in the establishment of the New South Wales Aboriginal Legal Service [ALS], which today does legal work in criminal law, children's care and protection law and family law. The ALS also works in the area of broader policy and law reform. As a descendant of the victims and survivors of the Myall Creek Massacre, Uncle Lyall was a founding member of the Myall Creek Memorial Committee, which has developed a fitting tribute and memorial at the massacre site over the past two decades. I commend Uncle Lyall Munro Senior for his dedication to the pursuit of equality. His legacy will be felt by all those whose lives he touched. Vale Lyall Munro Senior.

COVID-19 AND FRONTLINE WORKERS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:42:10): I acknowledge the ambulance service for the great work that it has provided to the community in New South Wales throughout COVID-19. These very brave men and women have put their own lives at risk to look after the lives of everybody in their respective communities. I thank each and every one of them for doing so. I also extend those concerns to our teachers. Teachers have been through a very tough time. I visited many schools just prior to COVID-19 and they had real fears about what it meant for them, their families and the children that they teach. I want to make sure it is on record for every school teacher and all ambulance personnel in my electorate of Shellharbour that we send you our great thanks and we appreciate all the work you have done. It will not be forgotten.

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:43:10): Recently I have been in contact with Gallagher Wines, which is a family winery at Jeir near Murrumbateman in my electorate of Goulburn. Greg Gallagher is a winemaker and consultant for over 12 other wineries in the region and neighbouring areas. The winery was heavily impacted by the summer bushfires through loss of visitation and sales. Severe smoke impacting the air quality for weeks on end resulted in the summer harvest being smoke tainted, which meant more loss in stock. As the winery is in Yass, which largely remained unburnt, this business was unable to receive direct bushfire assistance. I stand today to say that the New South Wales Government's investment of \$140 million in the Bushfire Industry Recovery Package has closed this gap by ensuring that businesses impacted by bushfires in any way are set to benefit from recovery funding to help them get back on their feet. The funding will help industries and businesses such as Gallagher Wines retain and create jobs and support them to rebuild, recover and regrow.

WESTPAC RESCUE HELICOPTER SERVICE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:44:12): In the sparsely populated regional, rural and remote areas of New South Wales many people live hundreds of kilometres from major medical services. When people suffer acute trauma or illness or require medical transfer for specialist services, often there is no time for road travel. The fastest and most direct is through our skies in the capable hands of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. It costs \$4,000 an hour for the service to operate one of the four life-saving helicopters. It relies heavily on fundraising and community generosity to stay in the skies. Recently ultra-distance athlete Paul Cornwell set out to raise money for the service by running 139 kilometres of laps around All Saints' College, St Mary's Campus, where he works. Throughout his mission Paul was supported by running partners and when burst blisters forced him to stop for a while his friends took up the charge and kept the lap count ticking over. I congratulate Paul on his efforts and on inspiring others to take up this cause. The \$2,470 they raised together will be greatly appreciated and used well.

BALGOWLAH NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:45:19): I acknowledge the outstanding and inspirational work done by our principals, teachers and support staff across the electorate of Manly. I pay particular tribute to Belinda Norrie, who is the acting principal of Balgowlah North Public School. She has done an outstanding job, ably assisted by deputy principal Sarah King. Along with her team, she has done a magnificent job managing the school through the challenges of COVID-19. The school has also enjoyed the opening of a new futsal court. Former president of the parents and citizens' association Nick Kuys did a tremendous amount of fundraising and

work with the P&C to get the funding across the line. The court is now open and is being enjoyed by the students and the community. I thank Belinda Norrie for her outstanding work and the way in which she has approached the challenges of COVID-19 faced by Balgowlah North Public School.

COVID-19 AND DUBBO ELECTORATE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:46:22): I thank the local businesses in the Dubbo electorate for their efforts in assisting with the fight against COVID-19. Baker Williams Distillery and Indigiearth from Mudgee, along with Native Secrets in Dubbo, have each shifted their usual business. They have rebranded and started creating new products with the aim of helping the response to the pandemic. Nathan Williams, Helen Baker and the team at Baker Williams Distillery changed operations to produce hand sanitiser, which has been supplied to Mudgee health workers and police officers from the Orana Mid-Western Police District. Sharon Winsor from Indigiearth normally makes a range of indigenous food, spices and other products. Cherie Thomson from Native Secrets normally produces skincare and body products. Both have switched their business models around to supply hand sanitiser. It is exciting that these local businesses were able to act quickly, change their focus and make products that help protect members of our community in this time of urgent need. Once again, people and businesses in the Dubbo electorate have shown a great capacity to lead from the front and adapt to whatever circumstances are thrown at them.

ILLAWARRA WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:47:26): I acknowledge the fantastic work of Sally Stevenson at the Illawarra Women's Health Centre. The centre sees 1,500 women each and every year in relation to family and domestic violence. It runs a fantastic service on a very tight budget. I acknowledge the Minister for Health and Medical Research, Brad Hazzard. After discussions with me, he has very kindly granted a \$50,000 one-off grant for a study to be done into a trauma recovery unit. I am very excited about this. It will be a start and hopefully a turning point in our history so that women can get the services they need in one place. I am very excited about the study and I hope it proves that the agencies and inter-agencies will accept this proposal wholeheartedly.

MICHAEL BONNICI

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (18:48:26): I congratulate Michael Bonnici of Alford's Point on receiving the 2020 Tom Harvey Award for Citizenship. Michael is a community champion who at the age of 22 has already dedicated much of his time and efforts to educating and assisting others. Michael volunteers over 200 hours per year at Wanda Surf Life Saving Club, where he serves as club captain, lifesaving director and duty officer for critical incidents. He leads numerous leadership development camps for younger members who are navigating the pathways of surf lifesaving. Michael has also volunteered with charities such as Samaritan's Purse, Australian Red Cross, Meals on Wheels and the Salvation Army. He even travelled to Cambodia to assist with building schools and provide aid to impoverished regions. It is no surprise that Michael was named Sydney South Volunteer of the Year in 2017 and the New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory Young Achiever of the Year in 2018. I commend Michael for his dedication to helping others. I am delighted that his outstanding contribution has been recognised with the 2020 Tom Harvey Award for Citizenship.

MAITLAND REGIONAL ART GALLERY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:49:27): As a proud patron of the volunteers at Maitland Regional Art Gallery [MRAG], I convey my sincere thanks and praise to the staff and volunteers for their work during the challenges of COVID-19. Under the joint leadership of gallery coordinator Katie Budeja and manager of gallery and libraries Keryl Collard, the team has continued to maintain and extend the profile and presence of the gallery as a community cultural and social hub. Much of this work has been online. With over 800 members and counting, the space continues to establish itself as one of the best regional galleries in the State—and even the country. The employees and volunteers exude a vibrant, welcoming atmosphere. They continually support the work of established, emerging and young artists through exhibitions, workshops and cultural exchanges. These hardworking people have delivered around 600 events each year, including events in their very important Art and Dementia Program. I welcome Gerry Bobsien, the newly appointed director of the MRAG. I cannot wait to see how our city's creative community continues to bloom under her leadership.

TONY FINNERAN

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:50:37): I congratulate Padstow's Tony Finneran, who has been recognised in the 2020 Stroke Foundation Awards. Tony is a stroke survivor known locally for his tireless work with the Bankstown Stroke Recovery Club. Not only is Tony a stroke survivor but also he is a bus enthusiast. Tony was the winner of the creative category in the Stroke Foundation Awards after writing six books on Australia's bus and coach industry. His books have raised more than \$38,000 for the Stroke Foundation. Tony suffered a severe stroke in 2013 and had to relearn everyday things that we take for granted, such as how to walk,

feed himself and communicate. After receiving the award, Tony said, "Creating my first book became part of my rehabilitation because I needed to relearn how to use a computer. It has been a joy to write my books and I don't think I would have achieved this goal if I hadn't had a stroke." The awards recognise the unsung heroes of stroke: the stroke survivors, carers, volunteers, health professionals and researchers who strive to help people who have had a stroke and their families live well.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE POLICING

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:51:39): I also congratulate Tony Finneran. He is a very good friend of mine from my many years in the bus and coach industry. He has been a wonderful inspiration for so many of us there. I pay my respects, thanks and gratitude to our local police, particularly our new superintendent, Chad Gillies, who has joined the Port Stephens-Hunter command as our local area commander. I thank and congratulate him on his openness, proactivity and ability to reach out in such a difficult time. The police have done such an enormous job during this crisis and to take on a new command was just another challenge for him. It was great to have him reach out and do that. He has been very helpful and responsive to our community about those types of issues that come into all members' electorate offices. I also welcome Acting Inspector Vince Nicholls as the officer in charge.

FLU VACCINATIONS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:52:40): Flu season is well and truly upon us on the Central Coast. For the first time, pharmacists can provide flu shots for anyone over the age of 10. Flu shots are available for free from the New South Wales Liberal Government for those who are aged 65 years and over, pregnant or considered medically at risk. While the flu vaccine does not protect from COVID-19, it will help reduce the severity and spread of flu in our community. I was able to pop in to see my pharmacist, Kevin at Erina Pharmacy, and he got to live his lifelong dream of stabbing me in the arm with a flu shot. He did a fantastic job. I had absolutely no side effects and no sore arm. To all those people on the Central Coast, I say: Do not forget to make the appointment to see your local pharmacist. See Kevin and the crew at Erina Pharmacy if you want to—they do a fantastic job. Have your flu shot to make sure we keep the flu under control this season.

KIDS AND CHAOS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:53:39): I acknowledge the remarkable work being done by two young mothers in the Maitland region to combat isolation in the early years of parenthood. Under the name Kids and Chaos, they arrange regular gatherings for parents and their children in a safe space; provide advice and information through regular Facebook postings; encourage the support of micro-businesses in the community; and raise funds and materials for related causes. Nicole Williams and Amy MacDougal—two young, enterprising women—have recognised the corrosive nature of isolation for young parents and have made it their mission to address it directly through their own not-for-profit organisation. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a temporary but necessary pause in their operations. Playdates, picnics and market stalls have been on hold for some weeks now. Despite being unable to gather in person, the group stays connected online and has been using the time to come up with even more ways to support, inspire and connect. I look forward to attending another one of their events very soon.

1ST YOUNG SCOUT GROUP

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:54:40): This evening I congratulate the 1st Young Scout Group on receiving \$160,000 under the Stronger Country Communities Fund. The money will be used for repairs to its meeting hall to upgrade it—it really does need it—and to improve its kitchen. You only have to scroll through the group's Facebook page to understand how important this group is to the young people in and around Young. It offers a wide range of activities and programs and gives our young people a lot of confidence as they grow up. They are able to run around and do all sorts of wonderful things. I have had the pleasure of joining the group at its hall and I really cannot wait to get back there. It has been impacted by COVID-19, like so many groups, but I look forward to returning and spending some time with its members. I offer a huge shout-out to Mal Blair, Rachel Ward and Amy Ryan for the fantastic work they do with our young people.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:55:42): It is greatly heartening that since our devastating bushfire season the Rural Fire Service has had 35,000 inquiries from people who want to join their local brigade. This is more than double the number of inquiries the RFS received in the previous year. The interest in and support for our fireys during these terrible times provides an immense boost for the brigades and the morale of crews as they recover from the worst fire season on record. To date the RFS has received 8,400 completed applications. I thank each and every individual who has made an application and is willing to be part of their local brigade and make a difference. I also thank the many community members who donated to them, which has obviously sparked

that interest and that feeling of being appreciated in this role. Without these selfless volunteers the destruction, loss and death would have been immeasurably greater. In a time of uncertainty it is grassroots organisations that will keep up morale and community spirit. I wish everyone who is embarking on their RFS journey the best of luck and I look forward to meeting and hearing the new members in my local brigades.

MACMASTERS BEACH SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:56:47): I congratulate the Macmasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club in my electorate of Terrigal on recently securing \$13,967 in grants, which will upgrade the security cameras at the surf life saving club and also purchase new swimming buoys. I congratulate the entire volunteer team at the Macmasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club. It is a small club with a very big heart indeed. I also give a shout-out to the long-serving club president, Alan Blackman. Al is doing an incredible job keeping the team together. Obviously the season was shortened due to COVID-19 but Alan and the team at the club have done an incredible job this season keeping our beaches safe, with not one drowning death on a patrolled beach on the Central Coast. This is the sort of work that our surf lifesavers have done all season. Macmasters Beach is literally one of the most beautiful surf life saving clubs in the State. I congratulate it on securing the grant.

SHELLHARBOUR ELECTORATE AGED CARE WORKERS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:57:52): Tonight I acknowledge and congratulate all of the aged care workers within the Shellharbour electorate. They do a fantastic job day in and day out. A lot of them are working mothers and fathers. They are doing night shifts and working long hours under very difficult circumstances. The aged care sector within the electorate of Shellharbour is a very fast-growing one and the demand is becoming greater as our community ages. These dedicated men and women do an absolutely fantastic job. On behalf of the Shellharbour community, I thank them from the bottom of my heart for the hard work they do. They are truly the unsung heroes within each and every one of our communities across New South Wales.

FREDA SHEATHER 100TH BIRTHDAY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:58:42): I congratulate Freda Sheather from Gundagai who recently celebrated her 100th birthday. With us all observing social distancing, party plans were put on hold but Mrs Sheather enjoyed visits from family and friends on her birthday. She received flowers, cards and congratulatory messages from many dignitaries, including the Queen. But the highlight for Mrs Sheather was a phone call from the Mayor of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Mr Abb McAlister. Mrs Sheather shared with us all her secret to reaching 100. She said, "I have worked hard all my life, I have helped people and I have always kept myself busy". I wish her a happy birthday and congratulate her on reaching 100.

SEAN HARWOOD

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:59:36): I share with the House that I recently celebrated my birthday, as did my twin. I place on the record a happy birthday message to my twin brother, Sean. Sean has always been my best friend. We are very, very close. We have never lived more than a couple of hundred metres from one another and we see each other regularly. He is over at my place for dinner a couple of times a week. I give a big shout-out to my twin brother, Sean, and wish him a happy birthday.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): I join the member for Shellharbour in wishing Sean a happy birthday.

TRIBUTE TO KEITH BONGERS

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—It is with great sadness that I advise the House of the passing of one Bankstown's highly respected and loved community members Mr Keith Leslie Bongers, who passed away Wednesday 15 April 2020. Keith was a longstanding volunteer, community advocate and lay preacher at Bankstown Uniting Church as well as one of the pioneers who set up the Uniting Bankstown Aged Care Facility. In recent years Keith nurtured our new and emerging migrant community by teaching English as a second language. Keith also remained committed to supporting many of Uniting Bankstown Aged Care's programs in assisting the less fortunate in our community. In 2010, as the then Mayor of Bankstown City Council I was proud to recognise Keith's outstanding volunteering efforts and community service through an Australia Day honour. I extend my most sincere condolences to Keith's family, including his four children Allison, Phillip, Susan and Roselyn, as well as my good friend Reverend Gaby Kobrossi who presided over the funeral service and was also a dear friend to Keith. Keith Bongers was undoubtedly a model citizen in our community and will be missed by all who knew him.

VALE, MAX HUMPHRIES

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—The loss of a great man—Max Humphries. In 1963 Max married the love of his life, Noelene, and the couple moved to Cobar from Bourke. Max had a love for photography and soon became the go-to guy for all special occasions. Many happy couples in Cobar had their wedding photos taken by Max in the 1960s and 1970s. Max was a founding member of the Cobar Rotary Club in 1966 and was always a familiar sight at the Rotary BBQs. Max's father served in the First World War in Gallipoli and this fuelled Max's passion in supporting the Cobar Cadets through Rotary. Max was a member of the Cobar Bowling and Golf Club for 45 years and served on the board for 33 years, 28 of those years were as Club President. In 2017 Max had a Bar in the Main Function Room named after him and his service to the Club. Max was heavily involved in the Brennan Centre Aged Care complex, another committee where he was honoured with a Life Membership, often doing most of the maintenance work himself to save costs. Max will always be a Cobar Legend.

LOCAL COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—I acknowledge local community newspapers, including in my electorate of Davidson on Sydney's North Shore and Northern Beaches. Printed newspapers have sadly been in decline since the advent of social media. The associated shift to online advertising, pressures associated with the COVID-19 crisis and failure to otherwise counter the internet juggernauts has ultimately cost local papers support and many journalists who worked on them, their jobs. The loss of advertising due to restrictions on real estate businesses as a consequence of COVID-19, gave media bosses the final validation needed to cease print publication of these vital community organs. In order to read local newspapers such as the North Shore Times and the Manly Daily, local residents now have to subscribe to the digital version of the parent company's main publications. So I acknowledge the past contribution and sad death of free and printed local community newspapers.

KU-RING-GAI NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—I am extremely grateful for the volunteers of the Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre (KNC) in my electorate of Davidson, especially in light of the coronavirus pandemic. KNC is a non-profit organisation that provides social support services for older residents in Northern Sydney, helping them maintain their independence and remain in their own homes. Their community services include transport for older residents to essential medical appointments, shopping bus services, shopping assistance, home visits and friendly phone calls. Due to the recent social distancing measures, regular social activities have been disrupted. The efforts of the KNC have provided senior residents with regular social interaction, as well as meals and groceries, delivered to their homes. I am pleased to be a patron of KNC and I commend its volunteers for their ongoing efforts, including in the wake of crisis.

60 YEARS OF WYLIES NEWSAGENCY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to congratulate and recognise Wylies Newsagency in Temora which has recently celebrated 60 years of family business. The Wylie family started their newsagency venture in 1960 and have seen many changes and transformations since that time. The internet and the 24-hour television news cycle has had an impact on newspaper and magazine sales, so the Wylies realised the need to diversify their operations. They now sell toys, and other goods not necessarily associated with a newsagency. Lottery tickets and lotto sales have also been a significant boost for the business. While other businesses in town may sell newspapers, Wylies continue to deliver to your home, rain, hail or shine. The Temora community loves the personal, friendly service offered by John and Sue Wylie and their staff, and it's so encouraging to see small business survive and adapt in our country towns.

WE WANT YOU BACK CAMPAIGN

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I wish to congratulate Cowra Shire Council and Weddin Shire Council on their support for the We Want You Back campaign to encourage tourism in the region again. The campaign is a partnership between 10 local government areas, Orange360, Central NSW Joint Organisation and Destination Country and Outback. It is wonderful to see so many locals jumping on board to display the fantastic range of attractions, cafes, restaurants, shops and produce that the region has to offer visitors. The campaign targets visiting friends and relatives which accounts for 37 per cent of NSW domestic overnight visitors. Videographer Andrew Barnes has been commissioned to capture the content for the campaign. All involved are to be congratulated on this great initiative.

ROUSE HILL RAMS

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Rouse Hills Rams Sports Club, which for many years has been a stalwart of the sporting scene in my electorate of Castle Hill.

Since its founding 15 years ago, the club now consists of 6 sporting divisions, offering Cricket, Netball, Softball, Touch Footy, Soccer and Little Athletics. It was recently my pleasure to announce \$4,000 worth of funding for the provision of Junior Netball Programs, assisting in the playing and coaching of the game. This was part of the State's \$4.6 million Local Sport Grants Program, of which Castle Hill was the beneficiary of \$50,000. The Rams go above being a mere sporting club however, with their charitable exploits being well supported in the local area. The Rams have teamed up with the Hills Relay for Life, the Rouse Hill RFS and Sport for Uganda. They are, however, most well known charitably for their Pink Stumps Day, teaming up with the McGrath foundation to raise money for Breast Care Nurses. My thanks and congratulations go out to the committee of Brian Yates, Scott Kenney and Julie Harvey as well as Christie Kunkel.

LANKAN ISLANDERS

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Lankan Islanders Cricket Club, who have been playing in local Park competitions since 2008. Founded by a group of young Sri Lankan cricket tragics, the Club has been a successful part of the local community, both in the cricket that they've played, and their charitable endeavours off the field. I was recently able to announce a \$2,000 grant to the club for the provision of a strategy workshop and coaching clinic. This was part of the State's \$4.6 million Local Sport Grants Program, of which Castle Hill was the beneficiary of \$50,000. The Lankan Islanders have recently made a foray into tennis and OzTag, realising their goal of ensuring Sri Lankan representation in as many sports as possible. The Lankan Islanders have made charitable contributions both locally and overseas, most notably sponsoring a handful of Sri Lankan children, through the procurement of textbooks and other educational supplies. This is representative of the giving spirit so often realised in the Hills. All involved with the club deserve commendation on their achievement, including Nirmalan Thanabalasingam and Tevin Liyanage.

MICHELLE BABINGTON

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—Earlier this year bushfires tore through the South Coast. Since then we've experienced floods, the current pandemic, and many are still affected by the drought. Despite the way adversity continues to affect the South Coast, it is the wonderful community spirit that always amazes me. The effects of the bushfires are still being felt by many, but life would have been much worse if not for the work of Michelle Babington, who quickly became the central point of contact for many in the Milton Ulladulla and surrounding area. The local Civic Centre began operating as an evacuation centre on December 1 last year, and soon became a distribution point, with many donating goods and dropping them off at the same location where evacuees were taking refuge. This overwhelming generosity led to the need to transport all the goods and start a new distribution centre. Two entire basketball courts of goods were collected and sorted, with Michelle opening a no-charge shop for those in need. Having been to the site with the Premier in January we were in awe of the volume of goods. Thank you Michelle and the many volunteers who came together to make this happen.

NOWCHEM AND MANILDRA

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—The COVID-19 pandemic has created a number of issues for communities around the world. While we aren't out of the woods yet, I want to pay special thanks to Manildra and Nowchem, who have been using their resources to help the community during this time. Manildra has produced thousands of litres of hand sanitiser to supply schools, ambulance, fire and police stations, aged care facilities as well as medical professionals and pharmacies, and Nowchem has ramped up production and called on staff to do overtime to help meet demand. With the world running short on hand sanitiser, hand wash soap, and protective equipment, the Premier issued a call to arms for manufacturers to look at ways to convert production lines into making these items. It's been wonderful to see local companies like Manildra and Nowchem taking up the challenge and working with us to fill the short supply. This has not only helped our fight against COVID-19, but created local jobs for the South Coast community. I encourage all businesses who can build parts or supply urgently needed items to sign up, and again thank Nowchem and Manildra for the work they've done to support our community.

RENEE WALSH

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to acknowledge Renee Walsh from Glenmore Park who has excelled in motorsport since taking up the sport in 2017. Renee, a local mum and motorsport lover was on the top of the leader board in the Improved Production Class of NSW Road Racing Championships in 2019. Renee races a 1999 Nissan Pulsar N15 SSS and has only been racing for two and a half years. In that time, she has managed to beat her personal best times on the track by two seconds and even as much as five seconds each race, improving her overall skills and making her a very competitive racer. Her passion for motorsport was born from her love of fast cars and modified cars as a teenager. As soon as she could drive herself, a desire to participate has always been on her mind. In 2017, her parents gifted her with a Women's Motorsport Development Program,

which took her through various motorsport disciplines. By the end of this year, Renee hopes to compete in door-to-door racing such as the Australian Pulsar Racing Association or the Improved Production Racing Association. Good luck Renee!

TASTE OF EVERYTHING

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to recognise Local Glenmore Park Group, 'Taste of Everything', for their acts of kindness towards the community. In 2019, the group received a grant from Penrith City Council which they used to make sensory blankets and pillows, weighted lap mats, squeeze balls, maze tunnels, children's calendars and boards with locks and handles. These items were then presented to the staff and teachers of Fernhill School at a special ceremony that took place in November 2018. More recently on behalf of the whole group, member Linsey Hall dropped off several pamper packages to the Greater Sydney Local Land Services in support of their 'Ladies of the Land' campaign. The campaign was designed to give ladies in the farming communities struggling with the ongoing drought, something to smile about in the form of pamper packs. Well done to all the ladies at 'Taste of Everything' for your contribution to making our local community a better place.

NEW ZEALAND WARRIORS

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation)—I acknowledge the recent stay in Tamworth by the NZ Warriors in the club's preparation for the return of the National Rugby League competition. Not only did the two-week training camp at Wests Leagues Club capture national and international interest, the process involved generated a number of firsts for Tamworth and the state. The flight from Auckland directly to Tamworth turned the regional airport into an international destination. With support from the Federal Government, Border Force officers were able to carry out the immigration process for the 48 Warriors' players and support staff on their arrival. Wests Leagues were able to provide facilities perfect for the training and living in a socially isolated manner and the Scully Park football pitch was in mint condition for training runs. Another benefit of the visit was re-employing staff who had been stood down due to COVID-19 restrictions, including catering, cleaning, accommodation and the ground staff. The Warriors gave a spine-tingling farewell Haka to Tamworth on their departure. Thanks for coming to our city. You are fantastic ambassadors for your game and nation. Come back soon.

OUR LADY OF LEBANON CO-CATHEDRAL

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—During the Covid-19 pandemic I feel lucky to say that many of my constituents were able to attend church. This was during the period when religious places were closed down to enforce social distancing measures. This was only possible due to the gracious acts of Father Tony Sarkis and his fellow priests at Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral (LOL) who continued their multiple services each week, broadcasting every one of them to keep the congregation connected. It was wonderful for the community to reconnect with the Church electronically during this stressful time. It is safe to say their efforts to go live on Facebook, YouTube and on their website helped maintain the faith in the hearts of many. Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral priest Tony Sarkis also spent time decorating the church with photographs of everyone forced to worship from home, pinning photographs of parishioners to the pews. I thank Father Tony and his fellow priests immensely for their admirable efforts. Their gestures are a strong reminder the church still has a strong presence, even when the doors were closed.

HARRIS PARK LITTLE INDIA

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—COVID-19 affected many people in Australia. Businesses were affected due to the closures, the community was forced into their homes potentially isolated from family and loved ones, travel plans ruined and rates of depression increased. Non-locals were among those severely affected, with international students left unable to pay for food and rent, and unable to obtain support from Centrelink. However many local superheroes rose to the occasion. This includes Little India Harris Park Business Association Inc (LIHPBA) and the Indian Support Centre Inc (ISC) which worked together to provide free food packs to those in need. This involved the setup of a distribution centre at 97 Wigram Street, Harris Park. Board members Sanjay Deshwal and Nitin Setia approached various businesses and secured a large quantity of food items such as wheat, flour, rice, sugar, dals, ghee and salt to be packed and distributed. Many thanks to Harris Park Little India for going to so much effort to provide some support to those who did it toughest during COVID-19 and I am grateful to have been a part of it.

ALBURY SCHOOLS AND AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION AWARDS 2020

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—Congratulations are in order for two regional schools in the Albury Electorate which feature amongst the finalists in the Australian Education Awards for 2020. The schools are The Scots School Albury (Non-Government) and James Fallon High School (Government). The Scots School Albury

Junior School Principal Matthew Boundy is in the running for the award to go to the Primary Principal of the Year. These awards celebrate achievements of the top performing schools, principals and staff. We wish them all the very best as they progress to the gala presentation to be held on November 6.

CAN ASSIST AND SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS FOUNDATION

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I would like to recognize two wonderful charities in the Southern Highlands, who not only support their local communities, but also generously work to support each other so essential funds can go wherever they are most needed. Covid-19 has affected not only businesses and individuals, but it has also restricted the ability of charitable organisations to fundraise, at a time when they are most needed. The Can Assist charity supporting those in the Southern Highlands diagnosed with cancer and their families, took a blow to their funding plans when the Tulip Time Festival was cut back in 2020 due to the restrictions from the Covid-19 Pandemic. Can Assist Southern Highlands was to be charity partners with the Tulip festival, and this setback meant significant losses for their finances. That's when another not-for-profit organisation, the Southern Highlands Foundation stepped in and handed over \$40,000 to Can Assist. The timing could not have been better for Can Assist as their ability to fundraise had been limited, while demand for their support had grown. Because of their support Can Assist will continue to help those struggling with cancer in our local area. Community spirit is alive and well in the Southern Highlands.

NORMA LINDSAY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—New Lambton resident Norma Lindsay has put her time in COVID-19 lockdown to great use. At the age of eighty-six, Norma knitted five bags full of scarves, beanies and other pieces of woollen clothing to help Waratah BreastScreen NSW with fundraising. Norma lost her daughter to breast cancer many years ago, and she said that while nothing could have been done to help her daughter she is proud to help Waratah Breast Screening help other women in the same situation. When the bags were picked up from Norma's house, she was also in the process of knitting tiny mittens, booties and beanies for premature babies at local hospitals. It's good to see that, in the darkest of times, people in the Wallsend Electorate keep on helping. My thanks as well to the staff at Waratah BreastScreen.

SUSIE NINEVSKI

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The COVID-19 lockdown saw many new challenges for people and businesses across the Wallsend Electorate, but in a sign of the generosity of the Wallsend community in trying times, local mum and director of AIR Recruitment Suzie Ninevski offered free financial and career advice to people impacted by COVID-related shutdowns. Suzie told me that took so many calls where both parents have lost their jobs, putting a lot of pressure on local households. In offering free advice to people in this situation, Suzie said she wanted to give back and support communities in any way possible. She contacted my office, and generously offered \$1,000 worth of vouchers to be distributed to those in need as the lockdown progressed. As a recruitment specialist, Suzie was in a position to offer help to people facing a seriously depressed job market. This was such a wonderful show of community spirit and I thank Suzie from the bottom of my heart on behalf of all those in the Wallsend Electorate.

CHARLES COOKE

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)—I would like to congratulate Charles Cooke of Gundy being awarded a Minister's Award for Volunteer Excellence in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Upper Hunter community and future of NSW. Charles was recognised for his volunteer service for the last 20 years in organising the Aberdeen Highland Games. These games are a very important and nationally recognised event in the Hunter Valley. I again congratulate Charles on his contribution to the Upper Hunter electorate.

MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE AWARDS

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)—I would like to congratulate the following recipients of Muswellbrook who were winners of the Muswellbrook Shire Community Volunteer Recognition Awards 2020, a partnership between Muswellbrook Healthy and Well and Muswellbrook Shire Council to celebrate National Volunteer Week 2020. Congratulations to the following award winners:- Young Volunteer Toni Prior—Youth Connector; Adult Volunteer Sally Jackson—Muswellbrook Girl Guides; Senior Volunteers Lyn & Brian Collard—Muswellbrook Markets and Red Door Kitchen; Volunteer Team Award—Muswellbrook PCYC. Once again I congratulate all award winners and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge their wonderful service to the Muswellbrook community.

SUCCESSFUL HEATHCOTE LOCAL SPORT GRANT RECIPIENTS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I wish to congratulate the following sporting organisations who were recently successful in the Sports Grants Program: Helensburgh-Stanwell Park Surf Life Saving Club for the

purchase of 10 nipper training boards; Helensburgh Netball Club for the provision of first aid, coach development and umpire development courses; Helensburgh Horse and Pony Club for the purchase of 2 portable PA systems.

SYDNEY SURF LIFE SAVING AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE – ELOUERA SLSC

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—On 30 May, Surf Life Saving Sydney Branch held its Awards of Excellence presentation. This year, the ceremony was held virtually through video presentations. Elouera SLSC members received three notable awards. I congratulate Darren Galea who was named the Branch Member of the Year. Darren has huge dedication to Elouera SLSC. His tireless efforts and hard work do not go unrecognised. I congratulate Andrew McKellar who was named the RWC Member of the Year. Andrew operates the rescue water craft which is an integral part of all SLS clubs. RWCs provide lifeguards with the ability to make quick and efficient rescues as well as possessing additional surveillance capabilities. Being a RWC operator requires concentration on high risk areas of beaches. I congratulate Grace Elliott who is the U15 Athlete of the Year. Grace evidently displays strong discipline and dedication to her training. To be an U15 Athlete of the year requires living a balanced and healthy lifestyle combining the challenges of school and training. I applaud Grace on her efforts and award.

SURF LIFE SAVING SYDNEY AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE - MARCUS KENNEDY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I congratulate Marcus Kennedy of Greenhills Beach and Cronulla SLSC. Marcus was named the Patrol Captain of the Year at the Surf Life Saving Sydney Awards of Excellence. This award highlights Marcus' valuable contributions to Cronulla SLSC and his dedication to ensuring the safety of all Cronulla swimmers and surfers. Marcus has volunteered for over 20 years at Cronulla SLSC. He still currently trains the younger and next generation of surf lifesavers. Marcus' commitment, dedication and tireless work ethic is valuable to the entire Cronulla community. Residents of Greenhills Beach should be very proud of Marcus and the swimmers of Cronulla very thankful.

ROBERT JOLLEY

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—It is my privilege to recognise Robert 'Bob' Jolley who has lived and worked in the Wentworth region his entire life. Bob owned the Golden Fleece agency in Wentworth during his working days and now volunteers to assist youth in his rural community. Bob was successfully nominated for Wentworth Council's Environmental Citizen of the Year and is now one of the final 15 in the State Environmental Award. Small steps lead to big results. This is especially true for eco-warrior Bob Jolley. Even in his eighties, Bob has been collecting bottles and cans for recycling over many years, generously donating all profits to local projects. He's helped raise more than \$25,000 for the Wentworth skate park and is currently splitting earnings between a new day-care centre and a youth centre for the drought-affected Wentworth region. It's estimated Bob has collected more than 294,000 bottles and cans that will no longer end up in landfill. A mammoth effort for one individual. Congratulations Bob.

MACINTYRE HIGH SCHOOL TRAINING AWARDS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I congratulate a number of talented students at Macintyre High School in Inverell on being named finalists in the 2020 NSW Training Awards – New England Region. Milly Sutherland, Karene Robinson, Sam Lavender, Beau White and Will McLachlan are all finalists in the School Based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year category. This Award recognises the student's commitment to their formal studies at school, and in the workplace. Rose Duncan, Jada Daemon, Tim Beattie, Liam Beattie, Riley Sandral and Seb Blair are all finalists in the VET in Schools Student of the Year category. This Award is open to full-time Year 11 or 12 school students undertaking accredited vocational education and training as part of their HSC studies. Owing to Covid-19, an awards ceremony will be held online on 26 June 2020 where the winner from that ceremony will go on to represent the New England Region at the State awards ceremony in September. I commend each and every one of these students on their recognition as finalists in these Awards. They should be congratulated on their dedication to their studies, resilience and talent. Well done to all.

BINGARA PRESCHOOL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise the wonderful work Bingara Preschool have carried out throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the seamless transition made for families who have children learning from home. Whilst Bingara Preschool has remained open for essential families throughout COVID-19, many families chose to move to distance learning. In that time, and led by director Charmaine Reading, staff have transitioned their term activities into fun online learning for their preschool children. Activity packs were carefully thought out and posted to children, which included learning material and ideas and links for the children to access, such as children's yoga, dance and

learning songs, bear hunts and Mother's Day activities. The children were encouraged to post pictures of their learning resources on the private Facebook page, for the other students to see. These 'play-based learning' activities, which are endorsed by the NSW Department of Education, have been essential in ensuring our 2021 Kindergarten students, are ready for the transition to school next year. I commend the staff of Bingara Preschool, Charmaine Reading, Fiona Rattray, Jo Coss, Jaymee-Lee Gee, Emma Smith and Emma Read, on taking the extra time and initiative, to teach our future leaders, throughout extraordinary times.

POSTMASTER DAVID CAMDEN

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—I would like to sincerely congratulate Postmaster David Camden, celebrating 35 years working for Australia Post for 35 years, who retired on May 23, 2020. Mr Camden has been the postmaster at the Woy Woy Post Office for over 25 years and is very well-recognised and respected in our community. David ensured all of us keep up-to-date with our communications and parcels, invested his time and love into providing for our community, and always delivered service with a smile. Upon his retirement, David encourages others to take up roles of service in the public sector, reflecting on the satisfaction of serving his community. Alongside his staff team, our community will miss David's wealth of experience, and yet know he is off to pursue other interests—all of which involve not getting up too early in the morning! David, we thank you so much for being so professional, and also being a friend behind the counter in the Woy Woy Post Office. And most importantly, we wish you good health, happiness, and all the very best for a fabulous life in retirement.

LIFESTYLE MATTRESSES WOY WOY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—I wish to acknowledge local small business Lifestyle Mattresses Woy Woy who have demonstrated their commitment to providing a 5-star service to its customers and my community. I have been notified by one of my constituents of a lovely story involving this small business and a family searching for an appropriate bed for one of its members suffering from Parkinson's disease. I have been advised that this family approached several major bedding companies to obtain a bed however were not satisfied with what was on offer or their services. On a whim, this family visited Lifestyle Mattresses in Woy Woy where they were able to find the bed they required, had it delivered within 7 days, installed, had the previous bed removed and all within a reasonable price. This family was thrilled by the standard of service and care provided by Lifestyle Mattresses Woy Woy and I would like to also commend this business for going above and beyond and proving small business really are great! Keep up the great service Lifestyle Mattresses Woy Woy!

ST GEORGE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—I congratulate the St George Football Association on all their fantastic work in promoting sport in the local area. The St George Football Association is the governing body for football in the St George area, and manages 23 clubs and over 10,000 players, volunteers, coaches and referees. The Club network is expansive and spans from Arncliffe in the north, Dolls Point in the South, and Peakhurst in the West. The teams are diverse, and cater to those of varying age and playing ability. As well as overseeing competitive games, the Club facilitates a number of training programs for players who want to develop their football ability and master core skills. Additionally, the Club actively recognises exceptional players and runs dedicated programs to further cultivate their talent. I would like to acknowledge the Association's CEO, Craig Kiely, for his outstanding leadership. Craig has been a huge advocate for boosting the uptake of sport in the local area. I would like to congratulate the St George Football Association for their success and I look forward to continuing to support their growth in the coming years.

KINGSGROVE VIEW CLUB CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—On 12 December 2019 I had the pleasure of attending the Christmas Luncheon hosted by the wonderful Kingsgrove VIEW Club. VIEW, or the Voice, Interests and Education of Women, is a national volunteer organisation that brings together women across the community. VIEW is a part of The Smith Family, and assists disadvantaged young Australians through fundraising, volunteering and sponsorship activities. The Kingsgrove VIEW Club is a very active local community group which was first established in 1961. I enjoy catching up with the VIEW ladies and had a wonderful time attending their Christmas luncheon. I would like to thank Club treasurer, Mary Butler, for her invitation to the luncheon. I would also like to take the time to acknowledge Lorraine Ripley, who has been a member of the Club for over 20 years and is currently the Club Secretary. Her dedication and service to the Club is immeasurable and the Club would not be where it is today without her commitment. I wish all the members of the Kingsgrove VIEW Club the very best for the upcoming year.

GEORGE MORTLOCK – DISABLED NSW RIDER OF THE YEAR

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—George Mortlock of Old Bar has been named Riding for the Disabled NSW Rider of the Year. George at just 10 years of age has challenges arising from an over sensitive

sensory processing disorder and he is technically non verbal, but he can now say cow and horse. George's mother Corissa Mortlock has said George has a great love of animals but because of his sensory sensitivities gets overloaded with movement of animals. Great Lakes Riding for the Disabled coach Maureen Turner who coached George submitted the citation said that of George's first lesson 'his ear piercing screams and his strong physical attempts to escape were overruled by him pointing and indicating that he wanted to ride'. Now he sits beautifully in the saddle and is steering the horse using the reins. George also won the RDA the Local and Regional Awards before taking out the State Award. I congratulate George on his awards and wish him continued success with his challenging endeavours which I have no doubt he will conquer.

LES AND HAZEL REEVES 75TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Local residents, Les and Hazel Reeves have recently celebrated their 75th Wedding Anniversary. Les and Hazel were married March 17th 1945 at St Johns Anglican Church in Taree. After joining the NSW Railways, Les became station master at Wingham Railway Station, a role he performed for 37 years. Hazel joined a contingent of women who carried out back breaking work of picking peas and beans for commercial growers in the region before taking on the role as a cook at both hotels in Wingham. In later years Hazel operated a wholesale nursery growing African Violets for large chain stores before running a Pots'n Plants shop in Wingham Arcade. They celebrated their milestone anniversary with their six children and many of their 15 grandchildren, 21 great grandchildren and one great great grandchild. I congratulate Les and Hazel on their 75 years of marriage and wish them a healthy and happy life as they enjoy their retirement at Whitton Aged Care Facility.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE GLEBE DIVISION

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—St John Ambulance, Glebe Division, was registered in 1903. It's the oldest and longest running St John's Ambulance division in Australia. The Glebe Division of St John Ambulance has 46 volunteers as part of the team with 35 qualified first responders and 8 registered nurses. Glebe Division provides medical assistance across the inner west, volunteering at community events, music festivals and providing essential support to emergency frontline services during times of national crisis. In 2019, the Glebe Division attended 377 local events and served more than 6,000 hours treating and looking after over 1,000 people in the inner west community. Volunteer organisations like St John Ambulance have been there for the community in their toughest hours, with 17 members of the Glebe Division travelling to fire affected areas in NSW. Volunteers looked after exhausted firefighters on the frontlines of the bushfires and helped take pressure off emergency services in evacuation centres. I know that for many seeing the iconic green uniform provides one with a sense of safety, knowing there is someone there to help. Thank you to the Glebe Division for your countless hours volunteering and for your dedication to looking after our community.

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE - TENANTS ADVICE AND ADVOCACY SERVICE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Marrickville Legal Centre's Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service has been invaluable during the pandemic, supporting thousands of tenants through the financial and housing crisis created by COVID-19. Without Marrickville Legal Centre's dedicated tenancy team, inner west residents would have been left to fend for themselves, navigating the daunting and often inaccessible legal system during this unprecedented time. During this crisis tenants have been confused by rapidly changing information, often feeling ill equipped and overwhelmed by the process of negotiating for a rent reduction. The tenancy team at Marrickville Legal Centre have provided the inner west community with unparalleled support, providing a clear and up-to-date COVID-19 factsheet on their website about the NSW Government's COVID-19 tenancy legislation and their tenancy rights during COVID-19. Caseworkers have been working day in day out throughout this pandemic providing case by case support to those struggling with rent negotiations with landlords, NCAT proceedings and those fighting for urgent repairs to their property. Thank you to the staff at Marrickville Legal Centre. Our community can never thank you enough for your support and advice to tenants, when they had nowhere left to turn.

LENNY HAYES

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I would like to recognise and congratulate an old school friend of mine from Redfield College, Dural. Lenny Hayes the great no. 7 from the St Kilda Football Club in the AFL has just been elevated to the AFL Hall of Fame. This is the highest honour that can be given to a former AFL player. Not a bad honour for a boy from Eastwood who cut his teeth playing for the Pennant Hills Demons AFL team. Lenny was a great Aussie Rules player but an equally gifted Rugby League and Union Player at school. I was the recipient of many inside flick passes from the very skilful five eighth, that got me over the try line many times. He would have been great asset to the West Tigers or the Waratahs. Those skills he gained playing League and Union at school made him an even better AFL player. Today as an assistant coach with the GWS Giants he

is still using all of those great qualities that made him a champion player. Well done Lenny; League or Unions loss was the AFLs gain.

ALL SAINTS' ANGLICAN CHURCH MURWILLUMBAH "MINI BEANS" PLAYGROUND

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I recently visited All Saints' Anglican Church in Murwillumbah to congratulate the Parish on their initiative to provide local families and their kids with a low-cost indoor playground called Mini Beans. They have now been awarded \$114,000 under the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 3. I strongly supported the Church's Mini Beans project going forward. On the visit Reverend Lyndon Mulholland showed me where and how it will operate out of its spacious and airy undercroft. Reverend Mulholland paid tribute to his wife Anna, who is project manager for Mini Beans, and Carmen Stewart, of It Takes A Town. The playground will be a social enterprise supported by local volunteers from the Anglican Church and It Takes a Town, and be a fun and safe place where young families can meet. Key local services including The Family Centre, Northcott, Support for New Mums, It Takes a Town and the Early Years Network will work a roster. Murwillumbah has been without such an indoor playground since major flooding in 2017 destroyed a similar social enterprise run by the former Baptist Church, so there is a definite need for such a facility.

TWEED WATER ALLIANCE INCORPORATED VICTORY IN PROTECTING GROUNDWATER

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to congratulate the Tweed Water Alliance Incorporated on its grassroots activism in successfully standing up to protect Tweed Shire from any new water mining. This represents a community victory for local families and farmers who need this water—a finite resource—for their domestic and agricultural purposes. These are the people whose rights I will always fight for. The Tweed Water Alliance was formed in 2017 to oppose industrial scale water mining/extraction from the Tweed Valley for the bottled water industry. The Alliance does not oppose the use of water bores. Water mining has been a divisive issue on the Tweed for many years but it really took the activism of Pat Miller, his fellow Alliance members and others to assist me in strongly advocating against this wasteful, harmful and unsustainable industry. I made my views known to Tweed Shire councillors and the General Manager, and I also thank them and Council's planning staff for genuinely listening to and acting on overwhelming opposition to water mining. The Council last week amended its Local Environment Plan 2014 to ban new groundwater extraction facilities within its rural areas or RU2 zone.

BUSHFIRE INQUIRY SUBMISSIONS

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would personally like to thank the residents of the Snowy Valleys local government area, and surrounds, who made a contribution to the NSW Bushfire Inquiry. It follows what was a tragic and devastating summer and I have seen first-hand the trauma and heartache that remains in the affected towns. It is not an easy thing to do - to share your experiences, following a traumatic event. It forces you to relive that nightmare over again. For sharing their story and thoughts on how to improve future bushfire preparedness, planning and response, I wish to particularly thank the following residents who took part in a special session I was able to organise with the NSW State Bushfire Inquiry commissioners: Keith Dawson, Joanne Murrell, Daryl Watkins, Janet Peel, Rob & Cara Ironside, Kylie Boxsell, Berlinde and Douglas Rand, Ralph & Judy Wilson, Greg Mouat, Steve Bellchambers, Rod Sturt, Terry & Chris Peel, Andrew Scoullar, Gavan Willis, Vickii Cobden, Michelle Wainwright, Michael Blenkins, Ray and Tina Billing. I also wish to thank the commissioners Mr Dave Owens and Ms Mary O'Kane.

CENTRAL COAST RURAL FIRE SERVICES

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—National Volunteers Week was celebrated this year from the 18th to the 24th May. This is a week where we celebrate and recognise the generous contributions of our volunteers. The Central Coast is actually the volunteer capital of Australia. I am advised that we have more volunteers as a ratio of our population than anywhere else in the nation. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate each Rural Fire Brigade on the Central Coast whose members spent their summer keeping people and property safe – not just in our own region, but right across New South Wales. There are eight Rural Fire Brigades in my electorate. Thank you to every single member of Killcare Wagstaffe, Macmasters Beach, Empire Bay Bensville, Copacabana, Avoca Beach, Matcham Holgate, Wamberal and Brisbane Waters Brigades. The level of commitment and dedication for each RFS volunteer is nothing short of astonishing. These are the people who run into the face of danger while everyone else is running away. On behalf of our community: thank you, thank you, thank you.

CENTRAL COAST SURF LIFE SAVING VOLUNTEERS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—National Volunteers Week was celebrated this year from the 18th to the 24th May. This is a week where we celebrate and recognise the generous contributions of our volunteers. The Central Coast is actually the volunteer capital of Australia – I am advised that we have more volunteers as a ratio of our population than anywhere else in the nation. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate each of the

thousands of Surf Life Saving volunteers on the Central Coast who spent their time patrolling our beaches last summer to keep locals and visitors safe. There are 15 surf clubs on the Central Coast and I am proud to have seven of these in my electorate. Thank you to every single member of Killcare, Macmasters Beach, Copacabana, Avoca Beach, North Avoca, Terrigal and Wamberal Surf Life Saving Clubs. COVID-19 may have meant that the beach season had to end sooner than expected, and I know everyone is looking forward to life returning to "normal". Thank you again to our volunteer surf life savers for all you do.

CELEBRATING FRONTLINE STAFF DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to take this opportunity to share my gratitude for the sacrifice of every frontline healthcare worker and emergency service member, across what has been an uncertain and chaotic period in our history. Despite the increased risk of exposure to COVID-19, these men and women—working across hospitals, health care centres, allied health facilities, and various sectors of the community—soldiered on to ensure support for vulnerable residents and patients continued. Some stayed away from their families, not knowing if they would come in contact with, contract or share the disease that has caused so much devastation for other nations. The public health orders have made life challenging for everyone, across the board, but I would like to thank the Murrumbidgee Local Health District staff, in addition to our local police, paramedics, and private health care providers. I also wish to thank our teachers and also the parents and carers who responded to the challenges our students faced in education. Finally I wish to thank all those who kept working in service industries and the retail sector and all those who continued to interact with others to support our community.

PROJECT KINDNESS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I would like to take the opportunity today to recognise the efforts of an organisation in my community, Project Kindness, and all of the work that they have done both throughout the COVID-19 Health Crisis, and previously. Through the COVID-19 crisis, Project Kindness has been collecting laptops and other electronic devices to give to children from disadvantaged backgrounds, so their education didn't suffer, helping teachers and students connect during an extremely challenging time. Access to digital technology was essential in ensuring that these students were able to work remotely. Without support from organisations like these, children from less privileged backgrounds were at higher risk of falling behind. I was more than happy to help facilitate their painting of a Kindness Cupboard, where people take when they need, and leave what they can. When completed, this cupboard will be given to the Mary Immaculate Church in Waverley, a fantastic initiative for our community. I would like to thank Clem Hartson, the founder of Project Kindness, and everyone who has worked with or donated to Project Kindness for their efforts and contributions to our community.

OUR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I rise today to recognise the tireless efforts of all of our medical staff at the Prince of Wales Hospital, the Royal Hospital for Women, and the Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick. Our nurses, doctors, and other allied health workers have been on the front lines throughout this crisis, working extremely hard and deserve the thanks of every person across New South Wales. Our healthcare workers, and the other front-line workers from across the state and the country are heroes. They have worked around the clock to care for us, and to keep us safe during an unprecedented health crisis that has gripped Australia and the world. We have seen this crisis hit other countries so much worse, and the extremely high quality of our healthcare workers is part of the reason why Australia has escaped such effects. I would like to extend my thanks, and the thanks of the Coogee community to these workers. You make our state a better, safer, and healthier place to live, and have given so much personally during this extremely difficult time.

HAMMONDCARE DARLINGHURST

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I'd like to put on record the important new supported accommodation program at HammondCare Darlinghurst. HammondCare Darlinghurst is a purpose-built, residential aged care home for 42 vulnerable older people with high care needs who have been or are at risk of homelessness. I visited the new building when it was completed and it is great to see that the facility now has residents living there and enjoying their new homes. Grants from the City of Sydney's affordable and diverse housing fund and donations from the Ian Potter Foundation enabled construction on St Johns Anglican Church land and its operations will be funded through Commonwealth aged care programs. HammondCare Darlinghurst fills a big gap between homelessness services, health services and aged care and provides a great model for aged care that meets the needs of specific population groups. I've called on the government to support projects like this and hope that we will see more of these high quality facilities that match individual needs and support a caring community.

MODEL FARMS HIGH SCHOOL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—Model Farms High School is a terrific school which educates over 1,100 students from parts of Baulkham Hills, Bella Vista and Winston Hills. The 2020 academic year for senior students thus far has been challenging at times, yet I know the students at Model Farms are well supported by dedicated teachers and support staff. I acknowledge principal Mark Grady, deputy principals Kerrie Kennon and Jennifer Pledger and the great educators at the school for their work in instilling a love of lifelong learning to local students. In particular, I want to acknowledge the school's student leaders who have assisted the student and teaching community throughout the year and will continue to do so. Well done to school captains Erin Milostnik and Harrison Moroney, vice-captains Bradley Chesson and Alicia Kammerer, sport captains Stephanie Hulme and Cameron Murray and SRC presidents Eloise Kerney and Rishi Mishra. A big thank you to the engaged P&C for their work this year, particularly president Julie May. I wish Model Farms High School all the best for the 2020 academic year.

THE AUSTRALIAN MAN CAVE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On Sunday 31st May I had the great pleasure of joining and supporting The Australian Man Cave (TAMC) who gathered in the virtual "Zoom" world for a scheduled brunch meeting. TAMC is growing at a rapid rate with chapters launching in Griffith, Canberra, Sydney's Eastern Suburbs and the most recent addition, the newly joined Man Cavers up in sunny Queensland. Irrespective of where the Man Cavers are from, the aim always remains the same. TAMC strives to lower the rate of suicide in males across the nation while empowering men with the understanding that it's #notweaktospeak and the importance of supporting and leaning on one another for support. Thanks to TAMC National Secretary Peter Zangari for hosting the Ryde/Eastwood gathering and to all the participants on the day for your continued support of men's health in our communities. Although not in the traditional TAMC setting, the Zoom Brunch was a truly wonderful gathering with plenty of discussion and a great deal of support for each and every member present. It's always reassuring to see so many kind-hearted and passionate gentlemen doing their part to inept change and save lives. Well done TAMC.

FAIRFIELD COVID-19 TESTING CLINICS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I take this opportunity to thank the health care staff operating from the COVID-19 Testing Clinics in the Fairfield area for their efforts and diligence both throughout the COVID-19 lockdown period and right up to the present day. Testing for COVID-19 is of vital importance to minimising the spread of the virus and keeping it contained. Thanks to the dedicated health care staff performing their duties at these centres, we have been able to collectively reduce numbers to a point where we can return to a semblance of ordinary life. Fairfield Hospital, Fairfield Respiratory Clinic, and the pop-up COVID-19 testing clinics at Fairfield Community Centre and Fairfield Showground have provided Fairfield with this much-needed service and have seen many of our residents tested after experiencing symptoms. Thank you once again to the dedicated staff at these COVID-19 Testing Clinics, front line workers who have risked their own health for the sake of keeping our community as safe as possible.

COMMUNITY FARMERS MARKETS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I acknowledge the organisers and stall holders of our community farmers markets who were able to quickly adapt their service models so as to continue to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic. New Brighton, Byron Bay, Bangalow and Ballina farmers markets all continued to function with appropriate distancing and hygiene measures in place so that our community were still able to purchase fresh, local produce during the pandemic. For many people, a visit to the local farmers market was an important outing to maintain connection with other community members safely and obtain essential supplies in an open, outdoor environment. I commend those whose efforts meant that this service could continue during difficult circumstances.

BANKSTOWN DISTRICT AMATEUR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I am delighted to offer my ongoing support for the Bankstown District Amateur Football Association, one of the many local sporting clubs in Bankstown that have had to place their competitions on hold to comply with COVID-19 restrictions. Like many sporting clubs across the local area, Bankstown District Amateur Football Association has suffered a large reduction in volunteers and their junior players have lost valuable subsidies that would normally be provided by their adult competition. Bankstown District Amateur Football Association has warmly welcomed the news that their junior players will be able to resume competition from 1 July 2020 and continues to eagerly await being able to resume their vital adult competition. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Bankstown District Amateur Football Association Chairman Mr Andrew Forster, Deputy Chairman Mr Dimitri Hursalas, General Manager Ms Leanne

Millar, as well as Directors Mr James Bowmaker, Mr Andrew Skaltsounis and Mr Scott Farquahson, and commend them for steering the club through the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring their sport remain viable, and I wish them well as they resume their wonderful work in our local community.

HOLDSWORTH HOMESHARE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I'd like to put on record the innovative HomeShare program operated by the Holdsworth Centre in Woollahra. HomeShare matches older people who are living alone who have a room to spare with a person looking for affordable accommodation and companionship and is designed to benefit both parties. The program helps older people looking for practical ways to remain living at home and independently as well as those struggling to find affordable, appropriate accommodation, such as students, refugees, women and people with disability. In just over a year, Holdsworth HomeShare has had more than 120 enquiries from owners and more than 150 inquiries from sharers. There are matches in in Woollahra, Waverley, City of Sydney and Randwick council areas, and the program is expanding to cover a wider area. I'm pleased that the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services will visit Holdsworth with me to personally learn about the program and its achievements. I commend Holdsworth for developing the innovative HomeShare program, harnessing community resources to address the growing housing affordability crisis and increasing isolation for an ageing population. This is an excellent example of community building.

IRISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise the Irish National Association (INA) and an event that I attended on 27 February. It was the launch of a book on the history of the INA. The three authors of the work are Richard Reid, Jeff Kildea and Perry McIntyre. They were all present at the launch which was held, entirely appropriately, at the Gaelic club. The full title of the book is To Foster an Irish Spirit: The Irish National Association of Australasia 1915-2015, with an introduction by the present President of the INA Karl Kinsella. Also present at the launch were the Irish ambassador to Australia Brendan O'Caollai and the Irish consul general in Sydney, Owen Feeney. The INA has played an important role in the Irish diaspora in Australia. Central to their activities have been Irish sports, language, dancing, history, literature, and culture. The first decade of the Association's history was marked by the controversy over the Irish fight for Freedom. That extended to the internment of Albert Dryer and the "Irish Seven". The INA continues as staunch as it always has been for the undivided freedom of Ireland.

TRANSPORT WORKERS IN COVID-19

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I acknowledge the transport workers who have continued working throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Bus drivers, train drivers, station masters and cleaners have been going to work every day of this crisis, quietly and diligently providing a service for all of us. Early on there were calls to suspend public transport to stop the spread of the virus, but this would've prevented many essential workers getting to work. Public transport had to remain open. Bus and train drivers got up, put on their uniforms and recognised they had a job to do. I acknowledge the workers of the NSW Branch of the RTBU, in particular Tram and Bus Division Secretary David Babineau, who has been tireless in his efforts on behalf of his members. As we return to work, please remember that transport workers are there to keep us safe. Full trains or buses, extra wait times at stations, and other delays are not their fault. Public servants take their jobs seriously and are committed to serving others. In times like this, it's good to remember just how much we need and rely on them. Thank you to every transport worker who has worked through this crisis.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I acknowledge National Volunteer Week, which was celebrated this year from the 18 to 24 May in recognition of our outstanding volunteers who generously support their communities in so many facets of everyday life. Volunteers are the unseen members of our society who seek to improve life for the marginalised, who raise funds for community projects and who often risk their lives to save others in remarkable acts of bravery and heroism. Today I recognise Busways driver and SES Commander Paul Burg who served on the frontline during the devastating bushfires that swept through parts of Port Macquarie in late October, early November 2019. Paul Burg played a pinnacle role in ensuring our transport network, Busways continued to operate alongside police, RFS and SES volunteers as fires threatened people's homes and businesses. As community leaders go, Paul would be described as one of the best. His involvement in natural disaster recovery in the 1999 Sydney hailstorm, Cyclone Yasi in 2011, and the ongoing search for William Tyrrell truly represents the National Volunteer Week theme; "Changing Communities. Changing Lives". I would like to thank every community service organisation who represents our wonderful region through the act of volunteerism.

PATRICIA DAVIS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I acknowledge our newly crowned national, parkrun Hero of the Year Trish Davis for her inspirational ability to influence literally hundreds of parkrunning participants discover the joy of exercise, health and wellbeing. Trish was overwhelmed last month to receive the Hero of the Year title via an online announcement to reward a life dedicated to keeping fit and healthy while encourage others to follow in her footsteps. Known as the "shining light" by her fellow parkrunner companions, Trish is by no means ready to hang up those boots, describing her mission in life to motivate people to be the best version of themselves. As part of her award, Trish was given the opportunity to travel to London and participate in the Bushy parkrun, post COVID-19. At the age of 66 Trish competed in her first marathon after completing the renown 900km Camino trail through Spain. Understanding her capabilities inspired her to train and compete in a 42km marathon in Australia which continues to be hallmark moment of her running career. From starting a walking group in the Camden Haven to recruiting new parkrun members from a hospital bed, Trish is the hero we all aspire to be.

JANETTE CHAPMAN, GILLIAN SUMMERS, SAM WORTH

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Today I recognise Janette Chapman, Gillian Summers and Sam Worth who coordinated a massive drive in response to a Rural Fire Service appeal during the summer's horrific bushfires. What was initially expected to be a couple of car loads of donations became four trucks as Newcastle responded with thousands of dollars of goods including water, medical supplies and sunscreen, based off a list provided by the Rural Fire Service support team. While it's no secret that Novocastrians are giving, it takes a great effort to manage such a response and Janette, Gillian and Sam certainly stepped up. On behalf of all Novocastrians a great thanks goes to Janette, Gillian and Sam for your generosity of time and spirit. I'm sure the recipients of the goods were extremely grateful.

SHEILA WOODCOCK

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Today I pay tribute to the late Novocastrian Sheila Woodcock, who bequeathed \$14 million to 15 community organisations on her passing. Miss Woodcock passed away at 87-years-old on 12 May, 2018, but her amazing gift was only revealed this year. The beneficiaries represent some of Miss Woodcock's great loves and her values, including animals, community and friendship. Amongst many others, this bequest will fund the training of 25 guide dog puppies, three graduate scholarships in diabetes research or treatment, and training facilities for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. This follows a life of philanthropy, which included long-term support of Vision Australia, the RSPCA and Breast Cancer Trials. Miss Woodcock has left an astounding legacy; the number of people this will touch cannot be counted. Vale Sheila Woodcock, and thank you.

MIRANDA MUSICAL SOCIETY

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I bring to the House's attention a wonderful organisation in the Miranda electorate; the very talented and renowned Miranda Musical Society. Miranda Musical Society is a non-profit community organisation well known in the Sutherland Shire and throughout Sydney. The group was formed in 1967 with a vision to present musicals to suit all participants and encourage new members to join their growing society. Since then, Miranda Musical Society have performed over one hundred productions for the community, including Broadway classics Les Misérables, The Phantom of the Opera, Beauty and the Beast and West Side Story. I was very much looking forward to seeing the organisation's highly-anticipated production of Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, which was unfortunately postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I acknowledge Patron Geraldine Tuner OAM, President Tim Dennis, Vice President Karen Moseley, Treasurer Rhonda Hewitt, Secretary Meredith Simpson, Publicity Officer Garth Saville, Members Representatives Gabby Robinson and Gavin Leahy and Public Officer Melissa Lammers, and recognise their resilience during these unprecedented times. I commend the Miranda Musical Society for over fifty years of wonderful productions and look forward to those to come.

JOEYS NETBALL CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge Joeys Netball Club who are the recipients of \$7,000 from the NSW Government's 2020 Local Sport Grant Program. Founded in 1963, Joeys Netball Club is comprised of nearly 300 members from around our Shire, catering for both junior and senior players of all abilities and nurturing players at representative levels. The secured funding will allow Joeys Netball Club to facilitate two great projects to benefit local members. Subsidising registration fees and uniform costs will reduce financial barriers and encourage players to remain active, whilst the development, training and mentoring of junior players and umpires will increase their skills and confidence. Of course none of this is possible without the hard-working volunteers behind Joeys Netball Club who work tirelessly to promote competitive sports for girls, encouraging

them to join in and stay active for life. Particularly I recognise the dedicated executive committee, including President Maryanne Leigh, Club Secretary Katrina Lonergan, Treasurer Aaron French, Player Representative Sophie Hunt and Umpires Convenor Kirsten Sweetland. I thank Joeys Netball Club for bringing the importance of these projects to my attention and extend my best wishes for the resumption of the netball season.

MRAG STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I wish to convey my sincere thanks and praise for the entire staff and volunteers at the Maitland Regional Art Gallery for their work during the challenges of Covid-19. Under the joint leadership of Gallery Co-ordinator Kattie Budeja and Manager, Gallery & Libraries Keryl Collard, the team has continued to maintain and extend the profile and presence of the gallery as a community cultural and social hub. With over 800 members—and counting—this space continues to establish itself as one of the best regional galleries in the state and even the country. The employees and volunteers exude a vibrant, welcoming atmosphere, continually supporting the work of established, emerging and young artists through their exhibitions, workshops and cultural exchanges. These hard-working people have delivered around 600 events each year with energy and passion. I know they will continue to be an asset to Maitland City Council - and Maitland in general - under the leadership of MRAG's newly appointed director, Gerry Bobsien. I want to take the opportunity to welcome Gerry Bobsien as the new Director of MRAG. I can't wait to see how our city's creative community continues to bloom under your leadership.

VALE DR BRUCE MESSMER

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I would like to acknowledge the recent passing of Dr Bruce Messmer and send my condolences to his wife Marie and family. Dr Messmer was a general surgeon who worked in Maitland. In 1963 he joined a growing practice in Morpeth. This was back when it wasn't uncommon for doctors to perform dozens of house calls a day. Dr Messmer was a Consultant Surgeon in High Street and ended his medical career at his Church Street Practice in 1995. Over the years Dr Messmer cared for hundreds of families and became a trusted member of their extended family. Dr Messmer's obituary in the Maitland Mercury observed that 'he was quietly spoken but loved medicine and looking after his patients - even at the end of his career, it wasn't uncommon for him to still be at the hospital at midnight.' I thank Dr Bruce Messmer for his passion and dedication to the medical fraternity and to the Maitland community. I give my most sincere condolences to Dr Messmer's family on behalf of a grateful community. Please know Dr Messmer made a positive impact on many patients, and his warmth and professionalism will never be forgotten.

LOCAL SPORTS GRANTS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I rise to congratulate the local organisations in my electorate who were successful in receiving funding through the Local Sports Grants program. We know sport is a powerful tool that can make a significant difference in our community. Whether it is participating as a spectator, athlete or official – it positively impacts our lives both physically and emotionally. Congratulations to Mosman Netball Club who secured \$2,000 for their coaching program for junior netballers, Monte Swimming Club who secured \$2,000 for their wellbeing program for juniors to enhance swimming coaching. Congratulations to Mosman Cricket Club who are receiving \$15,000 for the installation of a new storage shed at Balmoral Park, and Balmoral Sailing Club who secured \$13,800 for upgrades to the club kitchen at Balmoral Park. Finally to Mosman Lawn Tennis Club who are receiving \$3,980 for the re-roofing of the club pergola, and to the Balmoral Triathlon Club who secured \$1560 for their beginner triathlete development course. Congratulations to all these organisations on their success in the Local Sports Grant Program, and I look forward to seeing their projects completed to the benefit of our local community.

CHURCH BY THE BRIDGE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Many in my electorate of North Shore know of the generosity and community spirit of Church by the Bridge Kirribilli. During this pandemic, the Church has been providing meals for those who have been unable to leave their home, and who don't have any family to assist them with obtaining groceries. This has not just been locally either, with calls for help nine hundred and seventy kilometres away. Parish intern Naomi Deck and her volunteers prepare around seventy meals a week for parishioners, and other locals who need them – whether families, single people, and they cater for all dietary requirements. Church by the Bridge has also in the past had an active involvement with the Greenway Housing estate, running a fortnightly barbeque and Sunday service. Due to the pandemic, this ministry hasn't been possible and so the team members have been cooking up to one hundred meals each week and distributing them to residents of Greenway. Thank you for your community spirit and assistance during this difficult time for us all.

CARSS PARK POOL AND TODD PARK

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—Today I voice my support and thanks to the members of the Save Carss Park Pool committee. They have been fighting for a long time now to ensure the historic Kogarah War Memorial Pool remains where it is, and they now also fight to save the open space of Todd Park from an aquatic complex the community does not want. I want to state, on behalf of all my constituents that the fight is not over. We will continue the campaign to keep a public swimming pool at Carss Park and to ensure Todd Park is not demolished for a new facility. Taking a beautiful park that is used for enjoyment and recreation by thousands of people and building an aquatic centre on it would be a betrayal of the community's wishes. The Save Carss Park Pool committee have my support because Carss Park Pool is a unique and special place. It deserves to be saved.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 19:03
until Tuesday 15 June 2020 at 12:00.**