



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday, 16 June 2020**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday, 16 June 2020**

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

## *Notices*

### **NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

**The SPEAKER:** Before we start notices of motions (general notices), I remind members that new Standing Order 134 requires notices of motions to be emailed to the Table Office at [assemblynotices@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:assemblynotices@parliament.nsw.gov.au). Members who have handwritten copies of notices of motions today will be given a little leeway: They can place their notices of motions in the box behind the Clerk.

*[Notices of motions given]*

## *Bills*

### **CRIMES AMENDMENT (SPECIAL CARE OFFENCES) BILL 2020**

#### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from Wednesday 3 June.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (12:15:45):** The Opposition does not oppose the Crimes Amendment (Special Care Offences) Bill 2020. The bill proposes amendments to sections 72B, 73, 73A and 78A of the Crimes Act 1900. The provisions in the bill are largely based upon, but not identical to, the recommendations of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice report *Adequacy and scope of special care offences*, dated November 2018. The recommendations of that cross-party committee appear to have been unanimous. I join the Attorney General in thanking and congratulating the committee on its carefully prepared report and recommendations. While the age of consent is 16 years, in reality there are clearly some relationships where a person aged 16 years or 17 years does not in a real sense freely enter into a sexual relationship because of the power imbalance in that relationship. Those are called special care relationships. Sexual intercourse and touching are a special care offence in these relationships. As the Legislative Council committee said in paragraph 1.9 of its report:

While it is generally accepted that a young person aged 16 years or over is able to engage in sexual intercourse freely and voluntarily, the special care offence is based on the presumption that a young person aged 16 or 17 years cannot freely and voluntarily consent to sexual intercourse where a special care relationship exists. It is inherent that in these relationships there is a power imbalance that holds one person in a position of authority over another. The offence presumes that those in a position of authority may exploit the vulnerabilities of young people. Therefore any consent may not be freely and voluntarily given.

The object of the bill is to make amendments to the Crimes Act relating to special care offences. More specifically, the primary objects of the bill relating to offences in which a person has sexual intercourse with a young person between the age of 16 and 18 years who is under that person's special care are:

- (i) to expressly require the offender to be in a position of authority relative to the victim for certain special care relationships involving religious, sporting, musical or other instruction to be established, and
  - (ii) to revise a special care relationship that is established if the offender is employed at the victim's school and has authority over students at the school, to clarify that it applies to paid, unpaid and voluntary workers at the school and to require the victim to be under the offender's authority, and
  - (iii) to provide that a special care relationship is established if the offender works for an organisation that provides residential care to young persons in out-of-home care and has an established personal relationship with the victim in connection with the provision of that residential care, in which the victim is under the authority of the offender, and
  - (iv) to provide that a special care relationship is established if the offender works for an organisation that provides refuge or crisis accommodation and has an established personal relationship with the victim in connection with the provision of that accommodation, in which the victim is under the authority of the offender, and
  - (v) to provide that a special care relationship is established if the offender is the adoptive parent or the de facto partner of an adoptive parent of the victim.
- (b) to provide that a special care relationship is established if the offender is the spouse of a biological or adoptive parent of the victim (rather than a step-parent of the victim),

- (c) to extend the special care relationships to include those where the offender is the biological or adoptive parent of a biological or adoptive parent of the victim, or that person's spouse or de facto partner, or the spouse of a guardian or an authorised carer of the victim, excluding any person who is a close family member of the victim for the purposes of the offence of incest,
- (d) to extend most of the amendments—

to which I have just referred to—

... offences involving sexual touching of young persons between 16 and 18 years under special care ...

- (e) to grant immunity from prosecution to young persons between 16 and 18 years for an offence of incest if the other person to whom the charge relates is the young person's parent or grandparent ...

There are a number of aspects of the bill to be noted. The focus of both the bill and the Standing Committee on Law and Justice report is on relationships where a perpetrator is in a position of authority. It is that very sensible approach that will avoid capturing innocent relationships but will criminalise behaviour that is exploitative and should be sanctioned by the criminal law. Importantly, it will not be necessary to prove the actual exercise or abuse of any such authority; it will only be necessary to establish that a relationship of authority existed. As the committee pointed out, that was the approach of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Those provisions clarify sensibly the provisions of section 73 (3) (c).

The provisions related to a situation where the offender is at the same school as the young person are clarified. The bill includes among "offenders" anyone performing work at the school who has students, including the victim, under their authority. Importantly, it is made clear that "working" at a school can also include volunteers. That definition also extends to other new categories of special care relationships. The first of these is for an offender performing residential care work for young persons placed in out-of-home care who has established a personal relationship with a young person and has established that relationship with the provision of that residential care to the victim—in which relationship the victim is under the authority of the offender. The second is where the offender works for an organisation that provides refuge or crisis accommodation and has an established personal relationship with the victim in connection with the provision of that accommodation to the victim—in which relationship the victim is under the authority of the offender.

As I say, these are both new categories of specific special care relationships. I note that these are, in one sense, quite complicated provisions. The reality is that they have to be because the facts, situations and the realities of relationships can be complex. It is important not to criminalise innocent relationships and equally important to criminally sanction abuse of power and exploitation. I note that the extension of the offence to youth residential care in particular seems to result from the evidence of the Ombudsman to the committee and the number of complaints received by the Ombudsman.

The amendment to section 78A of the Crimes Act deals with incest. The amendment provides that young people are extended the same protections in relation to prosecutions for sexual relationships with their adoptive parents, adoptive grandparents, authorised carers or guardians as they would receive in relation to adoptive parents or adoptive grandparents, authorised carers or guardians under the special care offences. A number of other changes to section 73 and section 73A expand the number of relatives who would be regarded as providing a special care relationship, especially including grandparents either by way of adoption or biology as well as their spouse or de facto partner. This seems a sensible closing of what is otherwise a gap in the current regime. Much of the focus of the amendments and the preceding committee report is on making authority the essence of the behaviour to be criminalised. The committee report states:

- 2.64** The committee believes that the overarching intent of the legislation—to protect young people from being abused by someone in a position of authority in relationships of special care—is not adequately captured in the offence as it is currently worded. This is problematic, as it is important for the offence to provide certainty, particularly to those who have special care relationships with young people.
- 2.65** The challenge is in identifying the parameters of the offence in different contexts. Is the 19-year-old after school music tutor captured by the offence if he has a sexual relationship with a 16-year-old girl he tutors? Does the offence apply to a 20-year-old soccer manager who has a sexual relationship with a 17-year-old player on the team? And what if their relationship predated the manager's appointment to the position?
- 2.66** These scenarios are but two examples that highlight the confusion and uncertainty stakeholders have identified. Many attribute this lack of clarity to the absence of an explicit reference to 'authority' within the wording of the offence. In this regard, we note that other jurisdictions refer to the offence as a 'position of authority' offence, rather than a 'special care offence', including the Royal Commission in its recent Criminal Justice Report.

Focusing on authority emphasises that the fundamental objective is to protect young people from sexual exploitation, which seems a fairly sound basis upon which to found legislation. As I have indicated, the Opposition will not oppose the bill.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:23:48):** I support the Crimes Amendment (Special Care Offences) Bill 2020. I thank the Hon. Mark Speakman, MP, Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of

Domestic Violence, for introducing the bill to the House. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Crimes Act 1900 to introduce certain recommendations in a Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice report on offences related to when a person has sexual intercourse with a young person between 16 and 18 years of age and the young person is under the person's special care.

The amendments seek to clarify certain definitions to make it explicitly clear what types of people fall under the title of "special care" in an effort to adequately protect young people aged between 16 and 18 who are under the special care of these adults. The standing committee investigated the adequacy of the current provisions listed under section 73 of the Crimes Act with regard to relationships between school students and people who carry out some type of work at their school. It considered whether workers in youth residential care centres or similar settings—including but not limited to homeless shelters or services—should be recognised under section 73 as being defined as special care relationships with 16- to 17-year-olds, whether the section 73 offence should be expanded to acknowledge relationships between young people and their adoptive parents, and whether the incest offence under section 78A of the Crimes Act should also be extended to include adoptive relationships.

The standing committee's report concluded that it would be significantly valuable to amend the special care sexual intercourse offence under section 73 to provide more certainty and transparency regarding which types of relationships are explicitly defined to ensure, on the one hand, that young people in relationships with adults that involve a power discrepancy due to that adult's position of authority are adequately protected and, on the other hand, that consensual relationships between young people who are over the age of consent and adults who might only be a few years older and which do not involve a power imbalance due to the adult's position of authority are not criminalised. The New South Wales Government supported each of the recommendations made by the standing committee.

This bill seeks to amend section 72B and section 73 of the Crimes Act to make legislative amendments to the special care sexual intercourse offence. Additionally, there will be corresponding amendments to the section 73A special care sexual touching offence. Further, there will be one amendment to the section 78A incest offence to guarantee the protection of young people when their adoptive parents or grandparents, authorised carers or guardians engage in a sexual relationship with the young person by mirroring the prosecutions as if the relationship were biological. The bill inserts the definition of "close family member" in line with the definition included under the section 78A incest offence. It will define "parent" to refer to both adoptive and biological parents.

The policy objectives outlined in the bill are to better protect young people who are aged 16 to 17 and are over the age of consent from mistreatment by adults who hold positions of authority over them, irrespective of whether that authority is abused. The bill aims to find a balance between respecting young people's autonomy and their ability to engage in consensual sexual relationships with whomever they choose and a situation whereby a certain relationship involves an adult in a position of power over a young person. This power dynamic may hinder the young person's ability to provide consent to any type of sexual activity willingly and voluntarily. The majority of the relationship types under the special care offences inherently involve an adult in a position of authority over said young person.

Examples of these types of relationships include when the adult is a doctor of the young person or the adult is a correctional officer at the institution where the young person is an inmate. It is understood by the Government that some of the types of relationships included in the special care offence do not make it overtly clear that sexual intercourse in those specific relationships is an offence due to the power imbalance in favour of the adult. The proposed amendments will seek to define that to commit a special care offence the adult must hold a position of authority in relation to the young person. To specifically ensure this, amendments will be applied to include a reference to the definition of "authority", which states that a young person is under the second person's authority if that young person is "in the care, or under the supervision or authority" of the second person.

The bill will not change the provision that in a school setting all relationships between teachers, principals or deputy principals with students at the school are relationships of special care. However, the proposed amendments extend this to include relationships between students and adults who perform work at the school as an employee—irrespective of whether it is a paid or unpaid position—a contractor, a volunteer or someone in any other role when this adult has sexual relations with a young person at the school while having authority over that young person. Further amendments will require particularly that for relationships between young people and adults who provide them religious, sporting, musical or other instruction to constitute "special care" relationships the adult must have authority over the young person in said relationship. This is to ensure that special care offences support the form of such offences as recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which characterised these as positions of authority.

The proposed amendments to the bill will seek to expand the types of family relationships that constitute special care relationships. The new definitions include the notion that special care relationships will also exist between a young person and their biological or adoptive parent and/or grandparent, as well as the spouse or de

facto partner of their parent or grandparent. This amendment will ensure all family settings are included and therefore young people are appropriately protected. This was to address the potential gap that exists in the Crimes Act regarding the criminalisation of sexual relationships between young people and their adoptive guardians. At present, it is an offence for an adult authorised carer or guardian to engage in sexual intercourse with a young person while the said young person is under their care. Additionally, the offence of incest states it is an offence for a person to engage in sexual intercourse with someone who has been a family member from birth—that is family members that are close by shared genetic make-up and heritage.

The proposed amendments will seek to rectify the fact that the Act does not include the explicit criminalisation of sexual intercourse between young people and their adoptive parents. Greater clarity regarding this offence is necessary. The main consideration in the offence of incest is to prevent reproduction between two people who share the same genetic heritage due to the serious health implications that can arise from this. However, there is the possibility that young people aged 16 and 17 who have engaged in sexual relations with a close family member who had authority over them would be not protected from prosecution, unlike young people in other special care relationships. The incest offence applies to anyone who has sexual intercourse with a close family member who is aged 16 or above. In an effort to address this discrepancy, schedule 1 [10] explains that a young person cannot be prosecuted for an incestuous relationship with a parent or grandparent as this is a relationship that would otherwise be deemed special care.

The proposed amendments to the bill will ensure the necessary and better suited protection of young people aged 16 to 17 who are at risk of being sexually exploited by adults who hold positions of power over them. It will protect the rights of young people, and it also ensures transparency and greater certainty about what type of relationship and situation constitutes the special care relationship offence. I thank the Attorney General for putting this bill together and I thank his office staff for their support in bringing it to the House. It is an important topic and one that should make a great deal of difference to the lives of young people. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:32:42):** I am proud to make a contribution to the very important Crimes Amendment (Special Care) Bill 2020. On 13 February 2018 the Attorney General tasked the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice with examining the adequacy and scope of the special care offence and to consider the circumstances under which, if any, the offence should be expanded. The committee received 17 submissions. It also held public hearings on one day. A wide array of views and concerns were presented to the committee by stakeholders in written and oral submissions. On 22 November 2018 the committee delivered report No. 66 entitled *Adequacy and scope of special care offences*. The committee concluded that there was value in amending the special care offence to provide greater clarity and certainty about which relationships are captured as criminal conduct. The committee made five recommendations to the Government. This bill will implement each of the four recommendations for legislative amendment.

Recommendation 1 of the committee was that the sexual intercourse under special care offence be amended to clarify that all special care relationships must involve the adult being in a position of authority relative to the young person. Without expressly requiring a dynamic of authority in the sexual intercourse under special care offence, the committee considered that there was a risk that innocent, consensual relationships that do not involve any power imbalance or exercise of authority may be inadvertently captured and criminalised. This has always been the provision's intent. Indeed, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse characterised special care offences as "position of authority offences". However, amendments will now put that question beyond doubt.

Recommendation 2 reiterated the importance of authority in special care relationships with particular reference to the relationship category where the adult has an established personal relationship with the victim in connection with the provision of religious, sporting, musical or other instruction to the young person. Recommendation 2 also recommended clarifying the definition of a member of the teaching staff of a school to ensure that it includes both paid and unpaid employees and volunteers. In legislating to adopt those recommendations it is now beyond question that the special care offence requires a dynamic of authority and that it applies to school staff in paid and unpaid, formal and informal positions and volunteer positions.

Recommendation 4 was to amend the sexual intercourse under special care offence to include relationships between young people and adults engaged in young residential care services and homelessness services where, consistent with Recommendation 1, the adult is in a position of authority relative to the young person. Young people who live or stay in residential care facilities or who access homelessness services can be particularly vulnerable to exploitation. The Government agrees that extending the sexual intercourse under special care offence and the sexual touching under special care offence to relationships formed between adults who work in those environments, and the young people they provide services to and have authority over, is appropriate and will help make sure that those already vulnerable members of our community are afforded greater protection at what can be extremely challenging, distressing and unsettling times.

Recommendation 5 is the final recommendation and amends the special care offence to define relationships between adopted young people and their adoptive parents, and the de facto partners of their adoptive parents, as special care relationships. In carefully formulating recommendation 5, the committee considered a variety of aspects and, importantly, a potential gap in the Crimes Act 1900 with respect to criminalising sexual intercourse between young people and their adoptive parents. It determined that greater clarity would be beneficial. The bill will help strengthen and clarify the longstanding special care offence in New South Wales. On the one hand it will maintain the appropriate balance between ensuring that young people are protected from potentially exploitative relationships with adults who have authority over them and, on the other hand, it will ensure that innocent, consensual relationships are not criminalised when the adult party is not in a position of authority relative to the young person.

Those five recommendations were put forward by the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice after it examined the adequacy and scope of the special care offences and put great effort into considering which of those offences, if any, should be expanded. A glance and consideration of all recommendations and their implementation leaves us in no doubt that the provisions that are in place in New South Wales to protect our young people will be improved and enhanced. I take this opportunity to place on record my thanks and the thanks of many people in my community as well as, I am sure, people across New South Wales who are appreciative of the work of the committee and the Attorney General in bringing forward this important legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (12:39:59):** I support the Crimes Amendment (Special Care Offences) Bill 2020, which is very important and special amending legislation. All members know that people who are in a special care role are entrusted with looking after those in their care and are meant to bring out the best in them by providing them with the best opportunities—and that applies especially to young people in their care. I appreciate the opportunity to talk about matters that are really important. At the outset, I commend, congratulate and thank the Attorney General and the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice for their work and for incorporating the committee's recommendations in this amending bill. It is clear that there was a problem and it is equally clear that a Parliament that works well fixes problems. This bill rectifies the problem.

In particular, the bill addresses adults who take advantage of the power imbalance of their special care relationship with young people in circumstances rendering a young person under the adult's complete control. That is a real problem that needs to be addressed. I cannot think of anything worse than the offence of a person in a special care relationship using their authority to have sexual intercourse with a young person aged between 16 and 18 years and in breach of the special care duty owed to that young person. Young people can be especially impressionable when they come into contact with power figures. This bill will ensure that young people will be protected.

Although the age of consent is 16 years, this amending bill addresses the special duty of care and the power imbalance between an authority figure and a young person. If there is a power imbalance, young people must be protected. We know that in a school environment it is an offence regardless of age for an adult to have a sexual relationship with a young person, but the bill widens the category of offences to include all offences committed by an adult who is in a special care relationship with a young person through sport, religion or musical tuition. That is a good reform.

Any person who, in effect, uses their authority to their own advantage while in a special care relationship with a young person is doing the wrong thing, particularly as regards acts of a sexual nature. I again commend the Attorney General and the committee for their work. I am sure that other speakers during this debate will examine all the particulars of the bill in great detail but suffice it to say that what is more clear than anything else is that we must do whatever we can to protect young people. This amending bill does that very well. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:42:42):** Over the course of five years the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse shone much-needed light on the experiences of people affected by child sexual abuse in an institutional context. It revealed the extent of the horrific abuse that affected far too many children and young people across the nation in organisations where they should have been safe. To give some context to the scope of that important inquiry, the royal commission received over 42,000 calls, over 25,000 letters, held over 8,000 private sessions with 57 formal public hearings and heard evidence about the abuse of children from over 1,200 witnesses. The royal commission produced a wide range of reports, including its *Criminal Justice Report* released in August 2017. The final report was presented to the Governor-General in December 2017 and contained 409 recommendations.

All Australian governments and all Australians have a responsibility to listen and to act upon the recommendations of the royal commission to prevent those abhorrent crimes. I am pleased to say that New South Wales has led the country in its response to the royal commission. On 23 June 2018 the Government formally

responded to the royal commission, accepting the overwhelming majority of its recommendations. The Government's response covered changes already implemented and new reforms introduced in response to the recommendations. It is worth outlining some of the important changes that the New South Wales Government has made in response to the recommendations of the royal commission to keep children safe, hold perpetrators to account and, of course, improve support and access to justice for survivors.

These include joining the National Redress Scheme, introducing reforms to make it easier for survivors to access civil justice, appointing specialist judges trained in managing child sexual assault matters, introducing reforms aimed at reducing trauma experienced by victims during sexual assault proceedings, strengthening protections for people who report suspected child abuse and introducing reforms to expand the categories of mandatory reporters, introducing legislative reforms to build a more comprehensive and robust reportable conduct scheme, developing trauma-informed care training packages for caseworkers and carers, improving services for children and young people who display problematic and harmful sexual behaviours, increasing protection and strengthening support services for young people in detention, and improving specialist sexual assault services. This bill builds on this important and ongoing work.

I turn now to address the royal commission's recommendations regarding position of authority offences. In its *Criminal Justice Report* the royal commission recommended that all jurisdictions that have not yet adopted position of authority offences, such as New South Wales' special care offences, should do so. The royal commission expressed support for the structure and coverage of the existing special care offence in New South Wales and, in particular, that it does not require the prosecution to prove that a defendant exploited or abused their position of authority only that the defendant was in a position of authority relative to the victim. The royal commission made three recommendations relating to position of authority offences. Recommendations 27 and 28 are that State and Territory governments review their position of authority offences and/or provisions that allow consent of 16- and 17-year-olds to be negated in the relationships with adults and people in positions of authority to ensure that offences and provisions require only that the offender be in a position of authority relative to the victim, not that the offender abused the authority.

Recommendation 29 was that State and Territory governments consider whether their position of authority offences may be too broad and inadvertently capture sexual conduct involving young people who are over the age of consent that should not be criminalised. If so, those governments should consider introducing legislation to establish defences such as a similar age consent defence. In its formal response to the recommendations of the royal commission the New South Wales Government accepted all three recommendations relating to position of authority offences and noted that the existing offence is already delivering on recommendations 27 and 28. In 2018 the New South Wales Government also implemented recommendation 29 by introducing a similar age defence. In the context of the special care offences, this defence may apply when an 18- or 19-year-old has had a sexual relationship with a young person who is less than two years younger than he or she.

With this bill the Government will build on its response to the royal commission, placing beyond doubt that special care offences do not require an abuse of authority to be enlivened but they do require that the adult has authority over the young person. In conclusion, I highlight that the New South Wales Government has been a leader in its response to the royal commission. The bill builds on the Government's ongoing commitment to build a safer society for our young people. I commend the Attorney General and his team for this amending bill and for adopting the royal commission's recommendations. I am very pleased to commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (12:48:54):** I speak in favour of the Crimes Amendment (Special Care Offences) Bill 2020 introduced by the Attorney General. The bill is designed to improve the protection of young people from potential exploitation by adults in a position of authority over them by amending the special care offences. The amendments will provide greater clarity and certainty about which relationships are captured as criminal conduct. While the general age of consent to sexual intercourse in New South Wales is 16 years, the special care (sexual intercourse) offence and the special care (sexual touching) offence under sections 73 and 73A of the Crimes Act 1900 respectively recognise that the power dynamic in certain relationships between an adult and a young person aged 16 or 17 can displace the young person's capacity to give free and voluntary consent to engage in sexual activity.

Relationships that have been recognised as special care relationships since the special care (sexual intercourse) offence was adopted over 15 years ago include those between teachers and students, youth justice officers and inmates, and health practitioners and their patients. However, the standing committee heard, and agreed, that two additional relationship types not previously expressly captured should be included in the offence. They are relationships between young people who reside in residential care facilities or homelessness accommodation and the adults who work in those services.

Stakeholders who made submissions to the standing committee were consistent in calling for the offence to extend to workers in those settings, highlighting the inherent vulnerabilities of young people in residential care

settings and those who are experiencing homelessness. They are some of the most vulnerable people in our society and may be experiencing acute instability, lack of other support systems and have complex histories of trauma. Recommendation No. 4 of the committee's report No. 66 was for those categories to be included expressly and explicitly in the special care offence. The Government recognises that staff who work with young people in residential care settings, refuges and similar homelessness accommodation services are in unique positions of trust and influence over the young people they engage with.

The amendment bill aligns with the policy objectives of the special care offence and will promote the protection of vulnerable young people in residential care settings, refuges and homelessness accommodation. With the bill, the Government is acting to implement the standing committee's recommendation by including those two additional relationship types. The New South Wales Government has been a leader in its response to the royal commission. The bill builds on its ongoing commitment to build a safer society for children and young people. Having had a career in the Australian Federal Police, I did a lot of training and became a specialist in sexual assault and child abuse. Supporting the bill gives me great satisfaction because I have assisted people who have been vulnerable to such offences. Ensuring that they will be protected by such legislation is fantastic. I commend the Attorney General for supporting the recommendations of the committee. I am pleased to support the bill.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:53:18):** I make a contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Special Care) Bill 2020, which is a product of the work done by the Attorney General on the back of a report by the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice. In many respects, this is a difficult area and an awkward subject to talk about but one that society has been confronted with on a number of occasions in recent years. I acknowledge the value of the work of the Legislative Council standing committee. Committee work can come into its own in such areas because members from all parties can come together and work collaboratively for the common good without it being a particularly political forum. When committees are at their best they can do some really good work and this is an example of how that can play out: when a report attempts to deal with those challenging and difficult issues by making some small but significant improvements to the way the legislation reads and works to protect young people in our community.

At the end of 2018 the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice delivered its report No. 66 entitled *Adequacy and scope of special care offences* and made five recommendations to the Government. I will focus on recommendations Nos 1, 2 and 5 in more detail and explain the Government's thorough and considered response. As previous speakers have said, a lot of good sense is on display across the Chamber on the bill, which I appreciate. In recommendation No. 1 the standing committee recommended that the special care (sexual intercourse) offence as a whole be amended to clarify that, in order to be a special care relationship, the relevant relationship must involve the adult being in a position of authority over the young person.

The existing provision in section 73 of the Crimes Act implies that relationship but it was felt by the committee and stakeholders who made submissions that it needed to be made more explicit because the existing section, while it describes a context—for instance, in the provision of religious, sporting, musical and other instruction to the victim—says that the person has established a personal relationship with the victim in connection with one of those things. "A personal relationship with the victim in connection with" does not make it explicit that it is an authority relationship. In fact, it may be misinterpreted to mean another participant in that kind of activity, which was not the target of the provision in section 73. I imagine that is where the stakeholders were coming from in asking for clarity about an authority relationship over the subject person.

While the existing section 73 of the Act leads us most of the way there, the amendments in the bill make it crystal clear that the essence of the offence is when one person has authority over another and uses that situation to improper advantage. In recommendation No. 2 the standing committee recommended that the authority dynamic be made explicit in the relationship category involving an offender who has established a relationship with a young person in connection with the provision of religious, sporting, musical and other instruction to the young person; and that the definition of "member of the teaching staff" of a school be amended to clarify that it includes paid and unpaid employees and volunteers engaged by or with the school in a formal or an informal capacity. Those of us who have been involved with schools know that there are lots of grey areas around the status of people because many within a school community volunteer and become de facto employees, sometimes over a long period, without even having that official status. In 99.99 per cent of the cases they do wonderful work with the best of intentions but, as legislators, we must recognise that those situations can give rise to very rare but damaging circumstances that can affect the welfare of young people.

It is appropriate that the recommendation clarifies that a special care relationship in a school can apply to a person working in any of those capacities on behalf of the schools who has an authority relationship with a student. The bill will place beyond doubt that to commit a special care offence, the adult offender must be in a position of authority relative to the young person, and that in school contexts the special care offence applies to staff in paid and unpaid, formal and informal, and voluntary positions. Making explicit that the special care

offences apply only in certain relationship types and only then where the young person is under the authority of the adult will help ensure that innocent, consensual relationships are not inadvertently criminalised. It will also help clearly align New South Wales special care offences with the form of such offences as recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Recommendation 5 of the standing committee was to amend the special care offence to include relationships between adopted young people and their adoptive parents, and the de facto partners of their adoptive parents, within the "familial special care" relationship category. The bill respectively amends section 73 (3) (a) and section 73A (3) (a) of the Crimes Act 1900 to expand the familial setting relationship category to reflect these additional categories and to go slightly further to ensure that the offence can apply to all modern forms of family structures. These amended definitions will have the effect that "special care" relationships will now be recognised between a young person and his or her parent and/or grandparent, whether by way of biology or adoption, as well as the spouse and/or de facto partner of his or her parent or grandparent, whether by way of biology or adoption. The key is the authority relationship, in whichever way it is generated.

The bill also reforms the offence of incest. Some stakeholders submitted to the standing committee that it was not clear whether the Crimes Act 1900 explicitly criminalises sexual intercourse between young people and their adoptive parents, as the special care (sexual intercourse) offence did not apply to relationships between parents and their children, and the section 78A incest offence applies to sexual intercourse between close family members from birth, implying a biological link for that offence. The standing committee determined that young people would be best protected by amending the special care offence to include this relationship type. [*Extension of time*]

As I said, the standing committee determined that young people would be best protected from sexual relationships with their adoptive parents by amending the special care offence to include this relationship type. The Government agrees that this protection is vital, and supports the standing committee's recommendation. However, the Government also considers that the protection should not be denied to young people who engage in sexual activity with their biological parents, noting that the incest offence can apply against any person over the age of consent—16 years. Subsequently, the bill makes the amendments recommended by the committee, and also amends the section 78A incest offence to provide that a young person cannot be prosecuted for an incestuous relationship with a parent or grandparent, as such relationships should likewise be considered to involve authority on the part of the parent or grandparent that would negate the young person's capacity to consent. That is the key: The young person, because of that authority relationship, is deemed unable to consent to that activity.

The amendments relating to familial setting categories go some way to recognise that the vast majority of sexual abuse cases of people under the age of 18 occur in domestic settings. Sadly, we heard lots of terrible stories arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and necessary work has been done to address those. But the community needs to understand that the continuing problem of sexual abuse of young people, particularly of younger children, applies to people in domestic settings, in familial situations, and that is incredibly sad, but it is true and needs to be confronted. The ongoing work to protect young people in this State should reflect that.

The bill will extend and clarify protections available for young people in our State, and ensures that the right balance is struck between respecting young people's autonomy and protecting them from exploitation in particular circumstances. I commend the Attorney General for working on this bill and presenting it to us today so that we can improve the protections available to young people in this State. I reiterate my appreciation of the work of the Legislative Council committee, which has dealt with these difficult issues and has come back with sensible, measured responses to increase the protection available to young people without unduly impinging on the freedom of young people, which is a delicate and difficult balancing act but which I believe the House is coming together today to embrace.

With this bill, we can move forward and address the scourge that sexual abuse generally represents to our community. But in this particular narrower instance of special care relationships based on authority the bill makes it crystal clear that an adult with authority over a young person aged 16 or 17 may not with impunity abuse that authority relationship in a sexual manner under the force of this law. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:04:36):** I make a contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Special Care Offences) Bill 2020. It gives me particular pleasure to support the bill. Having been a detective in a previous life and an officer of the court, I know how prevalent special care (sexual intercourse) offences are and how much these offences affect the lives of the victims involved. The special care (sexual intercourse) offence is set out under section 73 of the Crimes Act 1900. This offence was originally introduced in 2003 as part of a package of reforms designed to ensure that victims and perpetrators of sexual offences received equal treatment under the criminal law, regardless of their sex, gender or sexual orientation.

Before the special care (sexual intercourse) offence was introduced, a more limited offence of "carnal knowledge" applied, involving sexual intercourse by a male teacher, father or stepfather with his 16- or 17-year-old female pupil, daughter or stepdaughter. Unlike the carnal knowledge offence, the special care (sexual intercourse) offence applies to sexual intercourse involving adults of either sex and young persons aged 16 or 17 of either sex; and the adult, due to his or her authority, has special care over the young person, which negates the young person's capacity to give free and voluntary consent. "Special care" relationships were legislated to exist between adults with parental responsibilities and young people under their parental responsibility; health practitioners and their patients; custodial officers and inmates; teachers and students; and certain other adults acting as instructors or leaders, including in the provision of religious, sporting, or musical instruction, and the young people receiving instruction.

Since 2012 the Government has introduced amendments to strengthen the special care offence. In 2012 the parental guardianship category was expanded to include de facto partners of young people's parents and guardians. In March 2018 the teacher/student category was expanded to capture relationships between a student and an adult employed at the student's school who has authority over the student. This included teachers at the school beyond the student's direct classroom teacher; teachers who do not provide instruction to students, such as the principal or deputy principal; and people employed at the school who have care of or authority over students, which may include school counsellors, welfare officers and year advisers.

In December 2018 the language of the offence was modernised and a new special care (sexual touching) offence was introduced. This offence applies to sexual conduct that does not constitute "intercourse", and applies to the same category types as the sexual intercourse offence, as well as to relationships between parents and grandparents and their children or grandchildren. Biological parents and grandparents are not included in the special care (sexual intercourse) offence, as sexual intercourse between close relatives from birth is already criminalised under the section 78A incest offence. In its August 2017 criminal justice report, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recommended that jurisdictions adopt "position of authority" offences such as the special care offence applied in New South Wales.

The royal commission expressed particular support for the structure and scope of the special care offence in New South Wales, and how it only required that the adult be in a position of authority, not that that offender abuse that authority. While the existing special care offence in New South Wales already aligned with the key recommendations of the royal commission, we have continued to build on these reforms to ensure that the offence operates effectively. This included introducing a similar age defence, which, in the special care context, may apply where an 18- or 19-year-old has a sexual relationship with a young person who is less than two years younger than him or her. This reform delivers on the royal commission's recommendation that position of authority offences should not inadvertently criminalise innocent, consensual relationships that do not involve the adult party being in a position of authority relative to the young person. I would love to talk further on this bill and show my utmost support for the amendments, however time has overtaken me. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (13:09:37):** In reply: I thank the members representing the following electorates for their contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Special Care Offences) Bill 2020: Liverpool, Holsworthy, Manly, Lakemba, Terrigal, Goulburn, Riverstone and, last but not least, Myall Lakes. Most importantly, I thank the courageous survivors of child sexual abuse who provided their stories to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Their bravery has shone a light on the devastating consequences that abuse can have. Of course, the royal commission had a lot to say about that and the special offence protections in the law. The bill adds to the reforms that the New South Wales Government has made since the royal commission issued its final report to enhance the protections available for children and young people in our community. I thank the NSW Department of Communities and Justice staff, my own staff who have worked on the bill and the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice, chaired by the Hon. Natalie Ward, MLC, whose recommendations we have adopted. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

*Members***MEMBER FOR BAULKHAM HILLS****MEMBER FOR PROSPECT**

**The SPEAKER:** We have a few birthdays to acknowledge. Two members who have just celebrated their birthdays are the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, who is also the member for Baulkham Hills, and the member for Prospect, who is not in the Chamber. I wish them both a happy birthday. The member for Wagga Wagga and the member for The Entrance will both celebrate their birthdays shortly.

*Bills***DESIGN AND BUILDING PRACTITIONERS BILL 2019****EVIDENCE AMENDMENT (TENDENCY AND COINCIDENCE) BILL 2020****RESIDENTIAL APARTMENT BUILDINGS (COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT POWERS) BILL 2020****WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2020****Assent**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages from the Governor notifying Her Excellency's assent to the bills.

*Question Time***STATE ECONOMY**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:16:39):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. The Treasurer claims to be stimulating the economy so why in the middle of a recession is he cutting wages, privatising assets and pushing to increase the GST?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:16:55):** I thank the member for her question and her new-found interest in matters of the economy. This has been a challenging time for our economy, the national economy and globally as well. But New South Wales has led the way with its stimulus support packages, topping over \$13.5 billion. That has provided important support, allowing businesses to flourish and keeping as many people in jobs and as many businesses in business over this period of time. In April more than 220,000 people across our State lost their jobs and hundreds of thousands more across New South Wales are on the JobKeeper program.

We are seeing people take pay cuts and work less hours. As the Federal Treasurer said two weeks ago, this will be a business-led recovery. We are completely focused on cutting red tape and regulation, on reducing the tax burden so that businesses have the capacity to invest more, on driving productivity growth and having people in work. When it comes to the economy, I look at the measures. If we look at where New South Wales was coming into this pandemic, as the Premier has often said, we are in the strongest position because of our fiscal and economic management since being in Government.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Our asset recycling program, opposed by those on the other side, has unlocked capital.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We are investing in infrastructure, driving jobs growth and adding half a percentage point to our economic growth. Public demand from this Government has helped our State leading into this pandemic and it will help drive us through it. If we want to look at alternative measures across the board, we know that one of the first announcements we made in relation to stimulus support—we were the first State out of the block—was waiving \$450 million of payroll tax for businesses with payrolls up to \$10 million and \$56 million to bring forward the next round of payroll tax by raising the threshold to \$1 million in 2020. We brought that forward, ensuring that 5,000 businesses will no longer have to pay payroll tax and the administration costs associated with that. That is 40,000 businesses saving an average of \$13,000.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Our \$10,000 support package, as we know, has given hundreds of thousands of businesses cash flow to invest.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I thank the Minister for Customer Service for the work he has done. Let us look at the alternative. If we go back to the last election, we have cut \$5 billion of taxes over the last four budgets. What did Labor do at the last election? Under the now shadow health Minister—the then famed shadow Treasurer—a \$1.3 billion tax increase on businesses across the State.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Payroll tax—up. Stamp duty—up. Car registration—up. Car, bus and truck tax—up. Retirement village tax—up.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Car parking tax—up. Tractor tax on farmers. When? In the middle of a drought.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** If you own a boat, you pay a boat tax.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** This is what Labor does.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is a serious question that I would ask the Treasurer to answer in a time of recession.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer is answering the question and is being relevant. Resume your seat.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** The question relates specifically to stimulating the economy.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer is being relevant. Resume your seat.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Why is the Treasurer cutting wages, privatising assets and pushing to increase the GST?

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The Leader of the Opposition said it is a serious question. We have seen great leadership from the Premier, with her steady hand guiding us through this pandemic. Who was the only person who asked for a sit-down interview with the Leader of the Opposition? A comedian. That shows that nobody is taking you seriously. At a time when we need to instil confidence in consumers, in the business community, you are in a search for relevance. Unlike any other leader across this country, the Leader of the Opposition has sought to undermine public confidence.

## WATER BILLS

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (14:22:03):** My question is directed to the water Minister. Will her Government rule out increasing water bills by more than 50 per cent for renters and families during times of drought?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:22:35):** The fact is that this Government has given water bills a break since it has been in office and will continue to do so. Since this Government has been in office, water bills have halved in real terms. That is a result we are proud of. In real terms, we have put downward pressure on customers' water bills across Sydney and the Illawarra and we are proud of that work. As members opposite know, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] released a report today. In an independent process to government, overseen by stakeholders and community consultation, it released a determination today showing there will be a reduction—in real terms—of 7 per cent in water prices for Sydney. That is a positive outcome. IPART also considered the fact that we need to conserve water in times of pressure on our catchment and our system. It has recommended to Government that water usage charges be increased so we can help to conserve water. That report has been made to us and it has some merit.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Cessnock has asked a question. He will remain silent.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Our Government has also got a number of rebates for those who are financially challenged. There is even more support in this determination for pensioners. Pensioners currently receive a rebate on their service charges and their bills.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: My point of order is relevance. The question was specifically about whether the Minister will rule out increasing water bills by 50 per cent; it was not about rebates.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is being relevant to the question.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** There are rebates and it is great news we are supporting. The other determination of the IPART is an extra \$40 million to stamp out leaks and ensure that we get the right support into the ageing infrastructure.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Because you have been cutting that budget for nine years.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Because we have been doing that for many years. We are actually down quite a number of per cent in our leakage. There is a determination to continue to do that. In relation to the issue of usage—IPART is important—the information that I have been provided with says under drought prices a typical Sydney household that uses 200 kilolitres of water a year will have a 7 per cent increase in water and wastewater bills compared with 2019-20 and a 16 per cent increase compared with non-drought prices. But that bill will remain the same and will stay low if we reduce water usage by 26 per cent. That is the recommendation of IPART—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** How does a family of four or five do that?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** That is IPART's recommendation to government. It is important—

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** It is important that we all play our part in conserving water. This determination by IPART is designed to do exactly that. We are very proud of what we have done in New South Wales in driving down prices across the water sector in this city. It is an important consideration. Compared with other capital cities across Australia, we have the cheapest water and this will continue under this determination. IPART is sending a very important message to consumers that conserving water in times of drought is the appropriate thing for a community to do but at this current time consumers can look forward to a 7 per cent decrease in their water bills from 1 July.

#### MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:27:10):** I direct my question to the Premier. Why is the Premier buying custom-made schools in Victoria instead of backing manufacturing in New South Wales in the middle of a recession?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27:28):** I was very pleased to be in the Londonderry electorate yesterday when I opened a brand-new school at Jordan Springs.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** When I spoke to its first principal she was very excited about starting in term 3. She said that when she went for the interview she was told she would be required in 2021. Then they told her term 4 and now they have told her term 3 because the school is ahead of schedule.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I have never known an Opposition anywhere in the history of Australia or New South Wales not to support new or upgraded schools.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** In fact, yesterday at Jordan Springs—

**Ms Prue Car:** We just want it on time.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We know they are embarrassed by asking the wrong question when they do not let me answer it. They do not even let me give the answer.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Rockdale is on his final warning.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** They do not even let me answer their question because they do not want to hear it. This is the answer.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** Why didn't you invite the member?

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I was asked a question on education. I am answering the question and I appreciate the courtesy of those opposite in doing that. Yesterday at Jordan Springs I highlighted that because of new technology New South Wales is adopting in being able to construct some of these schools off site—

**Ms Kate Washington:** From Victoria—

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Jordan Springs is actually in Londonderry, New South Wales. Last time I walked through new and upgraded schools, 190 of them were here in New South Wales, and yesterday in the north-west alone there are 19 new or upgraded schools. Jordan Springs is the ninth one that has been completed.

**The SPEAKER:** If I hear another word from the member for Londonderry she will be removed from the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The great news about the technology which those opposite refer to is now we can actually get brand-new schools up and running without that longer lead time that used to happen in the past.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. The question was whether buildings at Jordan Springs were built in Victoria.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier is being relevant. The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We are incredibly proud of the fact that not only are we building new and upgraded schools but also construction and assembly jobs, and the jobs we are creating in New South Wales because of this massive \$6.5 billion pipeline, are unprecedented. I am incredibly proud of our record in that regard. We are making sure not only that we are building new and upgraded schools but also they are happening in a more timely way. Imagine the delight of the new principal yesterday when she said to me that rather than starting in term one in 2021, when she was told, she will be starting in term three because the school is six months ahead of schedule in construction. This is the type of story that we want to see all across New South Wales—in the bush, in the cities and in the regions.

I was very pleased to get an update from the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning in the Legislative Council. She advised me that the overwhelming majority of the 190 schools that this Government promised to be upgraded we are now upgrading, or building 208 schools across the State. The overwhelming majority of them are either on time or ahead of time and we are looking forward to delivering them across the State. We know why this matters. Every child and every student in New South Wales deserves the opportunity to be their best. We also appreciate that, whilst we are providing world-class education for our students across the State, we are ensuring that we provide those jobs now when it is really hard for families who are worried about their job security. All amount of suppliers are having those jobs created in New South Wales. Even though New South Wales is going through very difficult times and has experienced an increase in unemployment, it still has the lowest unemployment rate in the nation, and we hope to continue that.

#### STATE ECONOMY

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:32:04):** I direct my question to the Treasurer. New South Wales faces an economic cliff in September when help for many families and businesses runs out. Why does the Treasurer not fight to keep JobKeeper and free preschools and child care after the end of September?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:32:29):** As I said in my earlier answer, considerable work is being done by State Treasurers across political lines working very closely with the Federal Government to make sure that the stimulus support from our States is complementary to the support provided by the Federal Government. We are all focused on making sure that we keep as many businesses in business and as many people in work during this period of time. We have made a significant commitment when it comes to child care. As we know, the JobKeeper program did not extend to councils. We were the only State—I think South Australia recently followed our lead—that provided that additional support for council childcare centres so that the equivalent of the Job Keeper program would be available to them.

I have often spoken about the convoluted system of the Federal Government running child care and the State Government running early childhood centres and preschools across the State. The State Government has extended its program of preschool support until September because many working men and women need as much support as they can during this time. We want to have as many women back in the workforce as possible. That means that where we can find stimulus to support programs for families in need, we will continue to do so. Over \$13.5 million in initiatives are providing support across our State. Through the Board of Treasurers, the Federal

COAG or the Committee on Federal Financial Relations, affectionately known as CFFR for those who are interested, we are working closely with the Federal Government to ensure that the State or the Federal Government can fill any gaps that appear in the process and provide support.

As I said, this is not a time to play politics; this is a time to show leadership. Through the leadership of the Premier, during this time we are ensuring support on the ground where it is needed. Whether through the drought or bushfires, all our support at the Commonwealth and State level has been to support each other. It is clear that it is not a sprint; it will be a marathon. Changes will be needed constantly in public policy at the State and Commonwealth levels. We will not play politics with it. We will ensure that behind the scenes we are engaging to ensure that support is given to people who need it on the front line. We have met many people over this period.

In February the Premier announced a \$2.3 billion initial support package and the Government provided \$60 million to expedite social and affordable housing maintenance work. Just yesterday I was with the water Minister at a social housing site in Arncliffe, where, as a result of that funding, work has now been completed and the tenancy has gone up from 13 to 142 new spots. I met many young people, including a young year 10 student, Grace Ford, who has just finished school and now has been welcomed at one of those sites. We met many workers who said to the Minister and me that during that period that if it was not for that stimulus support, they would not be in work. That is a tangible example. We can make announcements in press conferences but when we see the meaningful difference on the ground that the support packages are making to men and women so that they can remain in work, provide for their families and put food on the table, we will continue to do that work.

I congratulate the health Minister on his work. By almost tripling our intensive care unit capacity, we can now lift those restrictions and get our economy moving so that in September we can transition away from the JobKeeper program and start paying wages. People do not want to be on welfare; they want to be in work. That is exactly what the Government is committed to doing. We have the strongest economy in the country. We are the engine room of this nation. We will drive our country out of that. It will not be on the back of the Government; it will be on the back of the men and women right across the State who have brought us into a strong economic position prior to the pandemic. It is our great men and women who will lead us out of it.

### HOMELESSNESS

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (14:37:29):** My question is directed to the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. How is the New South Wales Government providing safe and supported housing to people who are homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond?

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (14:37:53):** I thank the member for Sydney for his question and I note his passionate advocacy for supporting the most vulnerable. For those who may have seen it, the member for Sydney was a participant in the last season of *Filthy Rich and Homeless*. The latest season has focused on my region. I commend all those taking part in the program and for shining a spotlight on the importance of caring for the most vulnerable. I acknowledge the efforts and leadership of the City of Sydney, particularly its Lord Mayor Clover Moore, who continues to do a tremendous job and show other councils how it is done when it comes to caring for the most vulnerable.

I thank all members from both sides of the Chamber who have come forward to offer their comments on the Government's response to supporting the vulnerable at this time. The benchmark of any government is how it seeks to support vulnerable people, but no more so than during COVID-19. Since COVID-19 the Government has provided temporary accommodation for more than 1,200 people sleeping rough. To put that into context, rough sleepers are not just homeless people. There are different categories of homelessness: people who couch surf and people who are in dilapidated or unstable accommodation. Rough sleepers are some of the most complex and challenging cases and they require extra support and care.

Through the support offered by our Premier and Treasurer, the Government has provided additional temporary accommodation. In fact, \$34 million was announced. That money was broken down into two tranches. One group of funds was going to support products like Rent Choice, Rent Choice Youth and Rent Choice Start Safely. The Attorney General, and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence would know how important those 350 packages have been to people escaping domestic violence at this time. I know he would join me in welcoming it. The other \$14 million has gone towards supporting people into longer term temporary accommodation. Many of the people that we have encountered are those who we may not have seen before or those who have slipped through the cracks over many years. We have been able to provide them that accommodation.

On 8 June, I was able to announce a new \$36 million initiative, the Together Home package, which takes this Government's contribution to more than \$70 million to support the vulnerable and homeless at this time. It is a record contribution, the largest ever single investment in homelessness and rough sleepers in the State's history.

It should be welcomed because it will provide that next step to people who need that bridge to safety and security. So many of us take for granted going home at night and locking the door safely behind us. This is the first time for many people to be able to do that. The project will head lease properties, as we do now to provide accommodation to people, and then work with health and mental health to wrap those services around the people who need them. Homelessness is not just about not having a roof over your head; it is the symptom of other issues such as mental illness, domestic violence, drug and alcohol addiction, and financial hardship. The Premier bravely signed up to halving street sleeping by 2025. I am sure that when the Premier signed up to that agreement we never thought we would be in the situation as we are now.

I am pleased that the initiative has been welcomed by Homelessness NSW. I thank Katherine McKernan for her leadership. She has certainly been a champion of the housing first approach, for which I commend her. The initiative has also been welcomed by the Community Housing Industry Association; Shelter NSW; Southern Youth and Family Services, led by the inimitable Narelle Clay, who is known to many members; Wollongong Emergency Family Housing; Homes North; the St George Community Housing [SGCH] group; Link Housing; Wentworth Community Housing; St Vincent de Paul; Mission Australia; St Vincent's Health; and Dignity. Mark Degotardi, CEO of the Community Housing Industry Association, said:

This package is a strong step forward in nullifying the negative social impacts of COVID-19, we welcome the NSW Government's investment in tackling these issues.

Scott Langford, the CEO of SGCH, said:

Beyond the first response to the pandemic crisis, now, through strong joint leadership we see the advocacy and persistence of [Minister Gareth Ward], the commitment of Premier [Gladys Berejiklian] to halving homelessness and the Treasurer [Dominic Perrottet] investing in our communities.

He added that the Government must be committed to ensuring the temporary accommodation response through COVID-19 was the first step of a long-term plan to halve the numbers of people sleeping rough on our streets. When it comes to homelessness, there just is not a Liberal thing to do, a Labor thing to do or a Nationals thing to do; there is just the right thing to do. I am sure that all members in this House, no matter which side they come from, can be proud that throughout this really challenging and scary time we have been able to extend a hand of friendship, and provide not just supports but also the next steps to people to get their lives back together and give them the safety and security that everyone in the State deserves.

#### *Ministerial Statements*

### **COVID-19 AND STATE ECONOMY**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:43:26):** A few weeks ago at Foodbank in Blacktown I met a mum of three young children. After decades of hard work, earlier this year she and her husband invested their life savings to pursue their dreams of opening a travel agency. Their timing could not have been worse. When we last spoke the woman had not earned a single dollar in more than two months. Her husband lost his job. Neither qualified for JobKeeper or JobSeeker. Recently her nine-year-old daughter took Tiny Teddies out of her school lunchbox, telling her mum she needed to save the food to help her family get through these times. After driving around the State and applying for 50 jobs that turned up nothing, she had gone to Foodbank to get some essentials. That working family had never relied on welfare before and never dreamed that they would have to. But for them and for hundreds of thousands of others, COVID-19 has changed everything. Now we all face testing times.

Today would have been budget day, the day we would have unveiled the next chapter in our State's unfolding story as a financial and economic powerhouse—our sixth straight surplus; the lowest net debt and unemployment rate of any State; and the biggest building blitz of public schools, hospitals and transport that our nation has ever seen. However, our budget is not only numbers on a page but it is also a living reflection of working men and women, and families right across New South Wales. Right now they are doing it tough. The past 12 months are up there with the toughest ever. First came the worst drought in a century, with dams depleted and regional communities on the brink. We deployed our financial strength with more than \$2 billion in relief and assistance. Then came bushfires, the worst natural disaster in our history. Some 10,000 properties were destroyed or damaged, entire towns were evacuated and 25 lives were cut tragically short. Once again our strong finances delivered around \$2.4 billion in relief and recovery in partnership with the Commonwealth.

Before the New South Wales fires had stopped burning the State recorded its first case of COVID-19. Five months later the pandemic has left a global trail of devastation—entire nations locked down, cities completely overwhelmed, hospitals pushed beyond their limits and hundreds of thousands of victims. We are grateful that the horrors seen in other places have not made their way here. That is a credit to the law-abiding citizens of New South Wales who have done the right thing to keep the virus contained. But it also reflects a strong

response from State and Federal governments to safeguard our people's health and security. I pay special tribute to the Premier who has guided our State through all those challenges with a steady hand and a caring heart.

New South Wales could respond decisively again because it began from a position of strength. First, we boosted our health system. We doubled our intensive care unit capacity, reinforced ventilator stocks and established a network of clinics. We rolled out the nation's fastest and most comprehensive testing regime, with around 650,000 tests conducted to date. We provided training for thousands of additional nurses and free accommodation and parking to keep them safe and secure. We invested in research and innovation and rapidly rolled out mental health support. However, COVID-19 is not only a health crisis but also an economic crisis.

From day one our goal has been clear—to keep people in jobs and businesses in business. So we launched an unprecedented and unparalleled response: over \$4.5 billion in payroll tax relief for big and small businesses; a 25 per cent reduction in the payroll tax bill for SMEs and tax cuts brought forward by a year; \$10,000 support grants for businesses below the tax threshold; \$440 million set aside for land tax reductions to reduce rent for tenants in need; and \$420 million in workers compensation premium reductions. All that has been done in collaboration with industry to provide the necessary cash flow to keep as many people in work as possible. Our \$1 billion Working for NSW fund has protected jobs and created more, funding thousands of cleaners of public services and 1,000 more Service NSW staff to provide frontline support.

We have brought forward half a billion dollars in shovel- and screwdriver-ready projects to upgrade schools, hospitals, showgrounds, courthouses, social and affordable housing, and roads and community facilities right across our State. We have provided direct support for sectors that need it most—loan guarantees on offer for our university sector, support for councils to keep workers on and direct assistance to the arts, international students and transport sectors. For the vulnerable, we have provided more than \$100 million in additional funding to prevent and alleviate homelessness. We have provided energy bill relief, domestic violence support, funding to assist temporary visa holders and refugees, and dedicated funds for charities that provide relief and other vital support to those in crisis. Those targeted initiatives and many more take our total COVID-19 response to over \$13.6 billion, which is the largest State response in the country by far.

As we enter a national recession our pandemic response has helped mitigate the damage but there is no avoiding the economic crisis gripping the globe. After a run of strong growth the New South Wales economy is expected to contract by around 10 per cent in the second half of the 2019 fiscal year. Household consumption and service exports have been heavily affected, particularly tourism and international education. Border closures have brought immigration to a halt. Short-term visitor arrivals plummeted by 99.7 per cent over the year to April. Student arrivals dropped by close to 100 per cent, with only 10 international students arriving in April. Business and consumer confidence slumped to record lows. Commonwealth JobKeeper data shows that 35 per cent of applications for April and May are from New South Wales, despite our population share being only 32 per cent. Applications are highest in some of our State's most important sectors, like construction and professional services.

New South Wales is Australia's gateway to the world so it is no surprise that it has been the hardest hit. We see that in job losses too. The massive queues outside Centrelink give the crisis a human face. In April more than half a million people across the nation lost their jobs. More than 37 per cent were in our State. Young female workers have been disproportionately impacted. We expect to see around 275,000 fewer people employed in New South Wales in the 2020 June quarter. That would lift the State's unemployment rate to around 7.75 per cent—almost double last year's record low. The number would have been much higher but for the support measures of the New South Wales and Federal governments.

After an initial bounce, the recovery in economic activity is expected to be gradual. Uncertainty and low consumer confidence will likely mean people will save more. The national accounts for March already show that the household savings rate increased from 3.5 per cent to 5.5 per cent in a matter of months. Higher unemployment and underemployment mean wages growth is expected to be lower over the next four years. Across the private sector, pay freezes, and in some cases pay cuts, are occurring to minimise job losses. Those factors and others are expected to contribute to annual headline inflation falling into negative territory this quarter for the first time in 23 years. That has consequences for the New South Wales budget.

Higher unemployment and lower production and consumption will hit payroll tax, GST, land tax and transfer duty. Relative to forecasts published in the 2019-20 half-yearly review, current estimates are for tax revenue to fall by as much as \$20.3 billion across the five years to 2023-24. The State budget is likely to record significant deficits for at least this year and the next, but I caution that forecasting is extremely challenging in the current environment. We will continue to assess the rapidly changing fiscal situation and provide a revised outlook when we hand down the budget in November. After months of bad news it is easy to become desensitised but we need to be very clear. Our State is in for a testing time; what some are calling the worst downturn since the Great Depression. In those circumstances politics must take a backseat for the common good.

What happens next is up to all of us. Today we signal to the people of New South Wales a shift in direction from response to recovery. It is time to get the show back on the road. From 1 July the vast majority of our new socially-distanced economy will be back open for business. We must be agile, we must be safe and we cannot afford a foot out of place. The biggest thing we can do for business and consumer confidence is to get people back into work as quickly as possible. So far almost 50,000 businesses have applied for \$10,000 grants to support them during the pandemic. From 1 July an additional small business recovery grant will provide up to \$3,000 to help SMEs adapt to life in the four-square-metre economy. The grants will cover costs like fit-out changes, cleaning equipment and staff retraining in digital transformation so that more businesses can make it safely in a post-pandemic world.

Another important pillar of support for families getting back into the workforce is early childhood education. I announce that community preschools will remain free until 30 September, allowing over 700 preschools to provide care to 45,000 children. Given constrained fiscal capacity and new challenges ahead, now is the time for neither reckless spending nor severe austerity. We will strike the right balance, supporting growth while charting a measured course towards fiscal repair. Our strong balance sheet and Triple-A credit rating means we have more freedom than other States to access the funds we need. But we must make every dollar count with targeted spending that gets results. Some people believe cutting red tape, regulation and tax cuts is the only way out. Others say only direct government stimulus and intervention can help. We are not interested in ideology. We are only interested in what works.

Our five-point recovery plan will focus on deregulation, productivity, tax reform, digitisation and trade and investment. We will seek to ensure government is an enabler not an obstacle to growth. This means looking at making permanent some of the temporary regulatory changes we have announced, as well as fast-tracking projects that grow our economy. We have one goal above all—to create jobs to get New South Wales working again. That is what success looks like. We will also press on with infrastructure and invest further in targeted and temporary stimulus measures where required. That is why we have sent a strong signal of confidence to industry, increasing our massive infrastructure build to over \$100 billion at a time when other States are winding back.

Based on advice from our Chief Economist, we will also target further support at key sectors such as construction, which faces challenges as work dries up; skilling and training to prepare our workers for the future; and helping tourism, retail and accommodation get back on their feet. Just a week ago we announced \$3 billion in direct stimulus to kick off projects in schools, hospitals and roads right across our State. Our plan is already working and we can see it on the ground. Yesterday I visited a social housing estate in Arncliffe and saw firsthand the impact of our measures, delivering refurbished homes for 142 tenants. Our support is achieving social and economic outcomes at the same time. One of the workers told me that it was thanks to this program that he and his entire team were able to stay in work, meaning he could provide for his family.

We have said we will put the economy before the budget but we will not abandon responsible fiscal management. On that front our commitment has never been stronger and our track record shows we know how to deliver. We will make every dollar count as we face difficult spending choices. Our outcomes budgeting framework will focus spending where it can have the greatest impact and we will continue to consider asset recycling opportunities where they represent best value for the people of our State. Reform is also critical to turn adversity into advantage. A Green Paper from the NSW Productivity Commissioner will be a launch pad to build on reforms already achieved in response to the crisis. The Federal Financial Relations Review, chaired by David Thodey, is also set to release its report in a matter of weeks. This can define the conversation on how we build a better Australia, where taxes are lower, fairer and more sustainable. The pandemic does not provide an opportunity to reform but an obligation to reform.

These are testing times but our State has faced tests before. Drought and disease. Fire and flood. Terror and tragedy. Through it all we have learned that there is nothing that we cannot overcome if we face it together. Our budget may be bruised, our economy may be battered but our spirits are unbeaten. The strength of our State is not measured by the state of our finances. It is measured in the dreams and the determination of our people. Since the bushfires began, the people of New South Wales have stood tall and stood together. I thank them and everyone who has pulled together to get us through. Let me end where I began. Today I called to check in on the mother I met at Foodbank. After a marathon search, she has finally found a new job. She said last week she had nothing, but this week she is getting back on her feet. Her story is our State's story. Her hope is our State's hope. She starts next week. We start today.

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:58:44):** We have called on the Treasurer to explain his economic position and approach to the Parliament for many weeks now and I thank the Treasurer for outlining his approach in Parliament today. New South Wales is in recession and needs a plan for jobs, jobs and more jobs. But what we have heard from the Treasurer today is his plan to cut wages, his plan to raise the GST and his plan for more

privatisation. What the Treasurer has not told us—and what we were hoping for—is how he will create more jobs in New South Wales because that is what people care about.

People care about jobs, jobs and more jobs—jobs in the city and in the country. Instead, the Treasurer is marching New South Wales off the September cliff when JobKeeper disappears for more than one million people across this State, when free preschool and childcare ends. New South Wales is not just looking at a September economic cliff but a September economic catastrophe. When we asked today what the Treasurer will do in September, he could not answer the question. What does the Treasurer say to Mary who wrote to me the other day? Mary's husband lost his job of 20 years. Once JobKeeper is taxed she has about \$650 left to pay for her family's medical bills, food and the mortgage. Mary and her family do not see themselves as welfare recipients, which is what the Treasurer called them today. That is a label they do not attach to themselves and one that Labor will never attach to them.

What happens to families like Mary's when JobKeeper disappears? It does not seem that the Treasurer is focused on that. Today I will go where the Treasurer has not. I will talk about people's lives and people's jobs. Our State has been hit by a series of economic convulsions—a drought followed by bushfires and a pandemic followed by a recession. The Treasurer told us today that more than 275,000 people have lost their jobs. Thousands more have left the workforce completely. Many have lost businesses and too many people have slipped through the cracks of government support. They are our casuals, part-time workers, freelancers and independent contractors, the women and young people who have borne the brunt of job losses in retail, tourism and hospitality. Today we saw the Treasurer fail to take responsibility for how we ended up in this situation.

The economic storm clouds were gathering in New South Wales well before COVID-19 hit. The Government's projected budget surplus was already dramatically downgraded last December. Wages growth was weak. Retail and residential construction were soft and the budget position was already crippled by blowout after blowout on project after project, including Sydney Metro, Sydney Stadium and the white elephant—the Premier's vanity project—known as the CBD and South East Light Rail. This Government has racked up more than \$13.5 billion in project blowouts. It is important to point out that the dire budget position we are in right now did not happen overnight. This Treasurer has always had us on a path to more privatisations to cover more blowouts and a forecast debt of more than \$41 billion.

That brings us to COVID-19. While the Berejiklian Government was busy letting in the *Ruby Princess*, it failed to take crucial steps to support the economy in February and March. Its survival measures—from supporting small business to the arts—were late and entirely inadequate. The Government snubbed international students entirely, risking an industry worth \$14 billion in New South Wales. The Government's next move as Australia's largest employer was to cut the pay of more than 400,000 workers. Virtually every economist tells us this is completely wrong. What kind of Treasurer hurts demand in a recession? When people's purchasing power is eroded they spend less at the shops, hurting local businesses and destroying jobs.

With international tourism, education and trade in the doldrums, there is no greater priority than getting people spending again. The Treasurer has promised to save \$3 billion over the forward estimates from his wages measure but that is \$3 billion of stimulus taken from Sydney and rural and regional New South Wales—from this State's economy. All the while this Treasurer is wasting \$1.5 billion of precious public money to move the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta.

Labor is always open to reform. We are always open to a conversation on reform, and I put that on the table very early on. But I have to say that right now people do not want white papers, which is what the Treasurer is advocating for; they actually want to plan for stimulus and they want a real plan for jobs. This Government has reverted to type—spruiking big construction projects in Sydney and supporting mostly male employment. But it has forgotten the people who have been hardest hit. The truth is that women have borne the brunt of this crisis. In April, 125,000 women lost jobs compared to 97,000 men. For every hour of work lost by a man, a woman loses nearly 1½ hours.

One of the best stimulus measures New South Wales can provide is to get women back to work. As the pandemic has continued women have taken on most of the home schooling and they have been pushed back into those more traditional caring roles. To fix this we have to break down the barriers. Let us provide greater financial help to female-run small businesses, including home-based businesses. Let us expand free TAFE courses in areas of skills shortage like nursing, early childhood and aged care. Let us keep improving access to child care and early childhood learning in New South Wales. It is by far—and it is not just me saying this—the greatest lever that we have for women and the potential benefits are enormous. We know that \$2 flows to the economy for every \$1 spent.

One report shows that halving the gap between male and female workforce participation rate would increase annual gross domestic product by over \$60 billion over the next 20 years. At the height of the pandemic,

families un-enrolled from child care, endangering the viability of centres. The Commonwealth Government and the New South Wales Government stepped up, and we praise them. We called for it, we welcomed it and I acknowledge that today. But 10 days ago Scott Morrison abandoned women—he walked away from that. He said federally funded free childcare would stop on 12 July. The Premier sat around that National Cabinet table and endorsed it. She did nothing to stop him.

Labor believes that these subsidies must continue, but the Berejiklian Government has a really important role to play too. The extra \$51 million that New South Wales provided to community preschools during the pandemic is due to expire as part of the September cliff that I have mentioned. Labor calls on the Government to keep funding free community preschools until at least the end of 2020. When the Treasurer said today that he is extending it to the end of September that is not an announcement, that is what it has always been. We urge the Government to keep its support for more than 260 council-run childcare centres. This will be really important for early childhood sector learning. It is great for what is a largely female workforce. Let me tell you, it is fantastic for parents who want to return to work.

I want to look deeper at that September cliff that I have mentioned. In September we will see apprentices lose wage subsidies. We will see households that have to resume paying their mortgages. Businesses facing insolvency must resume paying their debts. Employers in retail, hospitality and tourism will need extra financial help to reopen, re-hire and rebuild. JobKeeper and JobSeeker will completely disappear. More than one million people are on JobKeeper in New South Wales and more than half a million are on JobSeeker receiving an extra supplement of \$550 a fortnight. That is over one-third of the workforce in New South Wales supported by some of the most critical support programs in living memory. JobKeeper is enabling workers to retain their jobs and it is supporting businesses to keep open their doors. But if JobKeeper suddenly disappears in September, businesses and jobs go along with it. New South Wales has been warned by everyone from the Reserve Bank to the OECD: Take away JobKeeper and we prolong the recession, and we hurt the recovery. Labor says JobKeeper must be fixed, improved and kept for those who need it. I offer my bipartisan support for the Premier to advance that position in National Cabinet.

The Treasurer talks about a construction rebound, but that means very little if you do not have a rebound in manufacturing. Labor wants projects that are made in New South Wales. We want projects that use local concrete, timber, glass and steel. We want projects that employ local apprentices and trainees. It is no secret, everyone in this House knows that this Government has off-shored thousands of jobs, thousands of manufacturing jobs. It sourced ferries from Indonesia, buses from Malaysia and light rail vehicles from France and Spain. Recently, the member for Bega, Andrew Constance, called for the Government to take another look at this—I hope it listens to him. Finally, let us support manufacturing jobs from western Sydney to the Hunter and the Illawarra, to the Central Coast and mid-North Coast, to the Central West.

In the past month the Government has talked about the airport metro, Mamre Road Precinct and commercial high rise. But today Labor says loudly and clearly that projects prioritised or fast-tracked should be ones that are made in New South Wales. That should be the aim of every dollar spent by government, every single project—make it here in New South Wales. This Government should think big and bold about its procurement powers and its purchasing decisions and not just look at the cheapest option, which has always been its focus. How we truly benefit rural and regional economies, boost innovation and transform our State's future export prospects must be our priority.

Labor would apply a made-in-New-South-Wales approach to construction of schools right now. Daniel Andrews unveiled a \$1.1 billion fast-track program for schools, but in New South Wales, of course, just six of the Government's 48 fast-track programs are actually schools. Yet 100 communities from Monaro to the North Coast, from Riverstone to Camden still wait for new schools or upgrades that have been promised for years. Yesterday the Premier claimed that she could build a school in three weeks. That could be good news for so many communities in New South Wales, but what the Premier did not say is that those schools are being built in Victoria, not in New South Wales because this Government had not done the work it should have done.

I also call on the Government to fast-track the M12—an M12 made in New South Wales using local workers, local ingenuity and local product. We have long been excited by the prospects of an aerotropolis and we see a 16-kilometre stretch linking the M7 to the Northern Road as right for acceleration. But unlike most of this Government's other big promises, the M12 is fully funded and it has been promised to be toll free. The new airport will need a series of transport links and today we say the M12 is ready to go, let us get it rolling and let us do it—made in New South Wales. It is not just Sydney that has suffered during this pandemic. I want to especially acknowledge the rural and regional communities devastated by not just the pandemic but also by drought and bushfires. They are now struggling to bring tourism and businesses back.

The Government plans to rip more than \$150 million in grants from these rural and regional councils. But stimulus does not need to be a big Sydney project. In country towns it could be as simple as laying bitumen, fixing

a pothole or mending a fence. This recovery must be for everyone. So today I say that New South Wales needs a bold plan for jobs, jobs and more jobs. It needs a plan to ensure that we all share in this recovery. For women and men, white and blue collar, young and old, central business district and suburbs, our rural and regional areas, our focus must be jobs, jobs and more jobs.

*Documents*

**AUDITOR-GENERAL**

**Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 63 (C) of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *CBD South East Sydney Light Rail: Follow-up Performance Audit*, dated 11 June 2020, received out of session on 11 June 2020 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees*

**LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Reports**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 16/57*, dated 2 June 2020. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 15/57*.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

**Inquiry**

**Mr GREG PIPER:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Public Accounts Committee has resolved to conduct an inquiry into an examination of the Auditor General's Performance Audit Reports for August 2018 to January 2019, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

**COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Membership**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That:

- (1) Peter Bryan Sidgreaves be appointed to serve on the Committee on Children and Young People in place of Felicity Lesley Wilson, discharged.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Business of the House*

**BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3) general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 1036 to 1086 have lapsed.

*Bills*

**MENTAL HEALTH AND COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT FORENSIC PROVISIONS BILL 2020**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 3 June.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:16:40):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. The bill amends, rewrites and renames the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990. Whilst there are certainly some significant changes to the Act proposed in the bill, much of the current architecture is retained. The renaming of

the legislation to include reference to cognitive impairment reflects recommendation No. 1.2 of the Law Reform Commission [LRC] criminal responsibility report. The sources of significant parts of the bill are to be found in two substantial and important reports of the NSW Law Reform Commission. The first is report No. 135, entitled *People with cognitive and mental health impairments in the criminal justice system: Diversion*. The terms of reference were received by the commission for the report in September 2007 from Attorney General Hatzistergos. The report was dated June 2012 and presented to Attorney General Smith.

The second report is report No. 138, entitled *People with cognitive and mental health impairments in the criminal justice system: Criminal responsibility and consequences*. The commission received its terms of reference from Attorney General Hatzistergos also in September 2007. The report is dated May 2013 and was also presented to Attorney General Smith. The reports are referred to respectively as the "Diversion" and "Criminal responsibility" reports. Both reports were commissioned when I was Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Mental Health). Subsequently I held the position of Minister for Disability Services, so both those reports and subsequent legislation have more than a passing interest for me. My interest in forensic patients was such that I took to Cabinet and this Chamber legislation to remove executive discretion as to the release of forensic patients. I also note that both my father's parents were employed at Gladesville Mental Hospital.

It is a melancholy commentary upon those times, in the first half of the twentieth century, that my father's father was employed at Gladesville when his only qualification was to have been a strong, young farm worker from County Tyrone. As I say, I have more than a passing interest in this policy area. Part 2 of the bill deals with summary proceedings—that is, proceedings before magistrates. The significant provisions are currently section 32 and section 33 of the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act, which allow for the diversion of eligible defendants from the criminal justice system. In his second reading speech the Attorney General pointed out correctly the benefit of diversion of those with mental health impairments or cognitive impairment from the criminal justice system. Diversion into treatment usually means a significantly reduced risk of reoffending, which has an obvious benefit to the person diverted. It has an equally obvious benefit for the community as a whole, who are less likely to be victims of such behaviour. The bulk of the existing regime remains. As the Law Reform Commission report on diversion said:

The advantages of diversion are many. It can benefit both the offender and the wider community by addressing the causes of offending, and thus reducing offending behaviour. It can reduce involvement in the criminal justice system which may be particularly detrimental for people with cognitive and mental health impairments. There may be potential cost savings associated with diversion, for example reduction in costs of incarceration or hospital readmissions.

As the Law Reform Commission also pointed out, it may well, of course, be unsuitable for serious offenders. In fact, it may also be more burdensome for the offender than being dealt with according to law. In this bill there are changes to diversion primarily in three areas. The diversion scheme in part 2 of the bill will now refer to the new statutory definitions of "mental health impairment" and "cognitive impairment" that are contained in an earlier part of the bill. Those are modern, contemporary definitions. The Attorney General has pointed out that the temporary impact of taking drugs or having a substance-induced disorder is excluded expressly from being within those definitions. The Law Reform Commission found the present definitions inconsistent and outdated. The bill's definitions are not identical to the Law Reform Commission's proposals but are very close.

Secondly, now there is a non-exhaustive, statutory list of items that a magistrate may have regard to when making a decision about the diversion of a defendant. The Attorney General has been keen to emphasise that one of those considerations was the safety of a victim or the community. That is as it should be, but I am not persuaded that that was not already one of the factors taken into account by courts in the previous, non-statutory system. The third difference in the diversion system provided in the bill is that the time during which a defendant can be called back to be dealt with at law is increased from six to 12 months. That occurs if the person concerned has not complied with treatment obligations. Effectively, the time during which the defendant is being supervised by the courts is doubled.

There are some other sensible but comparatively minor amendments to the operation of the diversion regime. Whilst the bill picks up a number of recommendation concerning diversion, a number of recommendations are not echoed in the bill before the House. In particular, I ask the Attorney General in reply to advise the Government's response to recommendation No. 8.3 of the "Diversion" report, dealing with the institution of a pre-court diversion system. The "Diversion" report also recommended, including in chapter 7, the expansion of the services that allow magistrates to utilise the diversion option. I ask the Attorney General to respond to that recommendation, which, in practical terms, allows for the expansion of the scheme. I would also ask if any consideration has been given by the Government to the development of a Court Referral for Integrated Service Provision [CRISP] list and, if so, what the results of that consideration were.

Part 3 deals with proceedings in the Supreme and District courts—that is, for more serious offences than those referred to in part 2. Currently, a successful defence based upon mental illness results in a verdict of not

guilty because of mental illness, known as NGMI. That is superseded in the bill by a defence of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment. The special verdict that is returned if the verdict is successful is "act proven but not criminally responsible". One anticipates that it will be known as NCR. It provides that a person who had a mental health impairment, a cognitive impairment or both at the time of carrying out an act, omission or a series of omissions or acts is not criminally responsible if the impairment had the effect that the person did not know the nature and quality of the act, or know that it was wrong because the person could not reason with a moderate degree of sense and composure whether the act was wrong.

Whether the defence is made out is determined by the tribunal of fact on the balance of probabilities. The substance of the statutory defence replaces the current defence known as the M'Naghten rules from the 1840s. They originated from a case where M'Naghten mistakenly shot Edward Drummond, thinking that he was the United Kingdom Prime Minister Robert Peel. The new statutory defence follows the structure of the M'Naghten rules closely but uses appropriately modern language. I note that the Law Reform Commission recommendation was that the verdict should be one of "not criminally responsible by reason of mental health or cognitive impairment". That is not exactly what the bill does, although it is clear that that is the genesis of the provision in the bill. The change to the special verdict does not make the defendant guilty. It accurately records that the act was committed but that there is no criminal responsibility attached to it.

If a person, because of mental illness or cognitive impairment, is not morally responsible for their behaviour, it seems quite wrong to describe them as guilty of a criminal offence. That is an obvious point but not everybody gets it. In the 4 June issue of a lawyers digital news service article about this bill, a headline was used that said "NSW to recognise mentally ill defendant's crimes". Of course, that headline is hopelessly wrong. Someone is not criminally responsible if they have not committed a crime. If even a lawyers news service gets it wrong then the complexities in the broader community can, no doubt, be even greater. The new special verdict is expected to provide some assistance to some victims by an acknowledgement that an act did occur. To some, the use of the term "not guilty" suggested the act did not occur.

Additionally, I note that the royal commission recommended explicitly that personality disorders be excluded from the defence. I seek the Attorney General's response to that recommendation and how it plays out in the bill. Part 3 also provides, in statutory terms, a number of matters that must be explained to the jury if the not criminally responsible defence is raised, including that the jury should not be influenced by the consequences of the special verdict being returned. That was a specific recommendation of the NSW Law Reform Commission. Proposed section 31 provides, sensibly, for a special verdict to be entered if both defendant and prosecution agree that it should be, provided the defendant is represented by a solicitor and that the court, after considering the proposed evidence, is satisfied that the defence is established. In appropriate cases that has the potential to reduce the time and complexity of proceedings when they are unnecessary. That was also a NSW Law Reform Commission recommendation.

Part 4 of the bill deals with fitness to stand trial in serious matters, specifically in the District and Supreme courts. It also deals with the processes that follow a finding of unfitness. The bill introduces a statutory basis for fitness to stand trial and is largely said to codify the common law. Incorporation into statute was recommended by the NSW Law Reform Commission in recommendation 2.1 of the criminal responsibility report. It is now consistent with most Australian jurisdictions. One other apparent legal novelty in part 4 provides for the court to be able to find that a person may never become fit to be tried. They can be referred to the special hearing process, rather than waiting for 12 months for that to happen, as is currently the case. As now, they can receive a limiting term and come under the supervision of the tribunal if subject to a special verdict.

The bill removes some of the unnecessary interaction between court and tribunal. Part 8 restates the law in relation to the victims of forensic patients. Two further substantive changes to the law should be noted. The bill omits section 22A of the Crimes Act 1900 concerning infanticide and replaces it with a new section. The new section modernises the language of that section. "Imbalance of the mind" is replaced by "mental health impairment" and the amendments remove references to "lactation". Additionally, a new section 4C is inserted in the Crimes Act dealing with mental health impairment. That section modernises the language and brings it in line with the definitions in the bill. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:26:35):** I speak in support of the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020. I thank the Attorney General for introducing the bill to the House. Last year as I moved through the electorate catching up with the various agencies and NGOs that do wonderful work for the community, I began hearing about certain difficulties being faced by those working in the fields of mental health and justice. When a person's situation involves both mental health and justice issues, testing conditions arise for both staff and affected families because the pressures and stress points are not only practical but also emotional. Add to that the cross-border complexities of different legislation and practices in policing, justice and health administration, community safety and corrections, and it is no wonder that gaps appear.

We must not forget that people get trapped or hurt in these gaps. Whether it is the transfer of someone held in custody—moving them between Victoria and New South Wales—or the procedure for sending an offender from the courts to the health system and back again, health professionals and corrections or police officers must be on top of interstate variations in policy and legislation. Last year I brought together local workers on the border in the fields of corrections, policing and mental health to better understand the situation. At that meeting two things became apparent: first, the amount of goodwill, hard work and empathy shared by those frontline workers; and, secondly, that *de facto* arrangements, understandings and procedures for handling forensic justice offenders that might be personal to a worker or pair of workers could be lost when those workers leave their job or move away.

Furthermore, our regional acute mental health facility lacks a dedicated forensic area for handling patients who are also offenders. In my local area of Albury the Friends of Nolan House have advocated for that to ensure that patients remain near their home and receive the treatment they require. In those ways, gaps appear in forensic justice on the border. The bill is a helpful step in updating pathways in forensic justice, closing some gaps and introducing terminology that is more in tune with current thinking on mental health and offending. People with mental health or cognitive impairment whose actions have brought them into the criminal justice system may require different treatment at law to that meted out to an offender who knows and understands their wrongdoing. The priority of safety is embedded in the bill—safety for those with a mental health condition, the health professionals working with them, the police, corrections officers and the public.

I have sought the views of people working in forensic justice within Albury. They have told me two things: first, that the bill allows flexibility of approach in dealing with people who have a mental health impairment or cognitive impairment and who come before the justice system; and, secondly, that the bill is more readable than the current legislation. The framework is easier to understand, which will help legal practitioners and ultimately the administration of justice. The process and its terminology become more transparent to the community. The bill is substantial and updates our mental health and forensic processes. It implements recommendations of the Mental Health Review Tribunal and the principal reforms recommended by the NSW Law Reform Commission.

A sizeable portion of the bill is about providing greater guidance to the courts on matters to be taken into consideration when making orders, including consideration of safety on all sides. The bill allows the courts the flexibility to handle people differently through the justice system where the offender has mental health or cognitive impairment and stands accused of low-level offending. Consideration of treatment, support and the likelihood of reoffending are given prominence in the process. Clause 3 contains key definitions. The new concept of a "special verdict of act proven but not criminally responsible" is defined to mean "a special verdict of act proven but not criminally responsible entered at a trial or following a special hearing if the defence of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment is established". The special verdict focuses on the terms "mental health impairment" and "cognitive impairment". Clause 4 (1) states:

- (1) For the purposes of this Act, a **person has a mental health impairment** if—
  - (a) the person has a temporary or ongoing disturbance of thought, mood, volition, perception or memory, and
  - (b) the disturbance would be regarded as significant for clinical diagnostic purposes, and
  - (c) the disturbance impairs the emotional wellbeing, judgment or behaviour of the person.

Clause 4 (2) provides that a mental health impairment may arise from various disorders, including but not limited to:

- (a) an anxiety disorder,
- (b) an affective disorder, including clinical depression and bipolar disorder,
- (c) a psychotic disorder,
- (d) a substance induced mental disorder that is not temporary.

Clause 4 (3) makes clear that:

- (3) A person does not have a mental health impairment for the purposes of this Act if the person's impairment is caused solely by—
  - (a) the temporary effect of ingesting a substance, or
  - (b) a substance use disorder.

It is straightforward to follow those steps. In effect, a person who commits a crime while on drugs or intoxicated will not be a person with a mental health impairment or cognitive impairment for the purposes of the bill by reason only of those circumstances. There must be more to it. Section 31 provides for a "special verdict where the defendant and prosecutor agree on impairment". The court may enter a special verdict of act proven but not criminally responsible if the defendant and the prosecutor agree that the proposed evidence in the proceedings

establishes a defence of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment, the defendant is represented by an Australian legal practitioner and the court, after considering that evidence, is satisfied that the defence is so established.

The replacement of the special verdict of not guilty by reason of mental illness with a special verdict of act proven but not criminally responsible is sensible. The terminology is easy for the public to understand and clearly delineates between the act and responsibility at law. Victims and their families will not have to see an offender declared "not guilty". It acknowledges their trauma while maintaining a clear line of consequence through the justice system. The bill effectively provides checklists that give direction to law enforcement and to mental health advisers. Clause 15 contains a list of factors that a magistrate may consider when deciding on the process to apply to a particular defendant. Those considerations include the suitability of the sentencing options available if the defendant is found guilty of the offence, relevant changes in the circumstances of the defendant since the alleged commission of the offence, the defendant's criminal history and whether a treatment or support plan has been prepared in relation to the defendant and the content of that plan.

Clause 36 contains another checklist, which deals with factors relevant to determining the fitness of the defendant to be tried for an offence. It adopts but does not limit common law considerations. A statutory checklist is a helpful tool for those working in the area when considering fitness. It also allows members of the public to understand the criteria that the court considers when determining fitness, thereby facilitating public awareness of the process and how critical decisions are made. Under the bill's fitness test, a person is taken to be unfit to be tried for an offence if the person, because the person has a mental health impairment or cognitive impairment, or both, or for another reason, cannot do one or more of the following: first, understand the offence the subject of the proceedings; secondly, plead to the charge; thirdly, exercise the right to challenge jurors; fourthly, understand generally the nature of the proceedings as an inquiry into whether the person committed the offence with which the person is charged; and, fifthly, follow the course of the proceedings so as to understand what is going on in a general sense. The clause goes on to outline some additional considerations.

Through new definitions and statutory checklists, the bill advances the objective of clearly administering justice for the benefit of the victim and the community while sending an offender who needs help to a place where they should receive it. By providing clear guidelines, the bill will support magistrates to make a decision about whether to divert a person into treatment or support. That is good news and good policymaking. As the Attorney General said, the bill "provides clear language, structure and processes, enabling efficient and effective responses". I support the bill.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:31:56):** The Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020 repeals, rewrites and renames the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990. In broad terms, the bill implements recommendations of the NSW Law Reform Commission report No. 135, entitled *People with cognitive and mental health impairments in the criminal justice system—Diversion*, dated 2012, and report No. 138, entitled *People with cognitive and mental health impairments in the criminal justice system—Criminal responsibility and consequences*, dated 2013.

The bill clarifies procedures and powers where defendants or accused persons with cognitive impairments or mental health impairments are before court; clarifies local processes in relation to diversion under sections 32 and 33 of the Mental Health Act 2007; and provides a statutory list of considerations for the court, including the safety of the community. However, it is clear that the bill will not effect substantive change. Another aim of the bill is to extend the length of time that local courts can supervise someone diverted out of the criminal justice system. The NSW Law Reform Commission report No. 134, entitled *Sentencing—Interim report on standard minimum non-parole periods*, dated May 2012, states:

People with cognitive and mental health impairments are over-represented throughout the criminal justice system.

The report continues:

People do not present to courts with a single, neatly defined, issue of mental health or cognitive impairment. Other aspects of a person's identity or experience, such as their Aboriginality or their age, may impact on court decisions about matters such as diversion, bail or sentencing. The intersection of mental health and cognitive impairments with other aspects of identity creates fresh challenges for the criminal justice system and we briefly outline some of the relevant issues.

Diversion of people with cognitive and mental health impairments generally involves defendants engaging with a wide range of providers of treatment and services that have a rehabilitative focus. The relationship between the criminal justice system (police and courts) and this service sector is crucial to effective diversion.

I challenge the Attorney General because while this is being tabled in Parliament we are seeing cuts to the Cognitive Impairment Diversion Program [CIDP] which is being run out of Gosford and Penrith courts. This is going to be completely cut. I see the previous corrective services Minister got a good understanding about the impact of people with mental health issues and cognitive impairment in the justice system. I thank the people from the Intellectual Disability Rights Service [IDRS] who have been running this program and who have been silenced

by the cuts. It is a critically important service for people with intellectual disability, acquired brain injury and other cognitive impairments, to help them stay out of prison, get support and move on positively with their lives. It is funded through the Attorney General and through Justice NSW. It has been running successfully for more than 2½ years.

Unfortunately the pilot program has ended and at this crucial time as we are seeing this law tabled in Parliament, it is running out of time in Penrith and Gosford courts. The people involved have been hoping that Justice NSW would expand the program across New South Wales. Instead the IDRS was told a few weeks ago that funding would cease at the end of June this year. Over two-thirds of CIDP participants have been kept out of prison and away from other penalties through court diversionary orders. The program organises for participants to have a full psychological assessment and helps them to get the support they need to move on positively with their lives. Many of them are able to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] for the first time or get significant increases in their NDIS packages, thanks finally to having a full diagnosis, and getting the help and support of a CIDP caseworker.

There has also been the added element that 26 per cent of the program's participants identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. Given what is happening in the broader community that is really important to note as the funding for this program is cut. At the last census Aboriginal people were only 2.8 per cent of the population, yet they make up 26 per cent of the people in this program—and they are being supported in the criminal justice system—which is about to be cut, at a cost of \$960,000 per annum. I thank the Council for Intellectual Disability for its incredible work supporting people with cognitive impairment and also for its contribution to the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020. I am looking forward to its petition coming to this House to save this fabulous service from being cut. We are heading towards 10,000 signatures under the challenging space of COVID-19. I would like to add the comments of a couple of participants who live with cognitive impairment.

Thanks to the program I stopped taking drugs, went to TAFE, got a qualification and now I am working. It changed my life.

Keira from Kingswood said:

It has turned my life around for the better.

And Clinton from Blacktown said:

I probably would have ended up in jail without the CIDP program.

I would like to read an email from one of my constituents who lived with a son who has an intellectual disability.

I am a member of the Council for People with Intellectual Disabilities. I have just learned that the NSW Department of Communities and Justice want to cut funding to the Cognitive Impairment Diversion Program. This is a program that helps keep people with cognitive impairment out of prison which started in 2017 as a pilot in Gosford and Penrith. CIDP is successfully keeping over two thirds of its participants out of prison through diversionary orders. It is critically important for people with intellectual disability, acquired brain injury and other cognitive impairments.

I also table an email that I am sure the Attorney General has received on a number of occasions to make sure it continues to be heard. Thank you so much to the team at CIDP at Penrith and Gosford. Further reinforcing from the report *People with Cognitive and Mental Health Impairments in the Criminal Justice System*, research indicates that by addressing the needs of people with cognitive and mental health impairments there will be some impact in the reduction of offender behaviour. Around a \$1 million cut now is a massive cost to the criminal justice system further down the track and a terrible short-term cut to funding by this Government. Diversion also serves to reduce the number of vulnerable people entering the penal system that threatens their welfare and their wellbeing. Once they are in, the chance of recidivism is greater.

Reoffending behaviour stems from complex needs such as homelessness, drug abuse or alcohol abuse, associated with cognitive and mental health impairments. The Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020 is an important step forward in the law's approach to mental health and cognitive impairment in the court system. Many of these changes are long overdue. It is good to see the Government make space amid COVID-19 to bring this bill to the House. It is also encouraging to see that this bill modernises the language in old legislation. It should be an important consideration in all legislation that the general public be able to understand the laws that apply to them and more so in the case we are talking about.

The care shown for the community and victims in the proposed changes to special verdicts of not guilty by reason of mental impairment will undoubtedly bring greater closure to victims and their families. Inclusion of community safety in the consideration of local courts in applying diversionary processes is a crucial inclusion. It seems that cuts to funding is in direct contradiction to what is going on right now. Ensuring that the needs of victims, offenders and society are balanced is a perpetual law of criminal law for our court system and the acknowledgement of this difficult task is a positive step for this bill.

The bill has specifically addressed the consideration of the safety of victims and the community it will also extend the period of time during which the court can supervise a person who has been diverted out of the criminal justice system. The bill also makes evident that its goal for those impacted, who have committed low-level offences, is to divert them to treatment rather than imprisonment. This approach of rehabilitation and community support is geared to reduce recidivism and yet we are not seeing the continuation of a program that we know supports that and should be expanded from Penrith and Gosford.

The bill also aims to protect victims and the community, clarifying the language and processes in existing structures to improve efficiency for those with mental health or cognitive impairment within the court system. Thanks to the contribution of advocates and stakeholders, this bill is a step in the right direction to achieving its stated aims. It is important to acknowledge the hard work of those at the NSW Law Reform Commission in establishing the basis for this bill. I am completely in support of any measures that seek to assist those in our community with mental health and cognitive impairment needs. It is important that the approach of the criminal justice system to cases involving these mental health and cognitive impairment factors is clarified and better tailored. However this Government's support of this is patchy at best. Once again I reiterate that the ongoing cuts to disability advocacy and the Cognitive Impairment Diversion Program at Gosford Court is disadvantaging people with an intellectual disability across New South Wales and in my electorate. [*Extension of time*]

I also reiterate that 26 per cent of the people involved in the program at Gosford have identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. Today I spoke with Karly Warner of the Aboriginal Legal Service who said its funding has also been cut by this Government. Considering what is going on in the broader community at the moment, we cannot consider any cuts to services that benefit Aboriginal people within the legal justice system. This about the capacity of people to live meaningful lives. I reiterate that people with disabilities and those with intellectual disabilities through the program have seen NDIS support. I have been privileged in recent weeks to speak to a number of participants in this program. Their stories have emphasised the power of the program and the enormous benefits to be gained from supporting people through evidently very difficult times in their life.

A participant from Umina knows that the program stopped him taking drugs, got him a support worker and increased his involvement with the NDIS. He has enrolled in TAFE to get a qualification. He is now working as a support worker, taking another young person through the same program. He is an example of what this program does for people, and he is passing on that experience to others. I also refer to an email from Amanda Burnet, an occupational therapist with a client who has firsthand experience of the program. She detailed the comprehensive and unparalleled support given by the staff of the program. The client was supported to get an autism assessment—a complaint they thought they would have their whole life—and now things finally make sense under this program.

They were in custody for several months and the correctional facility did not look after their disability support needs. The program worked closely with Legal Aid for the client to successfully apply for bail. CIDP staff listened to the client, did not judge them and always did their best to fight for the client, working to help the client feel like a human being rather than a client. The client is no longer required to report for parole due to having support and being able to comply with all the community corrections orders. Why is this program, which empowers people who have been completely disempowered by circumstances that are often out of their control, being cut? It is to save a few bucks—less than \$1 million. Saving money from one department will increase costs in our Corrections system to support additional inmates with increased needs when, if we support individuals properly, they may not be dealing with the justice system at all. [*Extension of time*]

Far too often, people with an intellectual disability are left with no support in our court system and the success of this program has revealed that a lot of those people would not go to prison if they had someone in their corner supporting them. I appreciate the Government touting this bill as a crucial clarification and tailoring of legislation to better support and acknowledge those with mental health or other cognitive needs in our criminal courts. But this means nothing when the Government gives with one hand and takes away with the other. The Government should put its money where its mouth is and do more to support the vulnerable members of our community. While I support the bill and the important steps it is taking to adequately assist those with mental health and cognitive impairment when they interact with our courts, it is important to note that this is just one of many steps in an ongoing process.

It is equally important that the Government does not view the bill as a solution for the long-term challenges in this area. The Government must do more or, at the very least, it should stop cutting programs to prevent harm to those with mental health or cognitive impairment needs. If the Premier maintains that improving mental health and its associated outcomes is a key focus for her Government, she should ensure that programs like the Cognitive Impairment Diversion Program are not only continued but also expanded into courts and across the State. It is about giving people a chance to live a decent life.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (15:51:22):** I thank the Attorney General for bringing the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020 to the House. We are here today in part due to the

passionate campaigning of Wendy Robinson. Wendy has been championing for change after her parents, Ian and Margaret Settree, were murdered in their own home in Cobar by their son, Scott, on 3 December 2014. The murder of Wendy's parents thrust her into a world of legal argument and the courts for years. Scott had admitted to the shooting of Ian and Margaret. However, shortly before his trial in 2016, at Long Bay Jail, New South Wales, the in-house psychiatrist determined Scott had schizophrenia. Scott Settree was sentenced with the special verdict of not guilty by reason of mental illness in the Supreme Court of New South Wales. He was incarcerated indefinitely as a forensic patient within the system under the banner of the Mental Health Review Tribunal of New South Wales.

Wendy's story of struggle with the system was only just beginning. Under the Forfeiture Act, any person convicted of murder forfeits inheritance from the victim. But when a person is found not guilty by reason of mental illness this rule does not necessarily apply—it is at the court's discretion. Wendy was forced to take action in the New South Wales Supreme Court to prevent her brother receiving half of their parents' estate. Wendy won the case, but it cost her hundreds of thousands of dollars and years of drawn out legal affairs. This bill, the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020, does not deal with the Forfeiture Act. I urge the Government to review the bill in light of stories like Wendy's. No person who has suffered the anguish of losing their parents like Wendy has should have to go through the fight she went through.

Today I will focus on the wording of the special verdict of act proven but not criminally responsible that is defined by the bill as "a special verdict of act proven but not criminally responsible entered at a trial or following a special hearing if the defence of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment is established." I will read directly from a letter that Wendy Robinson wrote to me, and I make copies of the letter available on the table of the House to all members of this place. Wendy wrote:

On the 3rd June 2020 the Hon. Mark Speakman, NSW Attorney General and the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, Minister for Mental Health released a press release headlined "Act Proven" to replace 'Not Guilty' in Forensic Mental Health Reforms".

One would assume this meant 'Act Proven by Reason of Mental Illness'. BUT no! The words "but not criminally responsible" were added to the special verdict at the same time the words "by reason of mental illness" were removed. This does not change a thing in the eyes of the victims. Once again, the powers to be, the people we have been meeting with and the people we thought were finally showing some compassion to the victims are only rubbing more salt into the wounds of the victims and kicking us in the guts even harder. "Act Proven but not criminally responsible" is not much different to "Not Guilty by reason of Mental Illness". At least we have a start by changing Not Guilty by Reason of Mental Illness. Not Guilty rips into our hearts after the murders of our loved ones. We appreciate The Hon. Mark Speakman and the Hon. Bronnie Taylor's time through these discussions. However, both have presented a draft bill that is only going to open up further anger and debate with the victims. All we asked for was the word "Not" to be removed from the special verdict. I remember suggesting so many times "Guilty by Reason of Mental Illness". However, "Act Proven by Reason of Mental Illness" is also another good choice for the Special Verdict title. Victims acknowledge these killers are mentally ill, however want to see some responsibility in the special verdict for what they have done.

Have you EVER stopped to consider the mental state of a victim? Obviously not. It's tough!

"Act Proven but not criminally responsible" is a fair kick in the guts to us victims. While "Act Proven" is acceptable and we do like that, "not criminally responsible" is not acceptable. It is not much different to "Not Guilty". You are insulting us thinking we will be happy with this. All you have done is switched a bit of wording around thinking you are looking after the victims and society. It is a cosmetic fix and changes absolutely nothing.

That is an excerpt from a letter from Wendy Robinson. I thank her for writing to me. The wording change is significant to the victims of those crimes but insignificant in the administration of the bill. The wording change to what is acceptable to victims and what they have been campaigning for for years is unlikely to change the way forensic patients are handled in courts. When we make changes in this place, we must listen to those who have lived experience of the issues. Ignoring the input of the victims of crime and forging forward with a change they do not see to be fit is insulting to the many hours they have invested in making those necessary changes. I ask that in his reply to my contribution, the Attorney General addresses why the requests of people like Wendy Robinson were ignored in favour of the proposed wording.

I understand that when making changes to any area of law, many aspects must be taken into consideration. On behalf of Wendy, I would like an explanation of what led to the wording selection. I also foreshadow an area of change that we in this place must pursue for the protection of all citizens of this State and others. I preface those changes by stating that I do not seek to stigmatise people with a mental illness. I understand that people who are unwell, when left untreated, will act in ways no-one could anticipate. I am interested in better protection for people with mental illness or cognitive impairment and for our first responders.

For the safety of the community and the police, nurses and paramedics, we must look to a form of disclosure for the protection of anyone who may be exposed to a person convicted under a special verdict. It must also be available for the safety of the person with the mental illness if in the future they come to the attention of first responders. I thank Wendy and all those who have campaigned for years to see these changes made for their ongoing dedication to improving this area of the law for other families. It is not easy to turn such a tragic event into a positive, but they should know that due to their conviction and strength, today the New South Wales

Parliament is focusing its time and resources in pursuing changes that they have fought so strongly for. My commitment to Wendy is to keep pursuing the outstanding matters that she has flagged. I look forward to working closely with the Attorney General on the issue.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:57:48):** The Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020 improves the forensic mental health system so that it better supports diversion of low-level offenders only where safe and appropriate, and ensures that serious criminal matters involving mental health or cognitive impairment are dealt with effectively and efficiently. The bill clarifies the roles of the court and the Mental Health Review Tribunal. It also helps increase understanding of this complex area of law by replacing outdated language with modern terms in plain English. It sets clear standards and processes for dealing with people with mental health impairments or cognitive impairments who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

The basis for the bill is founded in two reports of the NSW Law Reform Commission. Following publication of those reports, a large number of stakeholders were consulted by Government to develop the bill. A forensic working group was set up to oversee the development and delivery of the reforms. Members of the working group comprised representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Mental Health Review Tribunal, the Mental Health Commission, the police, Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, Corrective Services, Victims Services, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the Department of Communities and Justice. Legal stakeholders provided insight and guidance to the reforms. They included Legal Aid, the Law Society of New South Wales, the New South Wales Bar Association, the Local Court, the District Court, the Supreme Court, Public Defenders, the Aboriginal Legal Service, Shopfront Youth Legal Centre and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Forensic mental health experts, particularly those from NSW Health, Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists gave their time generously to provide the clinical lens and practical aspects about this cohort of people who come into contact with the criminal justice system. Advice from forensic mental health experts was essential in finalising the statutory definitions of "mental health impairment" and "cognitive impairment" in the bill. The definitions not only help improve the understanding of mental illness but also provide the foundation on which key areas of the legislation operate, including diversion, fitness to stand trial and the defence of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment. Input from victim advocates has been integral to ensuring that the bill affords victims better experiences in their contact with the forensic mental health and criminal justice systems.

Victim advocates such as Domestic Violence NSW, the Homicide Victims' Support Group, Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia, the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, Support After Murder, the Victims Advisory Board, Victims Services and independent victim advocates gave valuable insight that shaped the 2018 Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Amendment (Victims) Bill. Once again victim advocates lent their expertise and experience to the current bill, with strong support for removing "not guilty" from the special verdict. To reiterate, the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill ensures that serious criminal matters involving mental health and cognitive impairment are dealt with effectively and efficiently. The bill improves forensic mental health so that it better supports diversion of low-level offenders. It will replace outdated language with modern terms in plain English. The statutory definitions of "mental health impairment" and "cognitive impairment" in the bill were updated with advice from forensic mental health experts. Knowing that the reforms have been created collaboratively with stakeholders through extensive consultation, I am pleased to support the bill.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:02:21):** The Opposition does not oppose the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020. The member for Liverpool has made a detailed contribution to debate on the bill and I endorse his remarks. Eight years ago the Law Reform Commission presented its landmark reports about mental illness and its impact on the criminal justice system. Over that period the Government has engaged in a comprehensive consultation process with just about every conceivable stakeholder. In so doing, it has produced landmark legislation in the field. Even after lengthy consultation and discussion, it is impossible to prepare a bill that does not have unintended consequences. The Government has endeavoured to minimise those unintended consequences.

Nothing brings more disrepute to the criminal justice system, which seeks to act properly and efficiently, than the treatment of those who suffer mental illness. In fact, I would venture to suggest from my experience of a lifetime in the criminal justice system that most of the offenders who appear before our criminal courts—particularly the higher courts but also many who appear before the lower courts—have either a mental impairment or a cognitive impairment. It will be apparent to anyone who has read the thousands of pre-sentence reports, psychiatrist reports and psychological reports that I have read. The criminal justice system has never been able to cater properly for them. The corrective services system still does not have the ability to cater for them. Prior to

making my contribution to debate on the bill I called a person at the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT who instructed me in a number of criminal trials. I asked him whether regional courts are still locking up the mentally ill in Goulburn jail. He said, "Yeah, about 80 per cent of them are still locked up in Goulburn jail."

That arises for a number of reasons. Whilst it might be clear to many practitioners when somebody is suffering from a mental illness, the accused or offenders do not necessarily know that they are suffering from a mental illness or cognitive impairment. They do not wish to utilise the available procedures and risk becoming a forensic patient because offenders are reluctant to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for an indeterminate period. So, as a matter of course, they make an assessment as to how long they are going to get from the judge or the magistrate compared with an indeterminate period for which they may have to remain in an institution—if an institution is available, bearing in mind the location in which they are being dealt with. For example, when it comes to serious offences, unless the offender can get a dismissal under section 32 of the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990 and be dealt with under section 33, many offenders are unlikely to want to be dealt with as a forensic patient.

Ultimately, it is for the offender to give instructions to their legal representative as to whether they wish to plead guilty or not guilty. Having regard to the bar rules, if a client instructs their barrister that they wish to plead guilty to an offence, even though it is clear that the defence of mental illness would be available to them, invariably they will not seek to take up that opportunity. As a result, those persons are sentenced. Of course, the sentencing judge takes into consideration the state of the person's mental illness—now called cognitive impairment—when fixing a sentence of imprisonment. The judge will find special circumstances and will minimise the sentence accordingly. Then they get locked up in a maximum security jail, not under the treatment of a psychiatrist. That causes extreme difficulty, not only for corrective services officials but also for other prisoners. Ultimately, many people are incarcerated—I do not know the percentage—while suffering from mental illness who do not avail themselves of the opportunity.

That failure by offenders to take up the opportunity might explain the Attorney General's observation in his second reading speech that in 2018 and 2019 only 30 people were referred to the tribunal for review following a special verdict of not guilty for mental illness. An issue in relation to the wording of the bill that will require constant review by the Attorney General is the application of the public interest test when courts or tribunals make decisions as to whether somebody should be released. In exercising their obligation to determine whether the public will be safe on the release of a mentally ill person, courts and tribunals may be too conservative to avoid being blamed if something goes wrong. I observed that with respect to a former client of mine many years ago who was convicted at the age of 16, together with her father and her brother, of the murder of her mother.

Her father and brother had a significant mental illness. She was diagnosed with a folie à deux. According to a number of psychiatrists, my client had a very rare mental illness but was no longer mentally ill at the time of the trial because she had been removed from her brother and father. Her name was Kylie Fitter. The member for Liverpool was the Minister dealing with her at one stage—in fact, he may have been the Minister who ultimately allowed her release. After Kylie Fitter was found not guilty at the age of 16 on the grounds of mental illness, the authorities did not know what to do with her. In those days, the Minister had to determine whether the public would be safe if she were released.

No Minister had the courage to release somebody who had been convicted of murder or somebody who had been found not guilty of a horrific murder by virtue of mental illness. That young girl spent eight or nine years in custody before the member for Liverpool, as Minister, gave the tribunal the power to make that determination to prevent political involvement. That is a pretty sorry story of how elected representatives regard being courageous about releasing those who are mentally ill. I caution that statutory wording may be read strictly by courts and the tribunal. When specified in legislation, certain words can have unintended consequences. The other issue I raise is a fascinating one. [*Extension of time*]

Since the 1840s or thereabouts the defence of mental illness was a test applied in what was known as the M'Naghten rules. The test was that at the time of carrying out the particular offence the accused was labouring under a defect of reason caused by a disease of the mind and, due to that disease of the mind, the defendant did not know the nature and quality of the act and did not know the act was wrong. Clause 28 of the bill replaced those words. The Attorney General says the bill's wording mirrors the M'Naghten test but in updated terms. The statutory test in the bill enables a person to show that they were not criminally responsible for an offence if, at the time of carrying out the act constituting the offence, the person had a mental health impairment or a cognitive impairment, or both, that had the effect that the person did not know the nature and quality of the act, or did not know that the act was wrong—that is, the person could not reason with a moderate degree of sense and composure whether the act, as perceived by reasonable people, was wrong. Those words are said to have modified the M'Naghten rule test that had been in existence since 1840. That is 180 years.

For 180 years in Australia and the United Kingdom—and I venture to say Canada and New Zealand—juries have had very little difficulty understanding the words used in the M'Naghten test. While I understand that people like to modernise the wording or framing of particular terms in statutes, when they have been judicially determined thousands and thousands of times not only are the meaning of the words clear but also juries have really not had any difficulty understanding the meaning of those words. So when you change the words by statute so that a different set of words applies in an adversarial environment you run the risk of starting up a whole branch of jurisprudence whereby those words are open to a completely different interpretation to the well-settled principles of the M'Naghten rules.

I am prepared to concede that, in view of the length of the consultation process over the past eight years, better minds than mine might have judged it is time to change the terminology and I am anything but a conservative. But the reality is that when words are pretty clear—and have been clear for 180 years—I worry when Parliament creates a whole new area of jurisprudence. The other issue I am concerned about—and I understand why they have done it because it is a great idea—are the provisions allowing special verdicts by consent to occur despite the checks and balances that have been put in place in clause 29 of the bill.

The reason I am concerned is in the case of those people who are mentally ill, who have no cognitive understanding of criminal acts they have committed and who may not be sane at the time they are giving instructions to counsel it may not be appropriate to enable the Crown prosecutor and the barrister for the accused just to sign up the accused in a verdict by consent based upon a few psychiatrists' reports. So I caution that the Government needs to review those provisions really carefully, first, to ensure it does not fall into disrepute; and, secondly, remembering there are many accused who will not consent anyway because they will not give instructions to avail themselves of the defence available to them.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:17:26):** A significant achievement of the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Bill 2020 is that it provides an advanced understanding of mental health impairment and cognitive impairment and will assist others to understand forensic mental health. The bill does this by replacing outdated language with modern terms using plain English while also allowing for understanding of mental health impairment to grow as medical evidence and knowledge emerges. Importantly, the bill creates a statutory definition of "mental health impairment" and "cognitive impairment". Creating clear definitions of mental health impairment and cognitive impairment improves understanding of what constitutes those impairments and will provide for consistency in judicial decision-making.

Having a clear threshold for what constitutes a mental health impairment or cognitive impairment under this legislation also ensures only genuine cases of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment are dealt with via the forensic mental health pathway. The new definitions of mental health impairment and cognitive impairment in the bill provide a necessary foundation on which other areas of the bill operate. For example, the terms "mental health" and "cognitive impairment" are used to modernise the current defence of mental illness. Currently the terms in an 1840s judgment commonly known as M'Naghten's rules are used to determine whether someone should be found not guilty due to mental illness. This common law test asks whether the defendant was labouring under a defect of reason caused by a disease of the mind.

Such terms are outdated and offensive to people in the community who live with mental illness. Using the new definitions of mental health and cognitive impairment, the bill introduces a modernised statutory defence of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment for application in the District Court and Supreme Court. While it does not deviate from the common law test, the statutory test will create clarity and consistency in this area of law. The bill also clarifies and modernises terms in other areas of the law, including the special verdict, fitness to stand trial and diversion. When a person successfully raises the M'Naghten defence, they are given a special verdict of not guilty by reason of mental illness. The bill changes the wording of this verdict, recognising that the term not guilty is hurtful to victims of forensic patients.

After consulting with a wide number of stakeholders, the Government has revised the special verdict to be act proven but not criminally responsible. The bill introduces a statutory test of fitness to be tried for the District Court and Supreme Court. Currently, the test of whether a person is fit to stand trial in New South Wales is informed by the common law. Having a clear list of statutory factors for the court to consider increases transparency and strengthens consistency in decision-making. This list of factors is heavily based on the existing common law test and is non-exhaustive so that, while providing clarity, it does not limit the development of the common law when needed.

Finally, the bill provides a statutory list of factors for magistrates to consider when making a diversion decision for less serious offences. Courts are already required to consider a list of factors at common law when making a decision on whether to divert. The list in the bill goes further and includes a consideration of whether the defendant had any previous diversion orders and, critically, considers community safety. Having this list in statute provides greater guidance and transparency in judicial decision-making regarding diversion.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:22:00):** I contribute to debate on the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020. This reform is well overdue but it is also difficult for the wider community to understand how individuals fall into this category, committing at times very heinous crimes and then being seen to be dealt with under a judicial system that causes some concern to the wider community. The special verdict was amended as part of a suite of reforms to forensic mental health as recommended by the NSW Law Reform Commission [LRC]. In 2013 the LRC made recommendations to reform the forensic mental health system in New South Wales and to replace the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990 with a new Act.

In relation to the defence of mental illness and the special verdict of not guilty by reason of mental illness—commonly referred to as NGMI—the New South Wales LRC found there to be a disconnect between the way the defence and the verdict of NGMI are understood by lawyers and the way in which those terms are understood by the general community, in particular by victims and their families. For a person to be found guilty of a serious crime at law, excepting crimes of strict liability, it must be proven that they not only did the unlawful act but also had the requisite mens rea—that is, they intended or had knowledge of the wrongdoing. If a person is successful in raising the defence of mental health or cognitive impairment—meaning they did not know the nature and quality of what they did or that what they did was wrong—they are considered not guilty at law. However, such persons then enter the forensic mental health system and come under the review of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for an undetermined period of time and are only released when the tribunal determines it is safe to do so.

The Law Reform Commission recognised that for victims of forensic patients the term "not guilty" in the special verdict was upsetting. It did not recognise that the person did do an act. In 2013 the Law Reform Commission recommended amending the special verdict to "not criminally responsible by reason of mental health impairment and cognitive impairment". During the consultation the recommendation of the Law Reform Commission was built on to add a further element to the verdict to recognise that the person did commit an act. Over 20 victims groups or advocates were consulted via roundtables, call for submissions, and presentations in 2018 and 2019. In the course of those consultations, the verdict of the bill was supported.

The bill as introduced on 3 June 2020 amends the special verdict from "not guilty by reason of mental illness" to "act proven but not criminally responsible by reason of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment" shortened to "act proven but not criminally responsible". The word "guilty" cannot be used in the special verdict, as a person found not criminally responsible is not guilty at law—the term "act proven" has been adopted to recognise that the defendant did commit a wrongful act and to better acknowledge the harm caused to victims. I might add that when debating these special and important laws the victim must always be considered in the outcomes. The victims wear the crime for the rest of their life. At times it is difficult for them to understand the functioning of law, but it is very important to always consider victims in these crimes.

When taken together, the special verdict balances the experience of victims while maintaining the legal doctrine of criminal responsibility. The rewording of the special verdict to "act proven but not criminally responsible because of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment" was chosen after consultation with legal stakeholders and victim advocates, who supported the new verdict, noting that it would result in the same legal outcomes yet it recognised the experiences of victims. I commend the Attorney General for the large amount of consultation with stakeholders, the Law Reform Commission and other groups that were involved. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:27:40):** It is a privilege to support the Mental Health Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020. I will refer to the important matter of transparency in diversion. Diversion enables the Local Court in matters of low-level offending to divert an accused person who has a mental health impairment or cognitive impairment into treatment and support from the criminal justice system. The statistics around diversion have been proven to be incredibly successful. Appropriate diversion has been shown to dramatically decrease reoffending rates. In 2019 less than 1.5 per cent of all matters that were finalised in the Local Court resulted in diversion of the accused person. This bill replaces the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990, including the relevant provisions on diversion in the Local Court.

It has been clear in my engagement work with my local area police commander Pat Sharkey, who is new to the northern beaches but who has worked across New South Wales in a number of different commands, that his work and emphasis is on ensuring that policing is carried out in a way that supports, assists, understands and identifies issues and concerns around mental health and does exactly what the bill is seeking to do. The issue of diversion has been important in the way that he polices and the way in which it has ensured that issues in the criminal justice system are dealt with appropriately. The Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990 does not provide guidance to magistrates when making a decision about whether to divert a person into treatment.

The bill does this by providing statutory definitions for "mental health impairment" and "cognitive impairment". A person who does not meet one or both of those definitions cannot be diverted under the bill, and

it is important to emphasise that issue and element. The bill provides statutory guidance on what factors a magistrate should consider when determining whether diversion is appropriate, including whether the defendant has had a previous diversion order and whether the defendant is likely to endanger themselves or any member of the community. The bill also provides a list of reasons for adjournments of applications for diversion, including for assessment and diagnosis, to develop a treatment or support plan or to identify a responsible person.

The bill also extends the period in which a magistrate may call a person who has been diverted back to court. This may happen if a person has not complied with their treatment or support plan. The existing Act permits magistrates to call a person back within six months. Under the bill, this is extended to one year. The local area safety committee in Manly works with the police, Northern Beaches Council, mental health professionals and representatives from the local health district who will be pleased to note that the bill includes planning and work around assessment and diagnosis to develop a treatment or support plan. They continue to reinforce that the work is about helping and supporting those with mental health issues and other concerns who have run foul of the justice system. This is a pragmatic, smart and sensible piece of legislation.

The amendments to diversion under the bill provide a clear threshold for a person to be eligible for diversion and greater guidance to magistrates when considering whether a diversion order is appropriate, and extend the jurisdiction of the court over a person who has been diverted. Importantly, the amendments were made in close consultation with stakeholders, including legal stakeholders, disability advocates, victim advocates, and the Local Court. When one appreciates and understands the value and importance of diversion in that it has been shown to decrease reoffending rates and that last year less than 1.5 per cent of all matters that were finalised in the Local Court resulted in diversion of the accused person, one sees the real merit and importance of transparency in diversion with respect to its inclusion in the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020. To that end, I congratulate the Minister and commend the bill to the House.

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:33:33):** I make a short contribution to debate on the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020. Forensic mental health is complex. It involves courts, the Mental Health Review Tribunal, the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, defendants, lawyers and victims of forensic patients. In 2013 the NSW Law Reform Commission produced a report that focused on improving the forensic mental health system for all participants in serious matters.

The Law Reform Commission found many inefficiencies in the system that affected how quickly matters could be finalised. Particularly, the NSW Law Reform Commission determined that processes around whether a person may be fit to be tried could be made fairer and more efficient, finding that the process following a finding that a person was unfit to be tried was inefficient and meant that people who would never become fit due to a cognitive impairment were referred to the Mental Health Review Tribunal for a determination on fitness, which would delay finalising of the matter for up to a year. That has been rectified by the bill: Now a person whose unfitness is caused by a cognitive impairment will be able to go straight to a special hearing without referral to the tribunal.

The commission also found the requirement for the court to conduct a further inquiry into a person's fitness to be tried after the tribunal had determined the person to be fit was unnecessary. The bill removes that requirement. The Law Reform Commission also found that a person who had received a limiting term at a special hearing—that is, a person who was unfit to be tried and was found at a special hearing on the limited evidence to have committed the crime—could be referred directly to the tribunal and need not return to the court for disposition. The bill has done this. Finally, the bill requires the court to consider whether a trial or special hearing can be modified to enable the participation of the defendant earlier. The accumulative effect of the amendments is that matters that enter the forensic mental health system will be resolved earlier. Critically, the changes provide for earlier resolution of matters for victims of forensic patients. We know that it is traumatic for those victims. I commend the bill in the House.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (16:36:56):** In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Liverpool, Albury, Gosford, Coffs Harbour, Heffron, Hawkesbury, Barwon, Tweed, Manly and Clarence for their contributions to debate on the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020. The member for Liverpool posed a number of questions for me to address in reply. One of them was why the bill does not pick up pre-court diversion as recommended in report No. 135 of the Law Reform Commission [LRC]. That report recommended that, first, the Statewide Community and Court Liaison Service should be expanded to provide assessment, referral and advice to police officers to assist in making decisions on diversion of people with mental health and cognitive impairments; and, secondly, that the Court Referral and Evaluation for Drug Intervention and Treatment [CREDIT] program should be extended to provide services and advice to police to assist them in making decisions on the diversion of people with mental health and cognitive impairments.

Those recommendations are now superseded. Under the bill, the police do not have the power to divert a person with mental health impairment or cognitive impairment into care, treatment or support. The member for Liverpool also identified the Court Referral for Integrated Service Provision [CRISP] list and a pre-diversion list. After the recommendations of the LRC were provided, the service landscape has evolved. The NDIS has been implemented and the mental health service system is continuing to change with the operation of private health networks. The member for Liverpool asked why personality disorders are not in the definitions of "mental health" and "cognitive impairment" in the bill. The definitions do not expressly exclude people whose sole impairment is a personality disorder. Expert stakeholder feedback was that the definitions should not exclude people whose sole impairment is a personality disorder, so as to not limit the definitions in the future, where further medical evidence can point to personality disorders impacting a person's actions. Due to other tests in the bill, it is not anticipated that it will depart from the current common law position on personality disorders.

The member for Liverpool identified that community safety is already a consideration that magistrates take into account when making orders. Community safety has been included expressly in the bill to make it clear to magistrates and other parties to the proceedings, which will provide more certainty in court's decision-making. Clause 15 of the bill provides a non-exhaustive list of factors that magistrates may take into account when considering whether to make a diversion order. The list provides guidance for the court and transparency in decision-making. It includes factors previously considered at common law and introduces the factor of whether the defendant is likely to endanger their safety or that of the community or any victim. It makes it clear that community safety should be a consideration in the decision.

Getting back to the CRISP program that the member for Liverpool referred to, I note also that recommendation No. 12 of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug 'Ice' was the development of a police diversion scheme for personal use and possession of prohibited drugs. The Government is considering the recommendation at the moment and opportunities for diversion generally, and will respond in the Government response to the inquiry into the drug ice. The member for Gosford asserted that the Government has a patchy record on supporting people with a mental health impairment or cognitive impairment or those who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Recently the Government has made significant reforms and investments to support people with mental illness or cognitive impairment, including, first, investing \$8.5 million for a new specialist victims support service to provide support to victims during their engagement with the forensic mental health process; secondly, reforms to give victims a stronger voice in forensic mental health proceedings; thirdly, installation of trauma-informed tribunal hearing rooms in Parramatta to improve accessibility and participation for victims in tribunal hearings; fourthly, the investment of \$10 million for a statewide Justice Advocacy Service for people with cognitive impairment; and now, fifthly, the introduction of nation-leading reforms to introduce a new verdict that better recognises the conduct of the defendant in those cases.

A pre-court diversion program for low-level offending will be considered in the Government's response to the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug 'Ice'. It is important to acknowledge and consider program design that factors in comorbidity with drug addiction, mental health and cognitive impairment. From October 2017, the Cognitive Impairment Diversion Program [CIDP] was piloted at Gosford and Penrith local courts to help defendants with a cognitive impairment who had been charged with low-level offences to access services to address the underlying cause of their offending behaviour. Funding for the CIDP pilot ceases on 30 June. Since the program stopped accepting referrals on 31 March as part of the planned end date for the program, a robust wind-down and transition strategy is underway to support existing CIDP participants with a transition to appropriate services. While there have been some positive results, the current model is not appropriate to scale to other locations beyond those two and could replicate services provided under the NDIS.

The program was always a pilot, limited to two locations, not permanent and subject to an evaluation. There has been an independent evaluation of the program, which produced a benefit-cost ratio of 0.23c per dollar spent. A transition plan to manage the end of the pilot has been developed, with support for clients with cognitive impairment at Gosford and Penrith local courts available through the existing Statewide Community and Court Liaison Service and the Justice Advocacy Service. The Statewide Community and Court Liaison Service provides advice to magistrates on defendants who have a mental health impairment and cognitive impairment. That includes the treatment needs of the defendant. Among others, the Local Court at Gosford will have access to the service.

I thank the member for Barwon for his extensive contribution to debate on the bill. I also acknowledge the continued victim advocacy of Ms Wendy Robinson. I met Wendy some time ago and I acknowledge her traumatic experience as a victim of a forensic patient. No members in this place could fathom the emotional distress that Ms Robinson experienced when she found out that her parents had been killed by her brother, Scott Settree. The member for Barwon raised a number of issues. They include the proposed new wording of the special verdict, the question of forfeiture under the Forfeiture Act 1995 and the provision of information first responders.

I will deal with the special verdict question first. In Report 138 the NSW Law Reform Commission recommended that the "special verdict" of "not guilty by reason of mental illness" be changed to "not criminally responsible because of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment". It found that the term "not guilty" had the effect of suggesting that the defendant did not do the act. This was confusing, particularly to victims, as the special verdict is only available where it is proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant committed the act. Following the NSW Law Reform Commission report, over 20 victims groups were consulted and asked whether the term "act proven" should be added to the special verdict. It was felt that "act proven but not criminally responsible by reason of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment" recognised that an act did occur and was therefore a more accurate representation of findings, was less confusing and did not minimise the impact of the offence and the perception of justice for victims.

Stakeholders were consulted on the changing of the verdict over a two-year period, including the Homicide Victims' Support Group, Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia, Domestic Violence NSW, Victims Services, Support After Murder, the Victims Advisory Board and independent victim advocates. The Department of Communities and Justice also received submissions from stakeholders, including the Law Society of New South Wales, Legal Aid NSW, the New South Wales Bar Association, the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (NSW), the courts, the public defenders, the NSW Police Force, the Mental Health Review Tribunal, Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, the Mental Health Commission of NSW, and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.

For a person to be found guilty of a crime at law, except for crimes of strict liability, it must be proven that not only did they do the unlawful act but also they had the requisite mens rea—that is, typically, that they intended or had knowledge of the wrongdoing. To put it simply, to be found guilty of a serious crime, a person must be found by a court both to have committed an act and to have had the relevant state of mind. A person with mental health impairment or cognitive impairment may be found to have committed the act but they may or may not have the mental state to be criminally responsible. If a person is successful in raising the defence of mental health or cognitive impairment as termed under the bill, it must be proven on the balance of probabilities that the person did not know the nature and quality of the act or did not know that the act was wrong—that is, the person could not reason with a moderate degree of sense and composure about whether the act, as perceived by reasonable people, was wrong.

The bill uses those terms for the special verdict and defines "act" to include both acts and omissions. If a person is successful in raising the defence of mental health or cognitive impairment, they are considered "not guilty" at law. However, those people then enter the forensic mental health system and come under the review of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for an undetermined period of time until the tribunal determines it is safe for them to be released. Before the bill, the "not guilty" verdict was reflected in the wording of the special verdict. The bill rewords the special verdict. While the word "guilty" cannot be used, as a person found not criminally responsible is not guilty at law, the term "act proven" has been adopted to recognise that the defendant did commit a wrongful act and to better acknowledge the harm caused to victims.

The rewording of the special verdict to "act proven but not criminally responsible because of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment" was chosen after consultation with legal stakeholders and victim advocates who supported the new verdict, noting that it would result in the same legal outcome while recognising the experiences of victims. My understanding is that in no jurisdiction in Australia does the special verdict suggest that the person who did the act was guilty. Rather, expressions like "not guilty" or "is not criminally responsible" are used. The bill goes further than the NSW Law Reform Commission's recommendations by not only using less offensive but still difficult language of not criminally responsible but also expressly recognising "act proven". To that extent, we have gone further in recognising the trauma of victims than any jurisdiction in Australia and further than the NSW Law Reform Commission recommended.

Inevitably, when someone who does an act that involves killing someone appears not to be punished, appears not to be going to jail, that will re-traumatise and upset victims. I can well understand why someone like Ms Robinson, in the letter that the member for Barwon read out, would say so many times that the verdict should be "guilty by reason of mental illness". But we simply cannot get away from the fact that if someone is so mentally or cognitively impaired that they do not know what they are doing, they do not know the nature of the act, the law does not find them guilty. We cannot say they are guilty. We cannot create a fiction. What we can do is reword the special verdict as best we can to minimise—it will not eliminate—the trauma that victims of a forensic patient will inevitably go through. I am sorry that we cannot go as far as Ms Robinson would like us to go. To do so would be a complete legal fiction and we have gone further than any jurisdiction in Australia and further than the recommendations of the NSW Law Reform Commission.

The member for Barwon noted that the way the special verdict is phrased does not change other statutory responses to the verdict, including forfeiture. The forfeiture rule at common law provides that where a person is

criminally responsible for the death of another, and that death is a material fact in the vesting of property in favour of that person, then the interest in that property is forfeited. As a person who is found not guilty by reason of mental illness or, under the bill, "act proven but not criminally responsible" because such a person is not criminally responsible for that death, the common law forfeiture rule does not automatically apply.

The common law position is that a person who wrongfully kills another is disqualified by law from taking any benefit from the estate of that other—the forfeiture rule, which was set out in *Cleaver v Mutual Reserve Fund Life Association* [1892] 1 QB 147 and affirmed by the New South Wales Court of Appeal in *Troja v Troja* (1994) 33 NSWLR 269. That common law forfeiture rule does not apply where a person has been found not guilty by reason of mental illness—NGMI—of murder. However, that common law has been reformed in New South Wales. Under section 11 of the Forfeiture Act 1995, where a person has been found NGMI in respect of a killing, any interested person may make an application to the Supreme Court of New South Wales for an order that the forfeiture rule apply as if the offender had been found guilty of murder.

Section 11 requires the court, in determining whether justice requires the rule to be applied, to have regard to the following matters: first, the conduct of the offender; secondly, the conduct of the deceased person; thirdly, the effect of the application of the rule on the offender or any other person; and, fourthly, such other matters as to the court appear material. Under section 11, if a forfeiture application order is made the Forfeiture Rule is to apply in respect of the offender for all purposes, including purposes relating to anything done before the order was made, as if the offender had been found guilty of murder. Section 11 was introduced by the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Amendment Act 2005.

The second reading speech by then Minister Graham West on 21 September 2005 for that Act noted that the common law Forfeiture Rule operates to prevent killers from benefiting financially from their victim's estate. The Forfeiture Act 1995 leaves the common law rule intact but allows the court to modify the effect of the rule if justice demands it. The Forfeiture Rule currently cannot be applied to people found not guilty of a killing by reason of mental illness. The bill amends the Forfeiture Act 1995 to enable the Forfeiture Rule to be applied to people found not guilty of murder by reason of mental illness where it would not be just for them to inherit from their victim's estate.

The Law Reform Commission considered submissions by victims groups that the requirement to make an application to the court to have the Forfeiture Rule applied adds to the stress and cost for the victim's family, and they submitted that the law should be changed so that the rule applies automatically. But in Report 138 the Law Reform Commission ultimately declined to make a recommendation for amendment of the Forfeiture Act, noting that it was outside the scope of the inquiry but also noting that when the Forfeiture Act was introduced in 1995 the Government considered that it was important that judicial discretion be exercised in relation to the application of the rule. Further, it noted that there are some situations where it is appropriate for the rule to apply and some cases where doing so would produce injustice.

The Law Reform Commission concluded that the decision was appropriate. There are exceptions to the Forfeiture Rule found in the Forfeiture Act. Under this Act, a person found guilty of unlawful killing can apply to the court to modify the effect of the Forfeiture Rule. An interested party can also apply to the court to have the rule apply against a person who has been found not criminally responsible for a death they have caused. Automatic application of the Forfeiture Act, or the Forfeiture Rule, where the person who has done the act is not criminally responsible because of mental health or cognitive impairment would be a one-size-fits-all approach that would inevitably produce injustice.

There will be some cases where 100 per cent forfeiture will be appropriate. There will be other cases where no forfeiture is appropriate, and there will be cases where some partial forfeiture will be appropriate. Bearing in mind that the person who has done the act has been found not criminally responsible—they are so mentally or cognitively impaired they do not know what they are doing or that their act is wrong—it cannot be that in all cases in all circumstances that automatic forfeiture is appropriate. In those circumstances, the Government does not propose to revisit the terms of the Forfeiture Act.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Public Interest Debate*

### COVID-19

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (16:58:17):**

I move:

That this House:

- (1) Applauds the extraordinary efforts of communities across the State to comply with social distancing requirements to help keep us all safe.

- (2) Notes that the easing of social distancing requirements has been possible as a result of these efforts.
- (3) Emphasises the importance of continued vigilance as restrictions ease to ensure community safety.

This afternoon the Treasurer not only made an historic economic statement about the challenges the people of New South Wales have faced physically, emotionally and mentally over the course of this COVID-19 pandemic, but also highlighted the financial implications that this will have on the State of New South Wales, particularly on our economy. While he was speaking, I was looking at the painting of William Charles Wentworth in the Chamber. Symbolically, we see Mr Wentworth gazing down on us, ensuring that our deliberations are worthy of the forefathers of this State. To the right of the portrait is a wonderful memorial to the two members of this Chamber who served, fought and fell on the shores of Gallipoli in April 1915.

They are two very powerful symbols of sacrifice, of intellect and of service. William Charles Wentworth overcame many challenges—some of them personal, some of them professional and some of them cultural. As the Treasurer was presenting his economic statement, I was thinking that over the course of the history of this place there would have been few years outside the war years that this Chamber has had to consider its deliberations knowing the challenges facing its citizens had never been more important, challenging and, of course, threatening. We started 12 months ago next month, with the beginning of a horrific bushfire season. The Treasurer highlighted that the bushfires had an extreme impact on the revenues of the State.

I remember thinking during the first five months of the bushfire season that the cost of rebuilding the State would be extremely difficult to recover in a short time. Fast-forward to January, when we began to learn about the pandemic and its impact on our lifestyles. Since then, we have continued to recover from drought. We had serious storm activity in February, creating its own problems, and I am reluctant but forced to advise the House that only recently I was given briefings by the State Emergency Service that we should expect higher than average rainfall that could lead to flooding. I make those comments because I see in the community and in the people of New South Wales a sense of fortitude that has made us the envy of the world.

I am extremely proud of the way that the people of New South Wales, under the tutorship of the Premier and the Prime Minister, have responded to this pandemic. Every morning I tell my sons that we should never be more grateful to have been born in Australia when it comes to the world's response to COVID-19. I know there have been challenges in the way we have had to approach the restrictions. I emphasise to this House and to all who listen to its deliberations that our response to COVID-19 was not a punishment. Indeed, it was quite the opposite. This Government took a firm but fair and cautious approach to the way we would respond, not because we wanted to enforce some sort of draconian law but because we did not want to see a repeat of the way that societies in the United States and the United Kingdom had been forced to respond.

We should highlight the fact that people have unfortunately used the pandemic for their own political purposes. This week we saw a member of the other place decide to completely disregard social distancing rules, attend a very risky mass gathering that had previously been deemed unlawful and then risk infecting members of a vulnerable community in the north of New South Wales by attending a gathering there in spite of, and against the spirit of, the Government's policies. The community needs to come together now. We should be grateful that we have been spared much of the devastation that COVID-19 has forced upon communities around the world. We should also be conscious of the fact that, even though we are seeing lives slowly return to normal, we cannot take any unnecessary risks.

For that reason there will not be a complete return to normality in the short term but what we will see is the great Australian spirit which had its genesis in William Charles Wentworth and, of course, those who fell on the shores of Gallipoli. That spirit, tenacity and a sense of having a go will no doubt be redefined over the course of the past 12 months and tightened, sharpened and made brighter because of the way that we have been able to come together and accept the fact that we have been challenged with a unique situation that can only bring our nation together. I conclude by thanking the Premier and the Commissioner of Police for their leadership during the course of the past challenging six months. I hope that in a very short time we will return to our normal lifestyles.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:05:27):** I thank all those who served the public and worked so hard during the COVID-19 crisis: the NSW Police Force, NSW Health, the Department of Education, workers in the retail sector, the aged care sector, disability services and our community sporting organisations. It has been their exceptional work that is getting us through the COVID-19 response. For all the criticism that bureaucrats get about their red tape, just remember it was those bureaucrats who, beaver away into the night with their red tape, may just have saved many lives. They join the likes of our supermarket staff and our workforce of cleaners, as the modern day, and often unsung, heroes of this epidemic. Most importantly I thank our community organisations—the Salvos, Meals on Wheels, Barnardo's, Mission Australia, RSL sub-branches, mosques,

churches, temples and community groups—that have certainly been the backbone of the response. They were there when government was not.

These have been very testing times and for no-one more so than the NSW Police Force. I believe it did an exceptional job. It is important for the public to remember that the NSW Police Force is, and will be, there to protect them during and after the pandemic. Time and again in my electorate of Auburn I have seen them go the extra mile to help those in distress and de-escalate a situation before it gets out of hand. I thank teachers, nurses, doctors, ambulance officers, childcare workers and everyone who did their jobs in the most difficult circumstances. I thank those working from home with young schoolchildren under their feet for making it work.

The people of New South Wales have been exceptional. The year of 2020 has certainly been a tough year and the worst, I suspect is yet to come. There will be a time in the future when we will mark 2020 in the history books, then there will be a time to assess what the lasting legacy of this time in history will be. Great shifts in history rarely come without social change. But remember the COVID-19 crisis has a long way to go. We may be only at the beginning given the ongoing international spread. This crisis will continue to greatly impact many of our industries, particularly tourism and events, for years to come. As a result of this crisis, a generation of young people under 22 have, for the first time in an age, faced mass unemployment. Childcare workers have been singled out as the first to be removed from JobKeeper. Our international students and Kiwi cousins are in dire straits. They are without jobs and unable to go home. These are only the first casualties of COVID-19. There will certainly be more and times will certainly get bleak.

How this Government responds will be indicative of how bleak the times will get and who will be left behind. Before the crisis my electorate was already at 10 per cent unemployment. I hope the New South Wales Government has a better plan for economic recovery than just removing stimulus from the economy. It is not as simple as getting up in this Chamber and stating they will build infrastructure. Some sectors of the economy will be in dire straits for a long time. Investment should provide jobs now but also the multiplier for the jobs of the future. So far the response of the New South Wales Government has been to cancel shovel-ready infrastructure projects. Given that Sydney Olympic Park High School is now a decade overdue, perhaps this infrastructure could make the supposedly fast-tracked list.

I know everyone is keeping their fingers crossed that we miss a second wave, but let us not rely on luck to avoid a second wave. The New South Wales Government must deliver clear messaging of what its expectation of the community will be. Let us have no more of the health Minister delivering messages of caution while his parliamentary colleagues cut his grass to remove restrictions. The good work that has been done so far has come on the back of the sacrifice made by many—mothers delivering babies without family members by their side, families absent at funerals to mourn their loved ones, families whose future dreams have been thrown out the window as they lose their jobs and their homes. Let us make sure these sacrifices count. Let us keep implementing social isolation measures so that we can reduce the risk as restrictions ease. Let us keep up the testing. Let us keep looking after each other and keep being kind. Let us remain strong in will, to strive, to seek and not to yield.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (17:10:09):** I speak as an extremely proud member of this Government, under the excellent leadership of Premier Gladys Berejiklian and her team for working around the clock with police, health and other authorities to ensure we respond effectively to the COVID-19 situation. I am pleased to note that my community in Wollondilly, as indeed the whole State, has responded excellently to dramatic change to our everyday lives. In my electorate there was a need to do something extra at the regional level, which I delivered as a response. After consultation with key people in the electorate and others such as the member for Goulburn and the member for Camden, the six local government areas, the Federal member for Hume, government agencies and industry leaders, I established the regional taskforce in the Hume region to resource and implement local sustainable solutions that could be applied as a model across regional New South Wales.

One of the projects that came from the taskforce was the establishment of a Resilience Hub and I am following that through in discussions with Commissioner Fitzsimmons. This hub will have ongoing benefits to the community long after the COVID-19 crisis has passed. It will empower the community and its leaders to take control of many future projects and provide resilience to future economic and social disruptions caused by natural and other disasters. This adherence to the public health priorities set out by the Government has allowed us to ease many of the restrictions imposed upon us to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

This easing of restrictions means we can get back to doing the things we hold dear. In particular, I am glad that Pie Time in the Southern Highlands can continue ahead as planned. I encourage all members to come to the pie capital of Australia to support the economy in the Southern Pie-Lands. While 99 per cent of the community remains vigilant to the threat of the pandemic, it is unfortunate, although unsurprising, to see a selfish 1 per cent jeopardise all this. I condemn the protesters who marched selfishly at the cost of a potential outbreak. As we have already seen, two of the protesters from the Melbourne rally had COVID-19 and they may have infected many who are more vulnerable to COVID-19.

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

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** If the tables were turned and this pandemic was more lethal to those under the age of 30, baby boomers and senior Australians would give their left arm to save the lives of their children and grandchildren. During this insane period, we also saw the heinous defacing of a Captain James Cook statue by a staff member of Mr David Shoebridge and I call on him to show some leadership and condemn the illegal actions of his staff member. It is a shame that Mr David Shoebridge, who loves to pontificate, is quick to cast judgement, and calls for papers and inquiries on others, does not apply this same standard to himself and his staff. The members of The Greens who sit in this House should be ashamed of their censured colleague in the Legislative Council. I again thank the community for their support of the Government as we have entered uncharted waters with this pandemic.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (17:14:05):** I make a brief contribution to the public interest debate. I show my appreciation to the New South Wales community and, in particular, my community of Mount Druitt, who have adhered to the imposed isolation restrictions and who are the very reason that the pandemic has been so well controlled. There is no doubt that Australia and, indeed, New South Wales are in a better position and are the envy of the world. According to the New South Wales Government webpage, as of today more than 649,000 tests have been carried out and 76 active cases are remaining. There are two main reasons for the success of containing the pandemic: one, the number and ease of testing available in each local government area; and, two, the community has taken the restrictions very seriously and adhered to the social isolation measures that were imposed.

The COVID-19 testing has not only helped to quickly identify those who have been infected and isolated but also put to rest the fears of those who had been or may have been exposed to the virus or those suffering from the symptoms. Any delay in testing could have proved detrimental to people's health and wellbeing. That is truly evidenced by countries that have been lagging in testing and resulted in thousands of unnecessary deaths. If the *Ruby Princess* had such testing in place, how many lives would have been saved? Local reporting has also assisted our community to be more vigilant in taking care when they are out and about. I have always kept my community informed of the active cases by postcode and I was pleased when there were no active cases in my electorate. I commend the New South Wales community, whose strict adherence to the restrictions imposed upon them has undoubtedly contributed to us being in this position today.

Despite the easing of restrictions, the community has continued to act responsibly and is maintaining the practice of social distancing. The people of New South Wales have sacrificed so much. Isolating themselves from their loved ones and not being able to gather with family and friends has been difficult. Prior to the easing of restrictions, the hardest aspect the public had to endure was not being able to attend a funeral service of someone close due to the limitation on numbers. I was not able to attend the funeral service of my son-in-law's father because the limit on numbers meant that only immediate family members filled the quota. During the difficult restriction period, my nephew was married but I was not able to attend the wedding because only five persons were allowed, including the celebrant. In fact, the parents had to alternate during the service to comply with the restrictions.

Without such sacrifice by the people of New South Wales, the situation would have been much worse. Everyone should be congratulated for looking after one another and standing together during the pandemic. I also commend the 36 schools in the Mount Druitt electorate, whose principals, teachers, staff and cleaners worked very hard and had to learn so much in such a short period. Our teachers continued to provide quality remote learning under the most difficult circumstances. I am incredibly proud of the commitment they showed to their students and the community. I am pleased to advise that there have been no recorded cases of the virus within the Mount Druitt school communities.

I thank the many charitable organisations in Mount Druitt, such as the WASH House, a community-based resource centre for women, as well as Foodbank, which continued to service the community during the pandemic. There are too many organisations to list individually. However, it should be noted that without their assistance many people in our community would have been much worse off. I also acknowledge our medical staff, who acted quickly and at times at great risk to themselves, to ensure that lives were not lost. We still have a long way to go until a vaccine is found—if a vaccine will ever be found. Until such time, we must continue to do our part by practising social distancing and integrating it into our everyday lives. This is the new world and we must change and adapt.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:18:49):** I begin by thanking the Minister for moving the important motion before the House this afternoon. I join him and other members in applauding the extraordinary efforts of communities across the State to comply with social distancing requirements to help keep us all safe; note that the easing of restrictions has been made possible because of those efforts; and, like the Minister, emphasise the importance of continued vigilance to ensure the safety of everybody in our communities.

As a former nurse, I particularly applaud the extraordinary efforts of those working on the front line across the health sector.

As many members will know, 2020 marks 200 years since the birth of Florence Nightingale and it has been declared as the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife by the World Health Organization. As acknowledged earlier this year by Jacqui Cross, the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer in New South Wales, that pronouncement is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for nurses and midwives to highlight their important work. It is their year to be loud and proud about their amazing work and the truly unique contributions that they all make to our healthcare system. As our community has dealt with the unique and often overwhelming challenges of COVID-19, our healthcare workers were stepping up. I could not have been prouder of the professionalism and the caring and compassionate manner in which they performed their roles in those unprecedented times. Each of them deserves our thanks, admiration and respect. No matter where they work in the health sector—as a nurse, hospital orderly, ward clerk, cleaner, paramedic or any other role—they are all included in these thanks.

From a local point of view, the health professionals within the Mid North Coast Local Health District were simply amazing. I begin by acknowledging the CEO, Stewart Dowrick, who kept us local members informed as statistics changed daily. He was always at the end of the phone to respond to our questions and provide clarification, particularly in the early days of the pandemic. I thank Stewart and his team for their ongoing support. I thank Catherine Death, who heads our local Port Macquarie Base Hospital and manages a fantastic team of people, including the Director of Nursing, Penelope Pink; John Lyne, who oversees the cleaning team at Port Macquarie Community Health Campus; Patrick Regan, who is the Nurse Unit Manager of the Intensive Care Unit; the wonderful community health nurses, who are led by Dan Abel; and all the staff of the COVID clinic and cancer services. I mention Melainie Ison, who manages the team of hospital orderlies, and our paramedics, including team leaders Josh Smythe and Jamie Martin. Every one of them is deserving of our praise.

It is also worth mentioning a couple of awesome pop-up support programs during COVID-19 pandemic. Our hospital staff were overwhelmed by the kindness of our community as they explored some unique ways to support our local health workers. An example of one of the most generous COVID-19 programs has been a business-driven initiative in the Hastings to provide family-sized meals to staff at Wauchope District Memorial Hospital and Port Macquarie Base Hospital. The initiative involved one of our local catering companies called XS Food, Slade Refrigerated Transport, Hastings Co-op IGA, Ken Little's Fruit and Veg and other businesses.

A community group called Frontline Needs Our Help, led by Rebecca Stockwell, rallied together to provide hampers of fresh fruit, goodies and other things to Port Macquarie Base Hospital and Wauchope District Memorial Hospital staff. Thousands of dollars' worth of fruit, juices, cakes, scones, slices and other treats were donated and distributed to hospital staff through the online group. Hastings Co-Op also supported the program. Many generous individuals in the community also donated food and treats to our frontline workers. I have no doubt that it was not unique to Port Macquarie. I acknowledge all those across the State who made the effort to support our health workers during this challenging time.

In closing, it would be remiss of me to not take time to commend the exceptional efforts of health Minister the Hon. Brad Hazzard, Chief Health Officer Kerry Chant and all of those working behind the scenes across the Ministry of Health. For a number of years I had the good fortune of working alongside Brad and I know full well that his focus on the wellbeing of patients, frontline staff and the department personnel is second to none. Thanks to the work of the leadership team and the Minister, as the pandemic took hold in Australia I was confident that we were in safe hands in New South Wales and that we would be in a well-prepared position for the worst outcome.

During the devastating bushfires, for weeks on end we all got used to waking up each day with an update from Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons standing alongside the Premier. It was not too long before Dr Kerry Chant was standing alongside the Premier or Minister every day providing us with an update on COVID-19 cases and reminding us of the importance of getting tested and complying with restrictions. I speak for all members in extending sincere thanks to Kerry Chant for her efforts and commitment to the health of every citizen of New South Wales.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:23:59):** The subject of the debate is the State's response to the COVID-19 health emergency. On behalf of the Labor Party I thank my community in The Entrance electorate. I also thank the people of New South Wales for their efforts in complying with the restrictions necessary to keep us all safe. I acknowledge the social and economic impact the health restrictions have had on our community. It highlighted those in our community who are the most vulnerable to economic and social dislocation: renters who are unable to pay their rent due to reduced income and whose landlords are unwilling to negotiate rent reductions; businesses that are unable to keep paying rent on their premises and unable to negotiate rent reductions; casual workers who may be ineligible for social support payments and who are confronted suddenly with low income, difficulty paying expenses, and hard times for both them and their families.

My community in The Entrance electorate was particularly affected by travel and visitation restrictions. The Entrance community and The Entrance township, in particular, rely on tourism. The economy relies on tourists. Typically, tourist-dependent businesses expect low business turnover during the week and make up for it on the weekend when people from Sydney visit. Those businesses experienced a huge and sudden reduction in their income, which necessitated extensive reorganisation. The support delivered by the State and Federal governments—that willingness to use the power of State finance to support a depressed economy—was very important for my community and for those businesses. But the easing of restrictions will be key to how those businesses emerge from the current downturn.

I acknowledge all the workers who continue to work during the restrictions to ensure that our community receives essential services and the necessities of life: the local supermarket workers who had little protection against the virus initially until supermarkets provided extra protective equipment and imposed restrictions on supermarket floors, the health workers in our hospitals and the transport workers who continue to deliver goods throughout the State. I acknowledge the 18 public schools in my electorate that responded to changes in restrictions imposed by the State Government, shouldered the burden and did their duty diligently. The 412 members of the NSW Police Force on the Central Coast did a great job. I commend them for their discretion. Members have heard today about people not practising social distancing during protests. During the restrictions many people on the Central Coast decided to undertake essential home maintenance. Many people converged on Bunnings and other Central Coast hardware stores. It took some time for those stores to impose restrictions to ensure the health of people on the Central Coast and avoid the risk of viral spread. I acknowledge that the police did not impose themselves too heavily until the community got its act together in that regard.

As restrictions ease we should not lose sight of what worked. Enhanced help for the unemployed worked. Free TAFE worked—more people are doing TAFE courses. Free preschool worked—more people sent children to preschool. I commend the Central Coast NSW Business Chamber for the programs it developed to help businesses emerge from the health restrictions. Three things will help Central Coast communities recover from the restrictions and the resulting economic downturn. Working from home has been embraced. We have heard a lot about improving the commute to Sydney, but working from home has been embraced by people on the Central Coast. We must support that. We must spend more on making housing more affordable and more on local roads to promote business activity in the local area to get the economy moving again. I support the motion.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:29:14):** I am pleased to speak in debate on the motion. Having listened to the other speakers, I note how inadequate five minutes is to do justice to the huge effort that has been made by our communities and all of those who have stepped up during the extraordinary time we have experienced. The year began in drought with fires raging. We then moved into a period of concern about flood in many areas. Barely able to draw breath, we were hit with the crisis of the global COVID-19 pandemic. It has been extraordinary. No corner of our communities remains untouched by this pandemic, both from a health perspective, including mental and emotional wellbeing, and from an economic perspective.

We still have a long way to go in fighting COVID-19. We know that the economic recovery will be long, complicated and difficult for many people. I acknowledge people who have lost their jobs or whose income streams have been compromised. Anyone who has remained in full-time employment, including members in this Chamber, is in a privileged position. I am sure all members have been dealing with people in such circumstances. Our hearts go out to them in trying to find a way through these extraordinary times. Normally we have a pattern, a template, and we know where we can go. We do not have that in the current circumstances. As the member for The Entrance mentioned, we must acknowledge people who have had to leave their rental properties because they have been unable to pay their rent. It is heartbreaking, but our communities do go on.

I acknowledge the extraordinary effort of those at the pointy end of the front line—nurses, doctors, medical and aged care staff, police, retail staff, disability sector workers, truck drivers, public transport staff and other essential workers. I acknowledge all people whose jobs kept life reasonable for us, such as the baristas who made our coffees, enabling us to feel some sense of normality. They were all very important. I acknowledge the local police in Lake Macquarie under the regional command of Danny Sullivan. He and his troops have done a tremendous job in leading our local community. We cannot name all the great charities, which is a great shame. In my local area Southlake Marketplace, Southlake Community Services, the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul, Meals on Wheels and other charities have done extraordinary things getting help to people in need. In Lake Macquarie and the broader Hunter Region, COVID-19 has, so far, been contained to 278 cases, with the sad loss of four lives. Health agencies had estimated that loss of life in our region would have been far worse if nothing had been done, with a possible death toll in the thousands. I acknowledge the Hunter New England Health workers who did an amazing job in keeping their local communities informed and in giving a sense of being in control.

Of course, the economic cost is enormous. We know it will be painful and it will be some time before we recover. It will not be without significant sacrifice and debate. That time is coming. As part of the recovery

process, we should certainly be debating how we will go about that. My view and the overwhelming view of my community is that it would be wrong to overlook the amazing job that the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, has done and continues to do in guiding us through the pandemic. She has done a magnificent job. I acknowledge health Minister Brad Hazzard. Dr Kerry Chant has also done a superb job. I am pleased to know that our politicians listen to the advice of health experts, which is very refreshing. Overall, New South Wales has done very well. The prize for the collective effort must go to the people of New South Wales. I thank every person who has stepped up and done the right thing by their neighbours and family members. I support the motion.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (17:34:17):** In reply: I thank the member for Auburn, the member for Wollondilly, the member for Mount Druitt, the member for Port Macquarie, the member for The Entrance and the member for Lake Macquarie for their contributions to this important public interest debate. It will be a telling statistic at the end of this pandemic that Australia was able to restrict its fatalities and exposure to the coronavirus to a bare minimum. Comparatively, the United States—a population of some 300 million people—has had some 118,000 deaths. If we superimpose that onto Australia, we should have had about 10,000 deaths, but we have had only 102. That statistic should earn praise for the Prime Minister, Premiers, respective health Ministers and chief medical officers for their management. We have essentially restricted our fatalities to 1 per cent of what would have occurred if our exposure to this pandemic was reflected by the number of fatalities in the United States of America. For this reason, the House should acknowledge, as the member for Lake Macquarie said, the role of the Premier.

I will add to the comments made by other members. Frontline workers have been extraordinary. Our nurses are always deserving of praise, but I specifically thank the rank-and-file members of the NSW Police Force. They have unnecessarily been exposed to people who wish to do them harm—the offence of spitting creates anxiety and uncertainty in the lives of officers dealing with members of the public. For that reason, I give special thanks to the NSW Police Force. I thank the other emergency services. My heart has sunk and continues to sink whenever I get a text from the fire brigade patrol to learn that a firefighter has had to enter a home or business where there has been a potential exposure to coronavirus. I commend this motion to the House. I thank those who have made a contribution. This is one of those occasions when the House is united to ensure that history dictates and records the wonderful leadership we have had over a very trying time.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **MENTAL HEALTH AND COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT FORENSIC PROVISIONS BILL 2020**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (17:37:47):** In reply: Before the public interest debate I was replying to some of the points made by the member for Barwon. I have dealt with the special verdict and how we have chosen the words "act proven but not criminally responsible". I have dealt with the Forfeiture Act, in that the Government does not have any plans to change the Forfeiture Act. The member for Barwon raised a point about disclosure. In particular he said, "For the safety of the community and police, nurses and paramedics, we must look to a form of disclosure for the protection of anyone who may be exposed to a person convicted under a special verdict. It must also be available for the safety of the person with the mental illness if in the future they come to the attention of first responders." I know where the member for Barwon is coming from. Our first responders put their lives and limbs at risk protecting our community every day. His concern for their safety is a concern that just about every member of this place would share. I am certainly willing to continue that dialogue with the member for Barwon. I understand his concerns on that issue.

The bill is the result of significant and detailed stakeholder consultation, and contributions from many parties. Particularly, I thank the NSW Law Reform Commission for its landmark reports on forensic mental health, and the Hon. Anthony Whealy, QC, for his work on the Mental Health Review Tribunal review, which led to a number of victim-focused reforms. I am so grateful for the contributions of all stakeholders who have helped shape the direction of the forensic mental health reforms. We have had numerous forensic mental health experts and victim advocates generously give time to provide feedback and direction. The legal profession has provided guidance and insight throughout the consultation and drafting stage. I am grateful for all these contributions to a bill that achieves the right balance between the key objectives of community safety, appropriate responses that decrease reoffending, and the efficient and effective use of court and tribunal resources.

The amendments in the bill will simplify forensic mental health legal procedures, and clarify the roles of the court and the Mental Health Review Tribunal. They will increase transparency of the law and decision-making by introducing a statutory test for fitness to stand trial and a statutory defence of mental illness in the higher courts. They will change the special verdict of "not guilty by reason of mental illness" to "act proven but not criminally responsible" because of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment to better acknowledge and more accurately reflect the harm done to victims. The amendments will ensure serious criminal matters involving mental health impairment or cognitive impairment are dealt with effectively and promptly, and will provide a stronger and clearer regime for diversion in the Local Court. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:41:35):** While Anzac Day services in my community of North Shore did not occur this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is always an opportunity for us to reflect as a community and commemorate the brave service men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Usually we would gather at local war memorials and reflect in solemn silence on those who have served across the generations, but with the cancellation of services we were unable to come together as we have in past years. I praise RSL NSW for instead introducing "Light up the Dawn", encouraging everyone to stand at the end of their driveway or on their balcony, listen to a brief commemorative service or tune into the Australian War Memorial service, and pay their respects by holding a candle. In some parts of my community people played musical instruments. It was heartening to see that so many across the North Shore held their own services at home and on the street. There were many houses displaying Australian flags, poppies and signs that read "Lest We Forget". It is at our most difficult times that the true Australian spirit shines through—as it was in times of war, and now as we navigate this pandemic.

We are a resilient State and we always pull together when times are tough. This year marked the 105th anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign, the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during World War I. During the eight months of the campaign, the Anzac spirit was forged in the horror and carnage that they faced, which also had a profound impact on Australians at home. This year I took the opportunity with just my family to lay wreaths at Mosman War Memorial, North Sydney War Memorial and Kirribilli Second World War Memorial on behalf of the people of the North Shore.

It was a very different day for all of us, but it was wonderful to see so many tributes from dawn onwards. Australians feel a deep affinity with the Anzac tradition of service. My family shares this history, with both my grandmother and grandfather serving in the Royal Australian Air Force during World War II. Our community has been widely represented across the generations in times of war. In thanking all service men and women, I will share a few local stories provided by our RSL sub-branches as they were not able to share them themselves at services.

Private William Henry Bowers of Mosman enlisted to join the Australian Imperial Force in April 1916, leaving behind his life at the *Orange Advocate*, where he had worked for 20 years. In a letter to his brother Private Bowers described the barren and shell-hole-filled Somme battlefield, and the horrors he faced alongside his comrades. Private Bowers was severely wounded on 15 May 1917 during the second battle of Bullecourt when there was a German counterattack on part of the captured Hindenburg Line near Riencourt being defended by the 54th Infantry Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. He returned to Australia in December 1917, passed away on 5 March 1949 and is honoured on the Mosman War Memorial and the honour board at St Luke's Anglican Church in Mosman.

Lieutenant Howard Bowden Fletcher, DFC, of Mosman was an auctioneer prior to his enlistment on 14 January 1915. He embarked on service from Sydney on board HMAT *Suevic* on 13 June 1915. Fletcher served with the 12th Light Horse Regiment and the No. 1 Squadron Australian Flying Corps during World War I. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for conspicuous bravery in air combats and attacking ground objectives. When Lieutenant Fletcher returned to Australia on 23 December 1918 he continued to live in our community and passed away on 10 April 1967.

Many in the North Shore electorate will know the name Bill Purdy. He is a local Mosman resident and a member of the Mosman RSL Sub-Branch. He served as a pilot in the Royal Australian Air Force with the 463rd Lancaster Bomber Squadron. We like to chat about Lancaster bombers because my grandfather was also a Lancaster bomber pilot. He flew an incredible 37 missions over Nazi Germany and Europe, which was an enormous feat while facing overwhelming dangers. Almost 51 per cent of all Allied aircrew were killed in operations, with only 24 per cent surviving the war unscathed. Bill was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and later the Legion of Honour by France for his service. He is still an active member of the Mosman RSL Sub-Branch.

The last local serviceman I would like to reflect on is a resident originally from Neutral Bay, Douglas Sandow. During the Second World War he was a flying officer completing operational tours flying B-24 Liberators with the No.12 Squadron and B-25 Mitchells with the No. 2 Squadron. The most emotional mission came after the war when he supported the repatriation of Australian prisoners of war from Singapore. Douglas has described the immense horror and sadness he witnessed during the war. He is an active member of the Kirribilli RSL Sub-Branch. I thank all our local sub-branches and service men and women past, present and future.

### OATLANDS GOLF CLUB

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:46:50):** No matter how empathetic we may be, one can never imagine the grief that tears a family apart unless it has been experienced personally. On a stifling February night seven children, buoyed by negotiated independence, set off to buy ice cream from the local store a few minutes away. A week later four of those beautiful children, hit by an out-of-control ute on that fateful journey to buy ice cream, were buried by their devastated parents. It is a tragedy beyond belief, completely unimaginable and surreal. Whether or not you have children, it is impossible not to be completely shaken by this loss of innocence and by the inexplicable nature of something so seemingly horrific.

Indeed, the entire nation was numbed with heartache. We were inspired as the respective parents, Leila, Danny, Bridget and Craig, faced this tragedy with stoicism, dignity and grace in the most public of ways. They are good people with hearts of gold and their warmth toward others is genuine. In their darkest days they found light in their hearts to illuminate a stunned nation. Unsurprisingly, the site of the tragedy has become a memorial. On a recent visit to the edge of the Oatlands Golf Club, where these beautiful souls perished, the local member, Geoff Lee, and I met with the families. Draped on the broken fence were crosses, rosary beads, candles, flowers, teddy bears, photos and other trinkets people had left in memory. Wreaths and crosses were on a large tree that symbolically overhangs the entirety of where the children fell.

About a metre away from the tree another small table with a schoolbag and other items marked the spot where Veronique, aged just 11, passed. I know the Abdallah family but I never knew the children. I have only ever heard of their sweet nature and desire to help others, including their participation in a weekly feeding of the needy. I was there because the family has effectively been ordered to remove the memorial from the golf course's land. Yes, that is right. I imagine there is a lot of grey in that particular statement but a request like this, only four months after the first hit to the family, could very easily be interpreted as insensitive. Geoff Lee and I met with the parents and listening to their heartbreak is something one would never wish on anyone. Over a period the makeshift people's memorial has been visited by thousands. A temporary fence has been erected.

For those familiar with golf, the memorial was in an area known as the rough. It has a negligible effect on the game, especially if you hit a straight ball. The golf course is privately owned and as such is within its rights to ask the family to move the memorial outside the boundary fence. But there is the law and then there is humanity. I would imagine that a large number of the 1,200 members of the club would be mortified by the unwillingness of the club's leadership to create a long-lasting solution that serves to honour the memory of the children and at the same time show the compassion our nation would expect. In a week or so the board will meet to discuss this issue. Thankfully, it seems its tone may have changed a little after having observed the goodwill from the family in removing the memorial from the edge of the golf course, which would have been incredibly difficult. The board has now invited one of the parents to address the board meeting.

While this is a positive step forward, it is difficult to imagine how hard that will be. As one of the parents told me, they feel as though they have to beg for something like this for their children. The hurt is still incredibly raw. I am a keen golfer and have played for over 25 years but I have not played that course, nor do I know the club. I have a sense of what is right and what is wrong, and a knowledge of how the golfing fraternity thinks. It is wrong to put these families, who have already suffered so much, through more anguish. It is wrong to dismiss grief as finite or to use rules and regulations, in this case to the letter of the law. It is wrong to pretend this tragedy never happened. It is wrong to miss the impact of this directive issued to the family.

I am not attacking the club, nor have I made this issue public prior to today. The purpose of today is to implore the Oatlands Golf Club to work with the family and to take the lead on an issue that has the potential to

show the best of their humanity. Like Geoff Lee, I am willing to work with both parties and any stakeholder to create a solution, and there is a solution. The tree I referred to earlier sits at the middle point of an arc in an imaginary semicircle from the boundary fence. It would equate to approximately 40 square metres of land not part of the fairway of the golf course. There is the potential to create a beautiful and respectful garden befitting the children. It could have safety fencing if the club is worried about golf mishits. There could be tiered hedges and four small, elegant sandstone columns, each with the names of the angels lost.

Antony, Angelina, Sienna and Veronique deserve no less. They captured a nation's heart and died in the most tragic of circumstances. There is a chance to do good. The family has offered to cover the expenses of the garden area. An elegant and negotiated memorial that fits within the course's landscape has the potential to be a very good solution. A peaceful and respectful place, it would have the capacity to signify the best of us as Australians. I reiterate my hope that the Oatlands Golf Club will enable a solution to this incredibly sad circumstance. I know it can do something positive but, more than that, it can do something right. The decision rests with the club's board and its members. I ask those with the capacity to make this decision to look into their hearts, imagine the grief of the family and do what they can to give them some peace in their otherwise broken lives and to match the mourning of a nation through their acts of kindness. They are desperately needed.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Lakemba. On Sunday I was at the memorial, which is around the corner from my in-laws.

### **NARRANDERA FISHERIES CENTRE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:53:10):** For almost 60 years the Narrandera Fisheries Centre has been at the forefront of producing and protecting iconic native fish species like Murray cod and golden perch. Now these talented fish ecologists, researchers and scientists have become the saviours of those Australian species. Today I celebrate the work of the Narrandera Fisheries Centre, which has become not only the nursery of our State's native fish, but also their Noah's ark. Last year the centre played a vital part in the mission to rescue fish from the Darling River to protect them from devastating fish kills. It became the refuge for 20 huge Murray cod, with the potential to produce more than 100,000 fingerlings a year. The Narrandera Fisheries Centre has become one of the most important players in protecting our native fish. Our native species are under extreme pressure. Their habitat has been invaded by European carp, producing 10 times the amount of eggs of native species like Murray cod.

Impacting on the vital habitat of our native fish has also been the drain of years of drought and the devastation of last summer's bushfires. The local extinctions of species like the southern pygmy perch or purple spotted gudgeon is a tide the centre is fighting to reverse. This is being done through a ramping up of breeding programs, and world-class research. The Narrandera Fisheries Centre has been boosted by a \$4.5 million redevelopment by the Government. This is adding new ponds and buildings, improving technology and helping the facility to become home to one of the State's largest ever breeding programs. This funding injection will increase breeding capacity by 150 per cent, and will play a huge role in meeting the State's target of producing 2.5 million native fish each year and returning them to our waterways.

The centre is more than just a spawning ground for native species: It has become a leading researcher in understanding fish genetics, the effectiveness of fishways, stocking, and biodiversity in freshwater systems, and finding ways to stop alien species such as carp and goldfish through biological controls and physical barriers. With its brand-new \$1 million freshwater research laboratory it is helping to improve the environment of native fish, not just bolstering their numbers. Marty Asmus and his team in Narrandera are making the most of this investment. The centre is a leader in understanding freshwater systems and habitat. Fish surveys can now be undertaken from a sample of water and assessing the environmental DNA from a volume no bigger than a coffee cup. This work is helping to understand the difference in locations around the State to inform breeding and restocking efforts.

Fish bred from the Lachlan River are returned to the Lachlan; those from Menindee go back to the lakes and the Darling. While they may be bred far from home, the centre ensures they return to the locations previous generations successfully adapted to. This concept may sound simple enough, but in reality it is an extensive process adding to the complexities of breeding native fish, and one that leads to greater survival rates once fish are returned to these waterways. These small samples are also being used to investigate the health of various waterways and the prevalence of invasive species. This information is helping to shape pest management, and can be used as part of wider efforts to remove carp from our river systems. Rounding out this huge variety of research are studies to understand the age of fish, which in turn inform breeding efforts, rescue for fish more susceptible to blackwater events and fish kills, and an understanding of our native species.

At a statewide level, \$10 million is being invested into the fish rescue strategy. I am proud of the key role Narrandera is playing to restore our native fish populations. While we look forward to later this year when millions

of native fish will be released into the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee, Macquarie and Murray catchments to help restock the Darling River downstream of Brewarrina, the Narrandera Fisheries Centre is looking further into the future. Their ultimate goal is for fish to recruit themselves in the wild, increasing their population naturally without human interference. As Marty Asmus puts it, a Murray cod can live for more than 50 years, so programs at the centre must also span half a century to truly understand the impact of their efforts. I look forward to seeing the Narrandera Fisheries Centre's work continue well into the future.

#### TRIBUTE TO DR FRANCIS CLEMENT CHAPMAN

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:58:06):** It is with a heavy heart I inform the House of the passing of a local legend in our community, Dr Francis Clement Chapman. Dr Chapman, or Dr Frank as he was endearingly known, passed away on Tuesday 12 May at around 4.00 a.m. He was 88 years of age. They were certainly 88 years packed with joy, passion and achievement. Frank was born in Taree. He attended Taree High School and The Shore School in Sydney. He was a gifted musician who played the violin. He excelled in maths and science. Upon leaving school in 1950, he placed in the top 20 in the State. He began studying medicine in 1951 at the University of Sydney and resided at Wesley College.

After graduation, Frank completed his residency at St George hospital, which is where he met his future wife, Ann. Frank remained at St George hospital for 50 years, working in his chosen fields of obstetrics and gynaecology. Dr Chapman delivered thousands of babies over the years, often for multiple generations of the same family. He was grateful to be in a position to deliver babies to the mothers he had delivered 20 to 30 years earlier. In this sense, Dr Frank had a special and unique relationship with the local community. For many locals he was the first person they met; he was their first interaction with the world. During Frank's eulogy, his son, Dave, reflected on the number of times he heard, "Oh, yes, Dr Chapman. He delivered me, my kids, my sister and my brother."

I can only imagine how rewarding this must have been for Frank. His passion for his work was evident: He saw it as a vocation, never as a job. Fittingly, Dave Chapman shared that even when he was organising Frank's thanksgiving service, he would answer the phone and hear, "Dr Frank? I'm so sorry! He delivered me", or, "He delivered my kids." Dave also shared that Dr Frank never lacked formal recognition. His academic excellence and professional proficiency gained him entry as a fellow of several royal colleges of medicine. There is no doubt that it takes a gifted man to excel as Frank did. But beyond that, it takes a great man to leave such an impression on so many people. Those who know Frank do not refer to him just as a wonderful doctor, but also as a wonderful man. In Dave's words, "Kind, considerate, thoughtful and compassionate, Frank really did bring joy into the world and we who loved him most know it will be a lesser place for his passing."

Part of Frank's popularity was his range of interests outside of his profession. Frank had a strong passion for music. He was a fabulous violin player and in later years he was a violin maker and a violin teacher. His students gave him reviews that were just as good as those his patients gave him. Dave shared that his music even catalysed his relationship with Ann when he asked her to accompany him on piano at a social gathering where he was playing the violin. One of his colleagues vividly remembers Dr Frank sitting in the labour ward one day waiting for a delivery, entertaining staff and patients by playing the violin to help pass the time. Like all things Frank did, he did it well, later gaining the distinction of being recognised in the *Violin and Bow Makers of Australia* publication. Over time, he made 10 violins and two cellos. He was working on a third cello when he passed away.

One of my last interactions with Frank was when I met with him and Ann at St Mark's Anglican Church, South Hurstville. I remember Frank being typically positive, chirpy and upbeat. What also struck me, as it always did, was Frank's and Ann's beautiful marriage. Frank put his obligations as a father and husband above all else, which is something I strive to replicate in my life. There is no doubt that our community will be poorer for the loss of Dr Francis Clement Chapman. His life brought so many other lives into the world and left a lasting impact on our community. Above all, he will be remembered as a husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, colleague and friend.

#### INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:02:45):** I will shed light on issues being faced by international students in my electorate of Coogee, across Australia and New South Wales. My electorate of Coogee directly neighbours the University of New South Wales and subsequently is home to a large number of international students who live, work and study in my community. The electorate of Coogee is home to a great many academics and support staff who derive their income from the higher education sector, many of whom have reached out to me to express concern about how international students are being treated. In 2018 the University of New South Wales received over \$700 million in revenue from international students, making up over 57 per cent of total student revenue.

The university is now facing a \$600 million budget shortfall as international student numbers have fallen by 30 per cent. In 2021 and again in 2022 the university's prediction is for losses of \$450 million. Let me be very clear: International students are extremely important to the Australian, New South Wales and Coogee communities. International students are not only important to the higher education sector but also are hugely important to the people, businesses and local economies that surround our universities. International students contribute over \$32 billion to the Australian economy, \$13 billion of which is in New South Wales, and contribute nearly 50,000 full-time equivalent jobs in New South Wales, which accounts for 1.5 per cent of the total employment in this State.

Those students live among us, share our communities, rent properties, pay council rates and the vast majority work and pay taxes in Australia as well. They spend money in our local supermarkets, they eat at Isabella's in Randwick, they watch movies at The Ritz in The Spot, and they definitely go to the Coogee Bay on a Saturday night. When a pipe is leaking, they call local plumbers; when they get sick, they visit local doctors and pick up their prescriptions from local chemists. Businesses across the Coogee electorate benefit from our international students, as both loyal customers and hardworking employees.

International students do far more than just add dollars to our economy. Wherever international students live they will be important parts of communities and economies. The benefits international students bring extend well beyond the economy. They volunteer in our communities, add to Australia's cultural diversity and enhance our international standing. They play many different roles in our communities: They are our colleagues, friends, neighbours, tenants, customers and classmates. Generations of international students to Australia and New South Wales have contributed to the goodwill between our homes and theirs, between our different countries.

How have we thanked these students for coming here to study and contributing to our lives? How have we protected the future of a globally respected Australian higher education industry? How have we recognised the financial hardship that has befallen these students and supported them through the pandemic as they lost their jobs and were unable to leave our shores? Tens of thousands of international students who are still in Australia are doing it tough, all while living thousands of kilometres from home. Thousands more have been forced to abandon their studies, break their leases, quit their local jobs and fly home. They are unlikely to return to their studies in Australia and are likely to advise their friends and siblings to study elsewhere. Many of them are completely out of work, having to take out loans or rely on charities. Most of these students cannot just go home; it is not an option. What have we seen from this Government? Nothing. No support whatsoever.

Treating these students as cash cows, taking their money but refusing to support them when they need our help is not only immoral but also economically irresponsible. History tells us that austerity does not work during a recession. The Liberal Government has, at a Federal level, provided billions of dollars of support through the JobKeeper program—although I note that it was \$60 billion less than they thought they would be providing, after, shall we say, a minor accounting error. While Labor does not believe that the JobKeeper and JobSeeker programs cover enough of our communities, we have been supportive of the programs in principle. The vast majority of international students are not eligible for any Federal Government support, and the support being provided by the New South Wales Government is entirely inadequate. Why does the Liberal Government insist on austerity for a segment of the community that is in need of such help at this time? It is brutal, it is devoid of compassion and it is fiscally irresponsible—all unfortunate trademarks of this Government, the Premier and her Treasurer.

If we do not support these international students, our economy will suffer, as will their education—this year and for many years to come. The jobs that these students create will disappear, as will the revenue they provide to our universities and colleges. This will decimate our higher education sector, including the mass closure of institutions and the loss of tens of thousands of jobs, at a time when the sector is already suffering. NSW Labor calls on the Government to provide a \$60 million package to fund grants of up to \$1,100 for international students experiencing hardship. This support is desperately needed by the thousands of international students living in my electorate, and for those living across the State of New South Wales.

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (18:07:41):** I wish to correct the record. We heard the inaccuracies of members opposite trying to condemn this Government for its support of international students. There is nobody more in support of international students than the Coalition Government on this side of the House. Some weeks ago we announced a more than \$20 million package for emergency crisis housing for our international students. Recently—a couple of weeks ago—we announced another \$6 million for temporary visa holders, which will also affect our international students. Just today it was my privilege to sign off on another \$600,000 worth of small grants for our charities and government community sectors to allow them to provide food services for the community. I commend those charities for providing food services throughout the community, including to our international students.

### MACKSVILLE DISTRICT HOSPITAL

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (18:08:44):** On 27 May I had the pleasure and delight of showing the Deputy Premier of New South Wales, John Barilaro, through the new \$73 million Macksville District Hospital. This is an incredibly achievement for our community—a brand new hospital on a brand new site. It is simply a cradle-to-grave experience, a state-of-the-art facility that sets the gold standard in regional health care. It was designed in tandem with staff, a community advisory group and an Aboriginal reference group. Mark Tyler did his community proud in the work he did to bring everybody together. The new Macksville hospital was built with the healthcare needs of the mid North Coast community front and centre. It was built by an overwhelming number of local tradesman and contractors.

There is local Indigenous artwork on the walls and the lights were sourced from Bellingen's Planet Lighting, the Iggulden family's amazing company, which supplies lights all around the world, now including Macksville hospital theatre. The lead contractor, Hansen Yuncken, was led by a locally born and bred project manager, the magnificent Josh Crilley. He did a great job and was a great leader for the project, bringing it in early—just wonderful. Timber from our local timber plantations was used and O'Donnell & Hanlon, based at Kempsey, provided another great contribution from a local company. They built and installed all the medical cupboards, which are very important, and they are doing that in all new hospitals across New South Wales because they are simply great at what they do. I am so proud of that company.

The new facility includes 42 inpatient beds—single and double rooms, all with en suite bathrooms—and day procedure beds and treatment spaces. A big shout-out to the team at Tresillian and the work that the Hon. Bronnie Taylor and Treasurer Dominic Perrottet did to fund Tresillian across regional New South Wales. This will be the first Tresillian centre in the regions at the Macksville hospital, which will service the North Coast, the mid North Coast and the north-west of New South Wales. There is medical imaging and a maternity unit, which features fully equipped birthing rooms that will be nurse-led, complete with specialised birthing baths, generously donated by the BowraMacksville branch of the United Hospital Auxiliaries of NSW. The new health campus is home to community and allied health services, which includes numerous interview and consult rooms and a gymnasium area for patients and clients accessing physiotherapy.

The modern and spacious emergency department [ED] has a special area designed for our youngest patients, and next to the ED waiting area there will be an Aboriginal health liaison officer ready to help community members with their healthcare journey. The new Macksville hospital is also home to regional Australia's first Tresillian residential unit, as I mentioned. Irene Rowsell and her team from the Nambucca Valley Cancer Support Group are simply magnificent and they have their own special area and offices within the centre. Perioperative services staff will work in a state-of-the-art operating theatre suite, in a health facility providing the Nambucca Valley community with high-quality, contemporary and accessible care close to home. In a quiet space past the cafe is a reflection room, featuring the stunning stained glass windows from the chapel of the old hospital.

There are 18 bus trips to and from the Macksville hospital daily, which means the local community is better connected to its new facility. The old hospital remains on stand-by, should it be needed during the current coronavirus pandemic. Following the immediate situation, the old hospital will be decommissioned. I welcome any suggestions from the local community on what best to do with the old site. I had the absolute pleasure of getting around my community in the past week, talking to local groups and local champions as we announced the 2019 Community Building Partnership recipients. In Nambucca we saw Scotts Head Tennis Club receive \$30,000 towards replacing two hardcourt surfaces and improving drainage. On Friday I was at the Macksville Showground, which received \$44,000 for major electrical upgrade works. Well done to President Michael Ettelson and people such as Pete Trisley who have worked forever on improving and maintaining that great facility.

I also went to Wauchope on Friday and met with the volunteers of the United Hospital Auxiliaries and was able to announce \$8,740 for the purchase of a fully covered lockable trailer. I also dropped in and met with the very capable Caleb Rose, manager of the Wauchope Country Club, which received \$15,868 for an upgrade of ageing irrigation infrastructure and improved recycling capacity. The Wauchope Riding for the Disabled also received \$7,025 for a new roof to shelter riders, volunteers and horses in the tie-up and mounting area. Wauchope Men's Shed received \$5,056 towards upgrades to electrical wiring and lighting and Kempsey Men's Shed received \$20,000 towards a new bathroom. The magnificent swimming club received \$29,625 to replace eight starting blocks at the Kempsey pool. They are all exciting projects and I look forward to seeing their completion. I thank the volunteers who are incredible in putting those applications in and making those facilities brilliant.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I have swum many laps at Kempsey pool. That is wonderful news for the pool. Thank you.

### GRANVILLE WARATAH SOCCER FOOTBALL CLUB

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (18:14:17):** It gives me great pleasure to bring to the attention of the House the Granville Waratah Soccer Football Club, which is one of the oldest soccer clubs in western Sydney. The club has been using Robin Thomas Reserve, which is located in Parramatta, as its home field. Last year the soccer club had 288 members in 23 teams. Five full-field teams made the semifinals and two of those teams went on to make the grand final—well done to all the members involved. I also congratulate the All Age Division 5 white team that won the grand final match. I recognise and congratulate Brad Major from the All Age Men 5 White team on being awarded the Bill Henderson player of the year award, which recognises three very important characteristics: sportsmanship, leadership by words and actions, and effort and commitment to game day, training, the team and the club.

I also recognise and congratulate Meya Joe Maleko from the Under 11 Possums team on winning the young player of the year award. The soccer club is expecting to have 270 members in 20 teams this year. The membership is slightly down this year due to COVID-19, but is expected to grow again by 2021. I acknowledge the 2019 club committee members for their hard work and dedication throughout the season: Noel Dona, Andy Gianniotis, Tony Farrell, Vince Wyatt and Paul Murphy. Their hard work to help get the members on the field each week to play soccer each year is appreciated. I also mention the committee for 2020: Noel Dona, Vince Wyatt, Andy Gianniotis, Tony Farrell and Zac Farah. This year's efforts during an unusual time to get all members out on the field must be valued and congratulated. I applaud Vince Wyatt for 55 years of service on the committee and Noel Dona for 20 years of service on the committee—an outstanding achievement.

As the club continues to grow, Robin Thomas Reserve and adjoining James Ruse Reserve are now set for a makeover. The reserves provide a number of sport and recreation facilities including a cricket pitch, sporting fields, a skate park, a playground, water play and an amenities building. Currently Robin Thomas Reserve plays host to the Granville Waratahs and several other sporting teams. It also provides space for physical education lessons for nearby schools, including Arthur Phillip High School. The project will cost over \$1.2 million and the State Government has supported this project with a grant of \$934,000. The project includes the rebuilding of fields 1 and 2, including soil profile, drainage and irrigation. It includes the installation of cricket nets and lighting, and of amenities building including public toilets. The reserves play a major part in the Parramatta 2038 Community Strategic Plan, creating a connected series of parks and recreation spaces essential to enhancing community liveability.

We also look forward to the upgraded clubhouse as a result of the works in the nearby Parramatta Light Rail. I am sure that the council, Parramatta Light Rail and the club will work together to find the best solution to invest in such an important ground. The Granville Waratah Soccer Football Club is an important part of the community, not only for the physical health of the hundreds of players and their families but also for their mental health and wellbeing. It plays an important role in personal and physical development and mental health. I have been the acting sports Minister for some time, and it has proven to me the value of sport in our community. The Granville Waratah Soccer Football Club is a wonderful example to the rest of the community of how volunteers, the community and families come together to provide a valuable community hub that everyone can enjoy. It is part of the inner-city life of the Parramatta CBD. I wish all members of the Granville Waratah Soccer Football Club a safe and fun season.

### WESTCONNEX

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (18:18:59):** The Liberal Government promised WestConnex would mean less traffic on local roads. A year on, the cat is out of the bag. WestConnex has made inner west local traffic even worse—so much so that Transport for NSW is now proposing changes to major intersections in Haberfield, Ashfield and Leichhardt to try to manage the flow of traffic into the WestConnex tunnels. These changes are the equivalent of bandaids for a triple bypass. If they go ahead, they will make it harder for locals to go to the shops, school or work. It will make it harder to visit friends or family and, ironically, it will even make it harder for inner west residents to use the toll roads that are beneath their homes. Hundreds of inner west residents have spoken up about the changes and made submissions. Their message to the Liberal Government is very clear: Wrong way. Go back.

Haberfield and Ashfield have been subjected to years of dust and disruption from the WestConnex project. Now the Government is foisting poorly thought-out road changes on us that will further divide our suburbs and mean that we spend longer and longer in cars. Margaret, a resident of O'Connor Street, Haberfield, puts it best in her submission. She said, "Haberfield residents have already been unduly and negatively impacted as a community by the WestConnex development through the loss of housing and living in proximity to major roads with the attendant noise, dust, building cracking and trucks. To ask the same community to also lose ease of access to journeys in and out of their suburb is totally unreasonable." As part of the proposal, the Government plans to

remove the traffic lights at Dalhousie Street and Parramatta Road and to remove the right-hand turn in and out of the City West Link at Waratah Street.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Government members will remain silent.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** These changes are designed to stop rat-running between the City West Link and Parramatta Road as drivers try to avoid the traffic jams around the WestConnex tunnels. Instead, locals report they will make it harder for Haberfield residents to access the city CBD and will actually increase rat-running on local streets. Vivien, who lives on Rogers Avenue, says, "An observation of the intersection of Dalhousie Street and Parramatta Road during any morning peak hour, even with the lights, clearly illustrates the safety issue if the lights were removed. Motorists on Parramatta Road queueing across the intersection already regularly causes traffic to bank back on Dalhousie Street all the way back to Ramsay Street and further into Five Dock. The changes at both Parramatta Road and Dobroyd Parade will force traffic into streets with schools and childcare centres, creating another major safety issue. I believe these safety issues alone would be irresponsible, an accident waiting to happen, but access into and out of Haberfield for local residents will also be made near impossible."

Leanne and Paul, who live on Hawthorne Parade, also note that backing up traffic around Sloane Street is likely to impact ambulances getting in and out of the new ambulance station. These concerns being raised by locals are not small inconveniences. If those changes go ahead they will fundamentally impact on the daily lives of inner west residents and put their safety at risk. The clearest example is how these changes would impact the safety of local kids trying to get to and from school. Removing the traffic lights at Dalhousie Street will funnel an additional 100 cars an hour onto Bland Street, an already busy street in a school zone immediately outside Haberfield Public School. Further down Bland Street, congestion will make it harder for students at Bethlehem College, De La Salle Ashfield and St Vincent's, while the changes at Timbrell Park will force more cars to use the roads around Dobroyd Point Public School.

Parents are already worried about their kids riding or walking to school, let alone with extra cars and trucks speeding along the local roads around them. As we all return to school and work post-pandemic, we need to encourage walking and riding for short trips. Making local roads safer, particularly around our schools, is key to that ambition. While the community broadly supports the proposed pedestrian overpasses and associated cycling infrastructure, they categorically reject the changes to local roads being proposed by the Government and Transport for NSW. I will leave the final word with Dee, a resident of Bland Street, who said, "We have accommodated the travel needs of greater Sydney, we bore the brunt of construction of WestConnex, we live with the traffic fallout, and now our local access to our own suburbs will be denied." It is just not good enough and these traffic changes are categorically rejected by the residents of Haberfield and Ashfield.

#### **PENRITH ELECTORATE PROJECTS**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (18:24:10):** I update the House on the aerotropolis, the north-south rail and the immensely positive impacts on my community of Penrith. I was proud to join with the Prime Minister, the Premier, the Minister for Transport and Roads, and my colleague the Federal member for Lindsay, Melissa McIntosh, at the Western Sydney Airport's Experience Centre last week to make the announcement of both the Commonwealth and State Governments' commitment to the delivery of a new north-south rail line.

The north-south rail line, to be known as the Sydney Metro-Western Sydney Airport, is a key deliverable of the Western Sydney City Deal. It is the hallmark of the city deal project that has brought eight councils from across western Sydney together. This project will see \$11 billion invested into western Sydney, creating a true north-south connection. The first part of this rail line will run from St Mary's south through areas like Orchard Hills and Luddenham, where there will be two new train stations; to pick up at the airport site, where there will be two train stations; then it will make its way around to the aerotropolis core. It is a sizable investment by both governments into public transport across western Sydney. When we say "nation building", that is exactly what this rail line will do.

Over time this new North South Rail Link will link south to Macarthur and north to the Metro North West, creating a genuine outer Sydney metropolitan train line. It is about making sure that people can move around their community and get close to the jobs they need. This project alone will generate 14,000 jobs over the life of its construction and forms a core part of the State Government's \$100 billion infrastructure program. One thing we know in this post-COVID world is that projects equals jobs, and there is no bigger project than this one in western Sydney. It builds on top of the work that we have already done around the aerotropolis core, particularly from an investment attraction perspective, bringing global businesses into western Sydney as long-term partners in the development of the aerotropolis and taking full economic advantage of the catalytic decision to invest in Western Sydney Airport.

Last week once again I was able to join with the Premier and the member for Mulgoa for the rezoning of the first precinct in the aerotropolis, the Mamre Road precinct. Over 150 hectares is being rezoned for job creation and investment in things like industrial activity, freight logistics and digital data centres. We definitely want those types of jobs across western Sydney, particularly in the aerotropolis precinct. It is fantastic to see my colleague the member for Mulgoa, Tanya Davies, building on her election commitment election around widening Mamre Road, which is now being backed up with rezoning to support greater job creation across what is already a thriving precinct.

These are clear examples of how we are bringing western Sydney to life, investing billions of dollars in road, rail and airport infrastructure, and creating jobs closer to where people live. This is a clear example of this Government's vision and commitment for western Sydney. The aerotropolis is no longer just a line on a map. The North South Rail Link is no longer just a dream for people in western Sydney. These projects are real, these dollars are real and if they are not underway now, they will be underway by the end of the year. On top of that there is a continuation of local road programs. The Northern Road continues to move at pace, once again creating strong north-south links between the Penrith and Nepean regions and Macarthur, picking up the airport precinct on the way through.

Yesterday I visited Jordan Springs Public School, a new school built in a modular, trailblazing design for the construction of schools in this growing part of the greater Penrith area. Whilst Jordan Springs is not in my electorate, a number of schools across Penrith have been housing the students who will go into the Jordan Springs Public School. The principal is excited to see 400 new students attending Jordan Springs Public School at the start of term 3. Whether it is new schools like Jordan Springs Public School, major road projects like the Northern Road upgrade, the rezoning of precincts like the Mamre Road precinct for greater job creation and greater investment attraction, or the mega projects like the North South Rail Link and the Western Sydney Airport, the key focus of this Government is creating jobs in western Sydney.

#### **FRANCIS ROAD OVERPASS**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:29:13):** Once again I speak about the importance of upgrading the Francis Road overpass in my electorate. The Francis Road overpass is a State road in the suburb of Rooty Hill and is the main thoroughfare to provide access to Mount Druitt Hospital, Mount Druitt Police Station, the newly built Fire and Rescue NSW station and the recently opened Sydney Coliseum. There are concerns that in peak traffic times fire, ambulance and police services will be unable to mobilise a quick response in the case of a life-threatening emergency as there are no suitable alternative routes. This road is heavily congested during peak times and traffic comes to a standstill, causing frustration to motorists and dangerous situations where emergency services are delayed.

Over the past five years I have voiced my concerns, yet my calls appear to be ignored by the Government. The call for this upgrade has also been made by Blacktown City Council and my Federal colleague, the member for Chifley, the Hon. Ed Husic. Blacktown City Council constructed the Francis Road overpass in the 1980s as a two-lane bridge when this section of the road was a local road. Back then the council could foresee increased congestion and therefore constructed the foundations to cater for a four-lane expansion. The council recently estimated the cost to upgrade this road at approximately \$146 million. The project will include upgrades to roundabouts and sets of traffic lights in the area to help increase traffic control and ease congestion when approaching the overpass.

Recently Blacktown City Council made an application for Federal funding, as it has not been successful in gaining the attention of the New South Wales Government. As this is a State-owned road it is the responsibility of the New South Wales Government to include this upgrade in the State budget. Over the past five years council has been unsuccessful in obtaining funding for this important piece of infrastructure. The council has recently applied for Federal funding. I call on the State Government to support the council's application and to partner with the Federal Government to deliver this project.

Approximately 24,000 cars use the Francis Road overpass on a daily basis. The need for expansion of the overpass was identified many years ago. Blacktown City Council has been requesting State funding for this road expansion for many years and has been continually ignored. In addition, the upgrade to this infrastructure will provide an opportunity for a boost to the local economy, reduce traffic congestion and improve road safety. Despite the reduced cost of the project, given that the council has already constructed the foundations, the people of my electorate continue to be ignored by the Government, which refuses to acknowledge this issue. I fear that this continued inaction will cause the unnecessary death of members of my electorate when emergency services will not be able to respond in a timely manner. The complete disregard for the people of my electorate for all these years is shameful.

## COVID-19

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (18:32:47):** The COVID-19 pandemic, like past disasters, is encouraging communities like mine in Pittwater and industries to think differently about the way we live and work. The Great Plague of London and fire of 1666 led to the creation of the city's first planning controls, with new wider streets, thicker common walls and other measures to slow the spread of fire and pestilence. Subsequent outbreaks of diseases like cholera and typhoid led to the creation of sewerage and water supply systems in that city, and the great smog of the early 1950s led to clear air legislation. Closer to home we have faced many furies over the past several months, with devastating bushfires, crippling drought, and now disease.

While the pandemic has prompted planning to consider how it can play a role in the economic recovery, one of the unexpected and positive consequences of the COVID-19 restrictions is seeing the way in which people are rediscovering public spaces, exploring their neighbourhoods and finding new ways to repurpose untraditional public spaces like local streets and roadways. The sheer number of people exiting their homes during the period of the toughest restrictions has exposed the limitations of some of our current public spaces. I have seen these limitations on some of the more popular public spaces in my electorate during COVID-19, like the Barrenjoey Lighthouse walk and some of the coastal walks, not to mention our public beaches to which access was restricted.

I have noticed how many of our footpaths and pavements were designed to prioritise vehicles, not people, which means that it has been difficult to cope with the sorts of demands that we have seen from the public during COVID-19. Similar to the pandemics and disasters of the past, as a community we must find a way to rethink the way we use our public spaces, the way we design our streets and our footpaths, and the benefits of including cycleways and linear parks in designing our urban centres. In my dual role as member for Pittwater and Minister for Planning and Public Spaces I was encouraged to see the Northern Beaches Council Mayor Michael Regan recently launch a call for ideas from residents across the beaches to come up with new ways to help businesses, create more public spaces and allow more room for everyone for social distancing.

I throw my support behind this call to reclaim the streets and car parks to help businesses and provide greater public spaces to the members of my community in Pittwater and all communities up and down the beaches. I understand some of the ideas being thrown around in my electorate include turning the back of the Terrey Hills shops car park into a piazza during the evenings, making Bungan Street in Mona Vale a pedestrian-only area and finding a way to resolve the four crossings at Avalon Beach, which is a puzzle almost as bedevilling as the Seven Bridges of Königsberg. This campaign for ideas complements the Government's new grant scheme "Streets as Shared Spaces", which encourages communities to consider how they are using public spaces differently as a result of COVID-19, and provides funding to projects that make simple changes to our public spaces and roadways to aid social distancing. We have also launched a pinpoint map where residents can drop their ideas in for councils to consider.

I have enjoyed reading some of the public space ideas and some of the things residents of the Northern Beaches love on the map. Residents in my electorate have suggested realignment of bike paths along Barrenjoey Road and The Serpentine and accessibility upgrades to viewing decks, and have shown their love for walks and cycle routes across the electorate. I encourage residents to make as many contributions as possible before the feedback on the map closes this Friday 19 June 2020. Cities, suburbs and regional towns have been shaped by disaster throughout history and have responded with newer and stronger systems in the way people move, socialise, work and play. This is happening again in the current pandemic. I am certainly interested in seeing how my community and communities across New South Wales rebound and regenerate after COVID-19. As Jan Gehl once opined, "First life, then spaces, then buildings. The other way around never works."

## TRIBUTE TO BRYCE GAUDRY, FORMER MEMBER FOR NEWCASTLE

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (18:36:56):** On 4 October 2019 former member for Newcastle Bryce Gaudry passed away at the age of 76. To the people he shared this Chamber with for 16 years he was a politician and to the people of Newcastle he was a steadfast voice, but he was also a loving husband to Barbara, an adored father to Justine and Brooke, and a doting grandfather to Hannah, Jesse, Lily and Luella. To me, he was a mentor and a friend. When I first met Bryce 20 years ago you would walk down Beaumont Street with him and every second person would say hello. He would stop, turn, look them in the eye and give them his undivided attention. He was a man of the people.

Although we all knew that, it became most evident when news of Bryce's passing broke. Tributes started pouring in acknowledging his compassion, his integrity and his courage of conviction. From his time as a teacher, a former student shared a memory of Bryce as the sports master at Newtown High encouraging a group of teenage boys to do every sport under the sun and finally convincing them to give ballet a go. Another described how Bryce helped her leave domestic violence and get into safe and stable housing, while a man commented on how being

associated with both Barbara and Bryce deeply enriched his life. In guiding me through my own political journey he taught me one of his own core principles: To thine own self be true. To Bryce that meant to adhere to your moral compass and ideology, no matter who was trying to tear you down. Bryce's ideology was progressive. He had a passion for equality, equity and social justice, with a strong focus on our Indigenous community, workers' rights and the environment.

Both Barbara and Bryce were very strong conservationists and were extremely active in the struggle to retain and enhance Glenrock Lagoon. They were both proud when it became a State conservation area. When he was the State member Bryce spent years working towards a Stockton Bight coastal park with the Green Corridor Coalition to secure a green corridor from the Watagans to the coast. He was very involved with the NSW Coastal Council and as recently as 2018 participated in student marches for climate action. Long before he was elected, Bryce was proving his worth in the political world. In all of the schools where he taught, including Newtown, Jesmond and Swansea, he was the Teachers Federation rep. Bryce and Barbara joined the Labor Party in the early 1980s. Shortly after that Bryce became a delegate and then the Secretary of the Newcastle Federal Electorate Council.

In 1985 he took the position of campaign director for Allan Morris and remained in that position until he was elected to the New South Wales Parliament in 1991. For almost 16 years and four successive terms, Bryce worked for the people of Newcastle as their MP, along with trusted staff John, Bruce and Marina. He campaigned for local train manufacturing, a new grandstand at the former Energy Australia Stadium and a world-class acute care hospital system in Newcastle. In 2005 he successfully opposed the removal of the rail line into the city and totally opposed the sale of the State-owned power station. His large political margins demonstrated his popularity within his electorate. Following his exit from the Labor Party, Bryce stood as an independent candidate in 2007 and although he was not successful in that election it did not stop him standing up for what he believed was right. Similarly, when he received his diagnosis of pancreatic cancer he did not go into his shell; he came out campaigning.

He took on two more causes: first, for the legalisation of cannabis oil to ease the effects of cancer treatment; and, second, for improved access to palliative care services. By this time I was the member for Newcastle and through the Palliative Care campaign I had another opportunity to work with Bryce. He had not changed: He still stood for the ideology of equality, equity and social justice. He was still fierce in his determination, steadfast in his convictions and true to himself. Bryce, thank you. You always gave your all. You did yourself, your family and Newcastle extremely proud, and you are very, very missed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** They are fine words from the member for Newcastle. I pay my respects to the Gaudry family and offer my condolences. Everything the member for Newcastle said about Bryce Gaudry is true.

#### **NORTHERN TABLELANDS MEALS ON WHEELS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:42:07):** During the COVID-19 pandemic few have had their lives more disrupted in our communities due to social distancing and isolation than our elderly. Those classified as "vulnerable" and/or over the age of 70 were quite sensibly advised to not leave their homes, finding themselves reliant on friends and family to undertake their day-to-day chores. In many ways—at least across the Northern Tablelands—our dedicated Meals on Wheels services have averted a humanitarian crisis on their own. For those who live alone or with minimal family nearby this has been a period of sorrow, isolation and, for many, depression.

For many on the Northern Tablelands in that vulnerable category over 70 years of age Meals on Wheels has been their only link to the outside world for months now, ensuring that once a day the elderly receive a hot meal, a welfare check and most importantly a "hello" to break the silence and the monotony. During the pandemic, the demand for Meals on Wheels increased more than 50 per cent while, unfortunately, the number of drivers and volunteers halved. That is because many of the volunteers for Meals on Wheels fell into the vulnerable category of being over the age of 70 and found themselves housebound. At Bingara Meals on Wheels, coordinators Judy Northcott and Jan Kane had to scramble to find drivers after their volunteer base went from 15 to just two.

At Warialda, Marie Dawson lost three of her 26 volunteers. Demand on Glen Innes Meals on Wheels skyrocketed, with 220 meals a week being delivered by staff from Life Choices—Support Services with minimal volunteer support. Moree Care provides 100 meals a week to vulnerable people in Moree and the isolated community of Mungindi, on the Queensland border, had its 52 individual volunteers reduced to 13 and its eight community transport volunteers slashed to just one volunteer driver.

In response to self-isolation, Executive Officer Michelle Harrison and her team, Belinda Gough, Lorraine Abrahamsen, Rachel Egan and Skyela Gillon, worked together on a click-and-collect grocery service, which

ensured their clients were still able to access essential items from the convenience of their homes. The hardest hit service across the Northern Tablelands was at Inverell, which went from having 95 volunteers pre-COVID to just 15 at the height of the pandemic. Thankfully, coordinator Beck Brannan received help from Inverell Shire Council. I thank the general manager, Paul Henry, who did a brilliant job redirecting his staff from the closed library and tourist information centre to help Meals on Wheels and keep them busy. Likewise, Inverell taxis chipped in and did the same, lifting the service's ranks back to 50 delivery drivers and volunteers. Beck thinks that many of those will stay on now that restrictions are starting to ease.

With many of the well-known charities choosing to not take donated goods during the pandemic, Armidale Uralla Meals on Wheels found itself inundated with donated goods. Manager Kerryn Williams and her support staff sorted goods and distributed what they could to the local women's shelter, St Vincent de Paul Society's Freeman House and other organisations that rely on donations. They did this on top of providing meals, sanitising delivery items and educating the many new volunteers who put their hands up to fill the shortage. Sally Schofield from Armidale Regional Council Home Support Service, which services Guyra and Tingha, found her menu dramatically changed. Alongside the daily meals, toilet paper—when there was none on the shelves—hand sanitiser, Glen 20 and face masks were all distributed to clients, reducing their need to leave their homes. The Meals on Wheels motto of "more than just a meal" has never been truer than right now in 2020.

The donations resulted in many emotional stories. Beryl Dahlenberg from Black Mountain celebrated her ninety-eighth birthday and was visited at the door with flowers and a delivery of chocolates and cards. When Eric Heagney sadly passed away at the age of 88 in Guyra on 15 May, Guyra Home Support Service coordinator Toni Kirkman was who the family wanted at Eric's funeral, despite only 10 people being allowed to attend—such was the impact that Meals on Wheels and Toni had on Eric's life. Yes, some Meals on Wheels staff are paid, but the vast majority are volunteers. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude for supporting our most vulnerable during this most difficult time. I pay tribute to them and take my hat off to them all.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I reiterate the praise for our wonderful Meals on Wheels across New South Wales.

#### **RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (18:47:28):** I update the House on the massive investments in school infrastructure that are occurring in the electorate of Riverstone. Late last year I saw the first project roll off a long pipeline of projects, when the Quakers Hill East Public School upgrade was completed with 12 new flexible learning spaces, a new performance studio, a new digital hub, and an extension and refurbishment of the administration facilities. That was followed by the completion of the Riverbank Public School upgrade at the start of 2020, which comprised another 15 new flexible learning spaces, the expansion of administration and staff areas, a covered outdoor learning area, additional student amenities and shade structures as part of that project. In term 1 of 2020 the Riverstone High School upgrade was completed, which included 12 new flexible teaching spaces, an upgrade to student change rooms and amenities, an upgrade to the canteen and refurbished administration facilities.

Nearing completion at this time is the Schofields Public School upgrade, where 27 new flexible learning spaces are being constructed, as well as a new staff administration area, a new library, upgraded amenities and a covered outdoor learning area. Construction has commenced on the next project, which is in the Alex Avenue precinct, or Schofields south, where a new primary school is being built—due for completion in time for the first school day of 2021—using the modular construction method we heard about in question time today. There will be 19 flexible learning spaces, new administration and staff areas, a new hall, a new library and a new covered outdoor learning area. Another project that is on the cards is some parking spaces for Marsden Park Public School. This is a unique circumstance because a major road upgrade has meant that there is almost no legal parking anywhere within the vicinity of the frontage of the school. At the same time, there is a population boom and a huge burst of enrolments, so it is a really difficult task for parents and visitors to find anywhere to park near the school.

I have been advocating for a solution using a parcel of road left over by the road realignment and I am hoping we are getting close to that. I am presenting 267 signatures, which were raised in about 48 hours, to the relevant Ministers in the next couple of days to see if we can reach a conclusion on that project to get some relief for the parents at that school. Also in the pipeline is a new primary school near Tallawong Station in the precinct that the planning department romantically called "Area 20". That primary school is due for construction by the end of this term of Parliament. Also in that same simpler time frame is the upgrade to John Palmer Public School and The Ponds into Glenwood High School.

All of those will be receiving additional capacity to cope with the growth of the region. As this long list of project shows, this Government is investing a massive amount of money for all of these projects in just one electorate. Clearly we are in the centre of the north-west growth centre, but there is a similar story going on in the

south-west and in many other places around New South Wales because this Government is investing more than \$6 billion over four years in new school infrastructure, an amount far greater than anything that has been provided before—certainly greater than has ever been delivered.

At the same time there is a recalibration of the Nirimba Collegiate arrangements between a collection of high schools in my area, which includes Riverstone High School, Quakers Hill High School, Seven Hills High School and Wyndham College. The three high schools have been year 7 to year 10 schools and Wyndham College has been the year 11 to year 12 school for the collegiate. That is changing from the beginning of 2021, when those three high schools will each take senior students, thereby, increasing its capacity for secondary enrolments over the coming years across a whole region. There will be further investments made to ensure we can cope with that as those schools take on those senior years.

While all of this is happening, the Cooler Classrooms program is rolling out. This Government is investing \$500 million to ensure that about one thousand schools in New South Wales receive air conditioning. This has never been attempted on such a scale before. Within the Riverstone electorate 10 schools are receiving air conditioning in round one of the program. Some of them have it now as part of those upgrade projects or new buildings; others will be receiving it in the near future. I will be lobbying very hard for the rest of the schools in the Riverstone electorate to get air conditioning in coming rounds.

### HILLSBOROUGH ROAD

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (18:52:35):** One of the busiest roads in the Hunter Region, Hillsborough Road, is a choke point between Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. At rush hour the road resembles a car park. Residents of Hillsborough face long delays when trying to exit their suburb and these delays account for thousands of hours of lost productivity every year. My office is frequently contacted by people asking for something to be done. Hillsborough Road is in dire need of upgrades. Worse still, it has become dangerous. In 2016, 15-year-old Jade Frith was tragically killed while trying to cross Hillsborough Road, and near misses remain common.

This is not the first time I have brought up Hillsborough Road in this place and I fear it will not be the last. I have given 10 notices of motion, asked questions on notice, spoken on this matter time and time again and I have even presented for debate a 10,000-signature petition on behalf of the community, calling on the Government to finally take action. And still, this Government has done nothing. Despite allocating \$500,000 in 2013 and a further \$4 million in 2015 for planning and pre-construction work on upgrades for Hillsborough Road, there have been no announcements, no further announcements and nothing of substance. The situation along Hillsborough Road has been left to deteriorate. In 2018 local resident activist Michael Nolan told the *Newcastle Star*: There are more than 600 residents in the area, plus business and sporting facilities, and that means we see hundreds of cars come in and out of Hillsborough on a daily basis. Every single one of them are trying to turn out onto this main arterial road.

Residents who have to get to work know if we don't leave before 7.30 we will be waiting in traffic, and people don't come to visit us because they don't feel comfortable with tackling the intersection. For us, it feels like an entire suburb is being [held] hostage every morning because we can't turn out of the one road that leads us out of our suburb. After meeting with Mr Nolan and other local activists, I called for funding to be included in the 2018-2019 budget. That budget came and went and there was nothing for Hillsborough Road. The 2019-2020 budget was another opportunity. I called for funding in that budget, but still nothing. This kind of inaction has become par for the course for this Government, throwing billions of dollars at expensive, flashy projects that look good on the nightly news or the front page of newspapers while neglecting the sort of bread-and-butter infrastructure work that helps a State grow.

The Government throws every resource behind light rail projects that go hundreds of millions of dollars, even billions of dollars, over budget. It spends billions tearing down and rebuilding perfectly adequate Sydney stadiums, but cannot bring itself to fund desperately needed upgrades to one of the Hunter region's most important roads. As the population of the lower Hunter continues to grow in the coming years, Hillsborough Road will come under more and more pressure. While the proposed indoor sports stadium at Hillsborough is a welcome addition to the wider community, it will serve to increase local road use.

The Government's disinterest is obvious and does it no credit—even small-scale upgrades are being kicked down the road. In September 2019 I asked the Minister for Roads and Transport when traffic lights at the intersection of Hillsborough Road and Crockett St, Hillsborough, would be installed. His response can be described charitably as terse. He said that the timing on upgrade work at the intersection of Hillsborough Road and Crockett Street, Hillsborough, was subject to investigations and would be confirmed upon finalisation. In response to a question explicitly asking for a time frame, the Minister failed to provide one.

This is characteristic of the Minister's approach to Hillsborough Road. In May last year I asked the Minister about upgrades to the roundabout at the intersection of Hillsborough Road and Macquarie Road, and the intersection of Hillsborough Road and Chadwick Street. On both occasions he dodged the question, promising a business case that has not yet been produced. The Government has the perfect opportunity now to fix this issue in the near future. Today we heard the Treasurer give his economic statement, which we on this side of the House have been calling for him to give for weeks. The Leader of the Opposition, Jodi McKay, was very clear about the need to provide jobs and support employment by using our purchasing power in New South Wales to create jobs. Here is a perfect opportunity. The Government must commit to the upgrade of Hillsborough Road. We will never have a better opportunity to make Hunter region infrastructure fit for the future.

### MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE PROJECTS

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (18:57:39):** I advise the House of a number of announcements in the Myall Lakes electorate, which is the most beautiful electorate in New South Wales. Wingham Library will receive \$500,000 for extensions. I note the member for Vacluse is at the table. A few years ago she and I went to the Wingham Library for a \$75,000 upgrade to the library. Now another \$500,000 will increase the size of the premises from about 280 square metres to 490 square metres. It will include learning spaces, meeting spaces and, very importantly, an access lift. As the member for Vacluse knows, Wingham Library is a beautiful historic building. When I was there I took the opportunity to announce \$50,000 for the Wingham Akoostik Music Festival, which has a 13-year history of providing culture and music in the area. It has a great reputation, but because of COVID and the concerns about crowds, it is being brought back to the streets and smaller venues in the hope that businesses will be able to piggyback on that. It will not only revitalise the central business district of Wingham but also bring much-needed money into those businesses.

I was able to visit and view the progress of the Manning Base Hospital \$40 million stage one redevelopment. Stage 1A has already been delivered, which is the oncology, renal dialysis and parking. Stage one—new medical imaging—will be ready for its first patients on 23 June. This new, enhanced stage one includes refurbishment of the main entrance to the hospital, ensuring that the hospital has a better environment and flow for staff and visitors. The medical imaging department will open with a general and mobile X-ray, ultrasound, fluoroscopy and bone density scanner on 23 June, which is in only a couple of weeks. The completed medical imaging floor will include two X-ray rooms; an orthopantomogram room; a panoramic X-ray that takes images of the upper and lower jaws, including teeth; a fluoroscopy room; and a CT scanning room.

A state-of-the-art MRI will be arriving in July and, with commissioning, should be ready for patients in August. There will be two ultrasound rooms and general administration, and support areas for clinical services. It is absolutely fantastic to see. The Federal member, Dr David Gillespie, was able to get the funding for the new MRI from the Federal Government. The clinical services plan for stage two will redevelop the hospital. Another \$100 million for the Manning Hospital is very welcome. We are looking forward to that plan coming about. After going through public consultation and surveys, the hospital is being renamed. We are going back to the future—we are going back to the name of the hospital being the Manning Base Hospital. We are looking forward to the completion of the clinical services plan, which is also looking at the need for a public hospital, which should be very soon. It has been held up slightly by COVID, which has impacted on the consultation stage.

There is a \$6 million project at the motel next door, Club Old Bar at Milton, so that people who come to Old Bar now have a brand-new beautiful motel to stay in. It is something that is very much needed, and I congratulate Trevor Wisemantel and Kim White on their foresight. I congratulate the board for agreeing to buy those properties and to build that motel. Forster Little Street and the Bullring at Main Beach will receive \$300,000 to upgrade amenities and build new change rooms, toilets and other things, and also a huge undercover barbecue area for community groups and families to get together. This is a good taste of some of the things to talk about in the wonderful Myall Lakes.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vacluse) (19:02:42):** I have been to the Wingham Library with the member for Myall Lakes, which seems like a long time ago. The local member has done a really strong job arguing for further investment into that library, which is indeed a historical home. I have pictures of it, which I actually looked at the other day and wondered what had happened since we made that commitment some two years ago. I congratulate the member for Myall Lakes on his strong advocacy for his local community, in particular the Wingham Library.

### COVID-19 AND RYDE ELECTORATE

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (19:03:30):** *The Weekly Times* editor, the irrepressible John Booth, AM, announced today in his local paper, "It's Over Time. To Open Up—Clubs, Pubs, Restaurants, Cafes and Churches." He thanked our Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, for a job well done. Whilst there is much to do in the coming weeks and months, I want to take this time to reflect. Our capacity to

endure what was requested of us has been all consuming—lives at risk, livelihoods at stake. This time last year few of us could have envisioned our immediate future of drought, bushfires and pandemic. Unprecedented tragedy has forever altered Australia. It has scarred our history with an immense degree of upheaval and change that will continue to be the topic of review and conversation for years to come.

Australians are right to feel the burden of the world on their shoulders; however, they have at their disposal the unique and indomitable Australian spirit. It is through our shared values of compassion, resilience and hard work that we have fought and overcome this adversity, and I am proud of everything Ryde has contributed. Ryde has stared down the face of a Covidian world and has risen to the occasion, along with the rest of New South Wales and Australia. I thank my community of Ryde for making the change to work from home, shop only when needed and forgo traditional socialisation as a means to protect themselves and each other. Challenges like these put our entire nation on the firing line and necessitate that we all do our bit. People have been called on in different ways, but it is our collective effort that has made a difference. I thank all the heroes of our health services—nurses, doctors and health professionals—working around the clock to ensure we have access to a strong healthcare system supporting us and providing the testing capability to combat the virus from an informed position.

Ryde had two testing centres, one at Ryde Hospital and a drive-through facility at WiSE Medical Ryde Respiratory Clinic. These two facilities have been instrumental in keeping our community safe and assured. They deserve immense praise for all their efforts. Ryde Hospital General Manager Heather Gough would attest to the dedication of all the hospital staff who worked to assist our community. I was pleased to be able to join with Gurnam Singh and the Australian Indian Sports, Educational and Cultural Society on Mother's Day to deliver meals for the staff on this special day. I talked to Taylor Clancy, an enrolled nurse at Ryde Hospital working in emergency. Altruistic does not begin to describe her kindness and dedication, even in such times of uncertainty.

Businesses have also been an integral part of our health response. There are those that were able to support our health workers by transitioning their production to personal protection equipment and other goods. There are those who adopted the immense changes of the lockdown, employing distancing and sanitary measures to adjust to the new reality to help everyone maintain access to essential goods. An example of this is Formula Chemicals in our backyard at West Ryde, operated by Leigh Smart, that contributed products like alcohol sanitisers to keep our community safe. Lockdown is a unique experience without compare in our modern day; however, it has often brought extreme adjustment, cynicism and occasionally boredom. Institutions of our community have been crucial in keeping us social when distanced, engaged with latest information and entertained with the new normal. Groups and pages like Humans of Eastwood on Facebook have stoked the friendly rivalry between Denistone and Eastwood and kept the area engaged with hilarious sets of memes and competitions. I thank Justin Li for his service in building such a modern community platform in Ryde.

This chapter in our history is one that will bleed for many pages. The community's tenacity has saved many lives. Following this health response we will rebuild New South Wales. This task again depends on the support of our entire community. I have faith that we will once again lead the way through hard work and innovation. Again, I emphasise the importance of being vigilant in the months and potentially years ahead until we find a vaccine. It is good to pause right now and reflect on the hard work, and thank the community for its hard work and sacrifice, but it is by no means over. We are still in the middle of a pandemic and I cannot stress enough, as we go to a new normal, the importance of getting tested. If you have any symptoms that relate in any way to what presents as COVID-19, please get checked. Keep up hand hygiene and be physically distant where you possibly can. If we do these things, then we will get through this pandemic together.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Ryde for his statement, particularly for the important message in relation to COVID-19 precautions.

#### **DELYSIA JEAN DUNCKLEY**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:08:41):** I acknowledge Delysia Jean Dunckley of The Entrance. Delysia, known locally as Del, is an exceptionally talented botanical portrait artist. Del has the ability to capture Australian wildflowers with precision and exquisite detail; her outstanding artwork is a testament to her craft and a great gift to our nation. Physical limitations, such as suffering the debilitating impacts of arthritis from the time she was a young woman, have certainly been no barrier to Del in her artistic career. Del meticulously studies wildflowers and paints their portraits, which becomes an invaluable record of our heritage and our history. Thankfully Del includes in her work both rare and endangered plants so that we can not only appreciate their beauty but also understand their ecological importance and need for protection.

Del's paintings have featured in many botanical publications; and six were included in the Commonwealth Park time capsule in Canberra to help commemorate Australia's bicentenary in 1988. The original copy of Del's Australian Wildflowers was presented to Her Royal Highness, Princess Mary of Denmark, during a visit to Australia as a gift to her children. Del's watercolour portrait of the *Atkinsonia ligustrina*, a rare, small, woody

shrub with exceptional fragrance found only in the region of the Blue Mountains, is included in the prestigious bicentenary book, *The Florilegium*, produced by the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney. Artistic treasures like Del Dunckley are an asset to our society. I am extremely proud that Del resides in my electorate and that we can all appreciate her outstanding artistic botanical portrait abilities. I thank her for her service to her craft of botanical portraiture and to the recording of our national botany.

### BARWON ELECTORATE JOBS

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (19:10:58):** Tonight I talk about jobs, specifically jobs in Barwon. I have been accused of standing in the way of or being "anti" jobs, which is an interesting accusation from the New South Wales Government. Let us start with some facts. New South Wales has had a Liberal-Nationals Government since 28 March 2011. I was elected to this place on 23 March 2019. Those two facts are indisputable. Let us look at some other, well-documented facts. The O'Farrell Government cut 15,000 jobs, nearly 6,000 of them from the public sector, in regional New South Wales. Then there was the Baird Government with Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian, now Premier, who stuck a for sale sign on almost everything in New South Wales and privatised a swag of government services, slashing jobs and leaving towns with fewer services. In 2019 the current Treasurer announced he would eliminate up to 3,000 public sector jobs over the next four years.

Why care about public service jobs? The importance of public sector work is all the more visible in my communities. Good jobs in schools, hospitals and public administration are essential to the overall wellbeing of rural and regional towns. They function as economic anchors and they support the local economy and the many spin-off jobs that come from having well-paid locals: consumer goods, hospitality, trades—the list goes on. This positive economic benefit has been ignored for years and years by the Liberal-Nationals Government. Of the 20 local government areas that experienced the greatest loss of public sector jobs between 2011 and 2016, six were located in the Barwon electorate—Central Darling, Brewarrina, Bourke, Coonamble, Cobar and Warren.

"But, Roy," I hear the Government say, "our record investment in infrastructure has seen us create thousands of jobs in New South Wales." To that I say independent analysis has shown that over 80 per cent of new jobs in New South Wales in the past five years have been created in the Greater Sydney area. What is the benefit of these cuts to the people of my electorate? Where is the economic return for the people of Barwon? Where is the reinvestment of the dollars saved through public service cuts to my electorate? Well, I struggle to find any. But what I can see is the overall negative impact of consistent job cuts and funding reduction to the people of regional and rural New South Wales—to the people of the Barwon electorate.

When we look into the loss of these jobs and what it means to our communities, we find that fisheries officers located in Broken Hill were cut. Now one officer, located at Dareton, is required to cover the whole of the Far West from the Victorian border to Queensland and from the South Australian border to Balranald, which is over one-third of the State. This is an impossible area over which to maintain compliance with fisheries legislation. Just today I have been contacted regarding an allegation of illegal fishing. Then there is the fire control officer position at the fire control centre in Ivanhoe, which is a key position in the coordination of Rural Fire Service volunteers in the event of a significant bushfire—cut.

Then there is the big one, the NDIS. It took out every single disability worker, support worker and therapist employed by the public service and pushed them into an uncertain employment environment. Many left, seeking the security of bigger towns and cities. This has had an enormous impact, not only on the economy of our towns but also, most importantly, on the availability and sustainability of services in our towns. The Government did this, not a pandemic or an unpredictable global event. These job cuts and the devastating impacts are the fault of no-one but those who sit on the Liberal-Nationals government benches.

In the past few weeks we have heard about the number of jobs that will be created in Narrabri if the coal seam gas project goes ahead. My support for the protection of groundwater and advocacy for the communities and industries that rely on it saw me being accused of being anti-jobs. What is most interesting about this argument is the fact that the information the Government keeps parroting about jobs comes directly from a report commissioned by Santos in support of its project. "We expect there will be up to 200 ongoing positions"—that is a direct quote from Santos. There is no independent verification, yet we see this figure crop up in Government reports. How can we really trust it? How can we bet the future of an entire town on the unverified expectation of a large company? Small towns have never been sold down the river by a large corporation before, have they? Never.

I take the House to some known facts. Between 2011 and 2016, Central Darling, Brewarrina, Bourke, Coonamble, Cobar and Warren local government areas lost 205 public service jobs from their towns—205 jobs. Despite what the Government would have us believe, the ongoing slashing of public sector jobs corresponds to a reduction in ongoing private sector jobs. The actions of the Government in reducing public sector employment has damaged the economy of towns right across Barwon. Its actions have reduced consumer spending across

regional New South Wales by an estimated \$1.9 billion. That is a loss of economic activity in the main streets and business parks in my communities, and that means less expansion and less private sector job growth. That is not on me; that is all on the Government.

### SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE POLICING

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (19:16:01):** Tonight I thank the police in my electorate of Seven Hills. As members of this place well know, the primary responsibility we impart to our police is for them to keep us safe. The recent pandemic has posed a once-in-a-century threat to public safety and it is well worth the time of this Parliament to reflect upon the excellent work of local members of the NSW Police Force throughout this difficult period. The pandemic was and is, first and foremost, a public health crisis of intergenerational magnitude. However, the virus would not have been contained to the extent that it has been without the involvement and support of our police.

The best available health advice has rightly guided the New South Wales Government throughout the pandemic. But it has been our police force that ensured the spread of the virus was slow at its outbreak and has remained comparatively slow throughout this entire period. The NSW Police Force has been highly responsive throughout this pandemic to the swift and necessary changes in government guidance and regulation, particularly with the enforcement of the evolving public health order. Over the critical weekends leading up to Easter this year, especially in response to some in the community ignoring Government guidance and regulation, it was the NSW Police Force that ensured it would not be a case of one rule for some and another rule for others.

It was the dedicated women and men of the NSW Police Force that gave legitimacy and authority to the Government's guidance and regulation by treating all citizens across our State equally and fairly, regardless of their postcode. I believe the NSW Police Force has been a pillar of strength for the people of New South Wales, along with our political and health leaders in government. This pandemic period has been another demonstrable example of who it is that the members of the NSW Police Force serve and protect. The NSW Police Force is here to serve and protect all law-abiding citizens of this State. We can tell the respect that police garner in communities given how few individuals have been caught flouting the Government's guidance and regulation across the State throughout the pandemic period.

We know this to be true also at a local level in Seven Hills. Throughout the pandemic period the vast majority of my correspondence with constituents was with respect to constituents confirming that they were able to engage in certain activities—such was their respect for our police and for the social pact between the New South Wales citizenry and their Government that our police helped to solidify. In more good news locally for our police, the new Wentworthville Police Station is up and running, increasing and improving the positive engagement of the Wentworthville community with their local police from the Parramatta Police Area Command. In more recent news, the New South Wales Government has been applauded for expanding its Police, Ambulance, Clinical Early Response [PACER] program to mental health issues by placing 36 mental health clinicians into 10 police area commands across New South Wales.

The Law Society of New South Wales president has expressed his support for the expansion of the program, highlighting that evidence from the pilot suggests early intervention support can reduce the number of people with a mental illness who end up in the justice system. Well done to the police Minister, the Commissioner of Police and their respective teams for their advocacy and support for this vital program to bring mental health to the forefront of engagement and interaction between police and the communities they serve. At a time when there is a vast amount of international commentary about the role of police, and policing more generally, the citizens of New South Wales can be proud of their police force and the hard work police do in keeping us safe throughout the pandemic period, and now as we enter the recovery phase.

The NSW Police Force is well positioned to adapt to any future challenges due to the strong rapport and respect it has within the broader community of our State. In recent times the police force has brought us together. I speak on behalf of all good members of this place when I thank all our local members of the NSW Police Force across the State for all they have done to serve and protect our communities throughout this very difficult period.

### NSW ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (19:20:30):** As a member of Parliament, I am contacted every day by local residents seeking assistance in dealing with State government agencies. As all members in this place will know, sometimes the challenges in navigating different departments and agencies can just become too difficult without a little bit of extra help. My office and I are always happy to help as best we can to navigate those challenges. There are times when the experiences of local residents when dealing with government agencies are so shocking and unfair that I am moved to raise the issue in this Chamber. The matter of Michael and Cheryl Corling from Millers Forest is such an issue.

The way they have been treated by the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA] is simply deplorable. The Corlings contacted my office in early March this year after being the victims of illegal asbestos dumping. That discovery came about when the EPA knocked on their door on 14 November 2019 and told them. The EPA attended Michael and Cheryl's property out of the blue and informed them that they had reason to believe a delivery of fill received by them the week prior was contaminated with asbestos. The Corlings were building a new house and when they received the fill it was classified as "excavated natural material" and certified "free from contamination".

However, after inspecting the mound and testing the fill, the EPA confirmed that it was contaminated with asbestos. The Corlings were obviously devastated. The EPA revealed that two weeks prior they had attended a property in Greenacre, Sydney, operated by Aussie Skips. During that visit the EPA took samples from two mounds of soil and waste within the property that they clearly had concerns about. Those samples later confirmed the presence of asbestos. On 12 November the EPA formally requested that Aussie Skips account for the material. Aussie Skips then, shockingly, admitted that it had transferred the material to the Corlings' property in Millers Forest after the samples had been taken by the EPA.

Initially, the Corlings contacted me in March. The EPA had promised to serve a clean-up notice on Aussie Skips, but four months had passed and it still had not done so. I wrote to environment Minister Matt Kean, asking why, given the seriousness of what had transpired, the EPA had not yet issued a clean-up notice on Aussie Skips. Michael and Cheryl were understandably frustrated because they were still living and running a business next to a mound of asbestos contamination and the whole debacle had delayed the construction of their new home. They were now forking out thousands of dollars in late fees to the builder. The Minister responded to my letter stating:

The EPA intends to issue a clean-up notice on Aussie Skips Recycling that will require remediation of contaminated material they deposited at the property.

The Corlings were relieved to receive that response from the Minister, but they remained quite frustrated it was taking so long. However, the story gets much, much worse. Just one week later, Michael Corling received a phone call from a regional director within the EPA who revealed that no action whatsoever would be taken against Aussie Skips despite its admissions, the EPA tests and the Minister's response. The million-dollar clean-up notice would instead be issued to the victims, the Corlings. They would now be responsible for removing the asbestos and, by doing so, face certain financial ruin.

According to the EPA, it cannot prove the asbestos was not already present on the Corlings' property. This is an absurdly unbelievable situation. I have in my possession formal EPA documents clearly stating that asbestos was found in the soil mounds at Aussie Skips' property in Greenacre. The documents clearly state that Aussie Skips then admitted to taking that material and delivering it to the Corlings' property in Millers Forest. When the EPA arrived at the Corlings' property to test the soil, those tests confirmed it was contaminated with asbestos—not only as suspected but, more importantly, as expected. The EPA is now going to let Aussie Skips off the hook and force the Corlings to fork out hundreds of thousands of dollars—if not more—to clean up somebody else's wrongdoing.

If the EPA has decided that, as the prosecutor, it cannot use Aussie Skips' own admissions, that is a matter for it—although I strongly disagree. But to turn around and expect innocent victims to pay clean-up costs is disgusting. I call on the EPA to reconsider urgently. If the EPA refuses, I call on the Minister to put a stop to this farce, because if it is allowed to happen in this case it can happen to anybody in New South Wales. As shadow environment Minister, I will work alongside the member for Maitland, Jenny Aitchison, and keep fighting for the Corlings.

### ILLAWARRA BOATING ACCIDENT

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (19:25:49):** I represent a region that is bordered by an escarpment to the west and the Pacific Ocean—or Tasman Sea—to the east. The Illawarra is often known as the land between the mountain and the sea. But the June long weekend was one of tragedy for the people of the Illawarra. In the early hours of Sunday morning I was informed by Surf Life Saving NSW that an incident—a search and rescue—was taking place just off Bulli. Bulli is a part of my electorate that many people probably know and have holidayed in, which sits right on the coastline. The previous night a father and son were enjoying an afternoon on the water. The weather conditions turned hazardous, with large ocean swell and freezing water conditions. Their boat capsized on Saturday evening. That night locals alerted authorities when they heard loud screaming coming from the ocean at around 6.45 p.m. Locals live very close to the ocean in that part of the world and the screams were chilling.

Emergency services were called to the area, including the services of paramedics, Wollongong Local Area Command, Toll Ambulance Rescue Helicopter Service, two police aircrafts, water police, Marine Rescue NSW and Surf Life Saving NSW. It was an intense operation that was the largest multi-agency operation Surf Life

Saving NSW has conducted in the Illawarra for many years. The search was exceptionally difficult and I pay my respects and gratitude to helicopter rescue teams for all their efforts. The crew successfully winched two men from a hazardous ocean with only eight minutes of fuel left in the chopper. I have been informed that the helicopter needed to park on the headland and await refuelling before it could depart. This is an extraordinary effort from the crew involved, and I thank them.

Tragically, a five-year-old boy and his 28-year-old male companion were missing. When I received that message on Sunday morning, as has often been the case in my electorate, I decided to go to the scene myself—as I am sure many members would have. My five-year-old son was awake and he came along with me. I met Pete Evert from Surf Life Saving Illawarra. He told me that clubs from Bulli, Thirroul, Coledale, Woonona, Austinmer, Sandon Point, Bellambi, Coalcliff, Windang and Stanwell Park were involved in a massive 24-hour search. Bulli was the host club and I particularly thank volunteers for providing much-needed warmth, food, comfort and privacy to the distressed families. This was a tragedy. As I spoke to the media that morning, there was a five-year-old boy missing and presumed dead. As the father of a five-year-old, these things cut deep and it is a challenging experience for us all.

It does not matter what happened—people will say, "They didn't do this" or "They shouldn't have been out there." Maybe that is all true, but the bottom line is that two people lost their lives in a part of the world that I love, in an ocean that we have all swum in. It is an ocean that can be ruthless at times and that lacks any form of forgiveness. I pay my respects to the family, who were, of course, extremely distressed. It was a distressing scene for everybody, as I am sure members can imagine. I give particular thanks not only to all the clubs but also to Keith Caldwell, president of the hosting club, Bulli, Jamie Caldwell and Lachlan O'Grady. Special mention goes to two Surf Life Saving NSW duty officers, Anthony Turner and Lachlan Pritchard, who coordinated the operation in conjunction with other emergency services.

Two people were successfully pulled from the ocean that Saturday evening and taken to Wollongong Hospital for treatment. But, as I said, two people—including a little boy—lost their lives. The boat was taken back to Port Kembla and the child was found lodged in the boat. This is a tragedy beyond anything most of us can imagine. I am very proud of our local surf life saving clubs, volunteers and emergency services. Special thanks go to Bulli Woolworths for donating breakfast and to Bulli Meat & Seafood for kindly donating lunch. I offer my deepest condolences—indeed, all our condolences—to the family who lost loved ones. When enjoying our beautiful part of the world—or any part of the world where there are coastal communities—please boat safe, stay safe and look after one another.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:31:06):** I acknowledge the very eloquent contribution by the member for Keira. As a representative of a coastal electorate, I have firsthand experience of the phone calls we receive when people are missing in the ocean, which leave us cold. Our communities rally together in those times of tragedy, as the member for Keira outlined so eloquently tonight. Incredible volunteers go out in the middle of the night and risk their lives—whether it be from Surf Life Saving NSW or helicopter rescue—and we can never thank them enough. They do an incredible job. Again, I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Keira and offer my condolences to his community because coastal communities feel it hard when one of their own is lost, especially under tragic circumstances. Water, which is usually our friend and which we spend most of our time enjoying, can also—as the member for Keira so clearly outlined—cause tragedy so quickly. On behalf of the Government, I offer my condolences to his community for those events.

#### **TERRIGAL ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:32:12):** I take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the House a number of schools, a sports club, community groups, rural fire brigades, Marine Rescue NSW volunteers and a church. Each of those groups has received a share of \$330,000 from the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership program. This year there are 16 projects across the Terrigal electorate. Each project was successful in receiving funding because it will make a real difference to the wider community. Holgate Public School will receive \$41,378 to install shade sails that cover the school playground and outdoor stage area so that kids are protected from the harsh sun. Terrigal High School will receive \$41,000 for outdoor fitness and team-building activity stations, which I know will be highly utilised by the active school community of students and teachers.

At Terrigal Public School the current worn and unsafe section of oval will be renewed, with a \$29,000 grant for natural and artificial turf. Our Lady Star of the Sea Terrigal Catholic parish, located at Serpentine Road, Terrigal, is set to benefit from a \$25,000 kitchen upgrade to serve meals to needy and elderly residents in our community. The foyer at the Central Coast basketball stadium will be repaired and refurbished thanks to \$20,000 for ceiling tiles, light fittings and a new wall. The fantastic team at North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club will receive \$15,500 for a number of occupational health and safety repairs that will benefit club members as well as the wider community, who regularly use the facilities at that fantastic club. A new suite of Raymarine electronic

and navigation systems will be installed in Marine Rescue Central Coast's two newest rescue vessels, CC30 and CC21, thanks to \$10,163 in funding.

At Aspect Central Coast School \$10,000 will go towards the installation of a PA system that will alert students and teachers to transition times and emergency evacuations. The Coast Christian School at Bensville will receive \$30,000 to construct coverings at the kiss-and-drop zone and to replace the playground's softfall. Empire Bay Public School will benefit from a \$20,000 tiered outdoor seating platform, which also includes outdoor bean bags and a mobile library box. I thank P&C President Belinda Koukas for submitting such a fantastic project. Brisbania Public School will be able to better communicate and engage with families and the community thanks to \$17,860 for a brand new electronic sign, which is being installed on the corner of High Street and Davistown Road. At Green Point Community Centre, \$15,000 will go towards upgrading the existing disability accessible bathroom and adding an accessible shower.

Copacabana Rural Fire Brigade requested and have received \$12,599 for new carpet and epoxy flooring. I am delighted to be providing this funding to that fantastic rural fire unit. A grant of \$10,000 to Avoca Rural Fire Brigade will allow for the installation of a new electronic sign. This is the least we can do to support our fireys following last summer's harrowing bushfires, which stretched from one end of New South Wales to the other and also impacted some communities on the Central Coast. Brisbane Waters Rural Fire Brigade has been granted \$2,500 for a smart TV and wall bracket to replace the old and broken multimedia equipment used for brigade presentations and training. Finally, Hardys Bay Community Church will receive \$27,000 for roof strengthening and re-sheeting. A consultant engineer's report showed that the original gabled roof, thought to have been built in 1921, needed to be restored to its original condition and made structurally sound.

Each project will absolutely benefit the wider community and I am proud to have supported these funding applications. Since 2009 more than 13,800 projects across the State have been funded through the Community Building Partnership program. I congratulate all 16 organisations that have received funding from the New South Wales Government. As I said, this will make a real difference to the wider Central Coast community and all the incredible volunteer organisations in the Terrigal electorate that work so tirelessly day in, day out. Whether it be a school P&C, a rural fire brigade or a surf lifesaving club, these community organisations all work together and we are helping them to deliver great outcomes for their organisations. I again offer my congratulations to these 16 successful recipients in this year's Community Building Partnership program.

#### WEST WALLSEND BUTTERFLY CAVE

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (19:37:11):** The Butterfly Cave is a sacred Aboriginal women's site in the West Wallsend village in the electorate I have the great privilege to represent. In the past eight or nine years I have spoken in this House about the enormous danger this beautiful, natural and important site faces at the hands of developers. And in the past couple of weeks has come the realisation that Rio Tinto has blasted and completely destroyed a sacred Aboriginal site in the north of Western Australia. Whilst a lot of finger-pointing was going on about whose job it was to protect that particular piece of our heritage as Australians on this land, in the end just not enough was done. There have also been reports that mining giant BHP is on track to destroy dozens and dozens of special Indigenous sites. Again, a lot of finger-pointing is going on about whose responsibility it is to protect those sites.

Today I want to talk about the Butterfly Cave yet again because developers and their bulldozers are on its doorstep. They are going to cut down all of the trees and foliage around the area. They will completely expose what should be a hidden, secreted, sacred site protected from the eyes of others. This House is wilfully going to allow that to happen—not because we do not know, but because we choose not to know and act. A former Minister for Environment and Heritage, and a former member for Maitland, Robyn Parker, declared it a sacred site but, unfortunately, only with a 20-metre buffer. It is hard to have a secret, sacred site with only a 20-metre buffer and the surrounding area covered in brick veneer and tile houses, concrete driveways and the like. It is pretty much putting a spotlight on that particular area and certainly not recognising its significance.

Over the past couple of days in Black Lives Matter protests, certain individuals have taken to different statues across our land and the history that sits in behind that. All power to those people, and all power to those who were outraged that someone may have put a little bit of paint on Captain Cook's statue. If I am making members mad by saying that so flippantly—good. I want them to be mad. Captain Cook has a history on this land for less than 250 years. Why do we place at a high emotional value on his statue when we sit here and completely ignore 50,000 years' worth of value on a natural cave that is such an important place to our Aboriginal women? Who wants to have a go at explaining that to me?

Why do we care about heritage and buildings that are 100 years old because they were built by whitefellas? We have statues down the road of whitefellas who arrived here 200 years ago and might have built a road or a tunnel. Why do we care so much about them but ignore the Aboriginal history that is part of our land and our

landscape? It is tens of tens of thousands of years old. I have pleaded with various Ministers of this Government to take action. Following the New South Wales placement of an Aboriginal significant site but with no protections, the Federal Coalition Government intervened and said it would place a further protection on that area because the New South Wales protection was insignificant. I thank them for that protection. However, when it comes to the push and shove about who is going to enforce, to inspect and to be on the ground to make sure that the bulldozers and the chainsaws do not destroy that site, the answer is no-one. When that site is destroyed, who will be guilty? Every single person in this room, every single person in Federal Parliament, and every single person who turns an eye away from our Indigenous culture. Come on. We have got to fix this.

### KOGARAH COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:42:21):** It is an honour to speak in support of Kogarah Community Services, a community organisation that services not just my electorate but also the neighbouring electorates of Lakemba, Kogarah and Rockdale. This fantastic organisation provides support for those in all walks of life. It utilises its strong connection with the broader local community to advocate for positive change. Change is not always easy to enact but it is very important. Kogarah Community Services continues to be a very strong, passionate, forward-thinking group in the community.

In February I attended One Billion Rising Kogarah. This included a vibrant showcase of multicultural diversity in the community with dancing and performances. I was pleased to see the number of people who enjoyed the show, including Mayor Kevin Greene and Councillor Nick Katris. But it is important to recognise the cause for which we all came together. We gathered in solidarity for One Billion Rising, which is a mass action to end oppression, exploitation and violence against women. This campaign was initially launched eight years ago and is a global movement. Just as we support the movement in Sydney, over the years similar events have taken place in America, England, Germany and Italy. The key messages of the organisation are promoted through action, art and imagination. This is in line with the organisation's call to action—to raise the vibration and rise for revolution.

Unfortunately violence against women continues to be a significant issue worldwide. Globally one in three women has experienced violence. In Australia one woman a week is murdered by a current or former partner, and one in six women experiences abuse before the age of 15. The reality is that these statistics will always be underestimated as many women will never share or report their experience of violence. Even so, these numbers are staggering, alarming and just unacceptable. The effects of this violence are enduring and life-changing and, sadly, can be fatal.

We all gathered for One Billion Rising because we recognised that something needed to change, and that message continues to prevail. In solidarity with One Billion Rising we added our voice to the global movement of preventing violence against women. This event truly demonstrated the commitment that Kogarah Community Services case workers made to promoting change within the community. It is a reminder that this is an issue that is not distant from our local community; rather, it is sadly too familiar. As I mentioned earlier, there were lively dance performances from a range of multicultural groups. When the One Billion Rising campaign was first launched, dance was used as a sort of symbol of freedom, unity, and disruption to the norm. Dancing creates a presence and joins people together, even though they may not have a set direction. I thoroughly enjoyed all the fantastic performances on the evening.

This event took place a week before the horrific and senseless murder of Hannah Clarke and her three children. I take this time to reflect and pay tribute to this young family whose lives were lost too soon to a disgusting and abhorrent attack of violence. The New South Wales Government supports providing more frontline services for victims and ensuring that primary prevention efforts continue. This includes providing record funding of 84 women's refuges and men's behaviour change programs, as well as community education and intervention programs. I thank Kogarah Community Services for its organisation of the event in support of this very important case. It was an honour to attend and support this global movement. While I hope everybody had a fantastic evening, I also hope that the core sentiment of the night is enduring.

### *Community Recognition Statements*

### TRIBUTE TO MARK WHITE, ASFM, OAM

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (19:46:52):** I pay tribute to and recognise the life of Mark White, ASFM, OAM, who sadly passed away recently. Mark was a strong advocate for the Penrith community and, in particular, for the Museum of Fire, where he held the position of executive chairperson for over 30 years. His passion for the Museum of Fire was legendary and his tireless commitment towards it was recognised with an OAM in 2015. Mark also remained an active and dedicated firefighter and was the longest serving firefighter at Fire and Rescue NSW St Marys station 077. He

was honoured for his service with an Australian Fire Service Medal. Mark had a big presence in every room he walked into. He was a true gentleman. His loss will leave a massive hollow in our community that can never be truly filled. There is absolutely no doubt that his passing will be felt by many across the Penrith area and the Fire and Rescue NSW community. I offer my sincere condolences to Mark's wife, Liz, his sons Gavin, Paul and Cameron and their extended family and friends.

#### **PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS' COUNCIL NSW**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (19:47:55):** Earlier this year I attended the Professional Teachers' Council NSW [PTC] presentation awards, which celebrate the outstanding voluntary work of professional teaching associations during 2020. The PTC was established in 1973 as a voluntary, not-for-profit education support organisation for professional teachers' associations in New South Wales. The PTC is the peak umbrella body providing support to member associations and represents all levels of education: early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary. It also covers government, Catholic and independent schools, and tertiary institutions. The PTC liaises on behalf of associations with the NSW Department of Education, the NSW Education Standards Authority, the NSW Institute of Teachers, tertiary institutions and governments. The PTC updates teachers on changes to curriculum or policy and also provides ongoing professional development. One of the awards is named in honour of Professor Dame Marie Bashir, who is the patron. There is also the Exceptional Service Award and the Outstanding Professional Service Award. I congratulate the PTC NSW board of directors on their leadership and thank them for their ongoing support of our professional teachers.

#### **MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE GREYHOUND RACING**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (19:49:00):** I inform the House of the exciting news for the New South Wales greyhound industry, and more particularly for the Taree greyhound track, because tomorrow will be the first TAB greyhound race meeting at Taree and on the mid North Coast following recent significant funding to upgrade the track, including Community Building Partnership money, Stronger Country Communities Fund money, and other government funding. Greyhound Racing NSW CEO Tony Mestrov said:

Taree hosting this TAB meeting is quite significant not only for the club, but also for industry.

He went on to say:

And on behalf of GRNSW, I would also like to send a sincere thank you to local member Mr. Stephen Bromhead. His ongoing support to the project has been greatly appreciated.

Tomorrow will be a great day for greyhound racing on the mid North Coast.

#### **INTERNATIONAL CLEANERS DAY**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:50:05):** This International Cleaners Day we thank the tens of thousands of cleaners across New South Wales who have worked tirelessly to keep us safe during the pandemic. This week I visited Royal Prince Alfred Hospital [RPA] to meet with some of the over 300 cleaners there, including Dolly, who has worked as a cleaner at RPA for 46 years. She is a proud member of the Health Services Union and told me just how hard she and her colleagues have been working. Cleaners are working 24/7, they have had to retrain during COVID, they are practising social distancing under extraordinary circumstances and they know that every day they go to work they could be putting their lives and the lives of their families at risk. International Cleaners Day started in 1990 when Los Angeles police attacked cleaners striking for the right to organise. The fight for fair pay and conditions continues 30 years on. The United Workers Union and cleaners across New South Wales are fighting to give cleaners more time to clean, better equipment and training, better wages and job security, and respect and a voice at work. I stand with cleaners across New South Wales and thank them for all they do to keep us safe, not just during COVID-19 but every day.

#### **CHIEF INSPECTOR JOHN KLEPCZAREK, APM**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (19:51:08):** I congratulate Hume Police District Chief Inspector John Klepczarek, who was awarded the Australian Police Medal in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours. John is based at the Southern Highlands Police Station and has been a tower of strength through the past six months of bushfires, floods and COVID-19. I was able to see John and his team in action during the summer bushfires. The community is so much the better for the efforts they put in. The leadership he provided made the community a much safer place during those times. John has always been available and able to advise and support me on many matters. He is now an integral member of the regional task force that I established to deal with the COVID-19 crisis in my region. His leadership in the community is well respected and appreciated. Well done! His reward is richly deserved.

**STEVE RADFORD**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (19:51:57):** I congratulate Broken Hill businessman Steve Radford, who has raised over \$50,000 for local charity Lifeline Broken Hill Country to Coast. Inspired by the work Lifeline Broken Hill Country to Coast does in the community, Steve wanted to make a difference and help raise awareness of men's mental health issues. Steve initiated the Challenge the Stigma of Men's Mental Health campaign with the hope of raising \$5,000 and then matching the donation with \$5,000 of his own. In addition to the fundraising, community members could nominate a challenge for Steve to complete. In the spirit of the community Steve has chosen to sing Jimmy Barnes's *Working Class Man* from the balcony of the Broken Hill Pub. I congratulate Steve and Lifeline Broken Hill Country to Coast on their commitment to raising awareness of men's mental health in the Far West of New South Wales. All funds raised will support Lifeline's programs and services in the region.

**VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (19:52:54):** Each year on the Queen's birthday we celebrate outstanding Australians for their inspiring work in our community. I was proud to see that a number of Queen's Birthday Honours recipients are residents of my electorate of Vaucluse. I congratulate University of Sydney Chancellor Belinda Hutchinson, AC; test cricketer Michael Clarke, AO; philanthropist Greta Moran, AO; businessman Kerry Stokes, AO; businessman Michel-Henri Carriol, AM; the late Dr Michele Cotton, AM; Charles Sturt University Dean of Rural Medicine Professor Lesley Forster, AM; University of Sydney Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Stephen Garton, AM; businessman John Hall, AM; medical researcher Emeritus Professor John Mackenzie Ham, AM; philanthropist Gretel Packer, AM; lawyer Raymond Whitten, AM; English Channel swimmer and surf lifesaver Cyril Baldock, OAM, from Bondi Surf Bathers Life Saving Club; surgeon Dr Peter Conrad, OAM. I extend my congratulations to all of this year's Queen's Birthday Honours recipients.

**TRIBUTE TO DENIS NICHOLS**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (19:54:06):** Today I honour unionist, environmentalist, former Newcastle councillor and deputy mayor and Stockton local Denis Nichols, who passed away on 25 May aged 73. As a life member of North Newcastle Rugby League Football Club and a Newcastle representative player, Denis was known to be tough on the field, but he was just as tough off it. He was one of the Hunter's great leaders for the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, with his tenure as the longest serving president of the Newcastle Trades Hall Council from 1983 to 1997 proof of the enormous regard his comrades held for him. As an active environmentalist, Denis helped initiate the clean-up and beautification of the Newcastle foreshore, harbour and Throsby Creek, work that will benefit many generations to come. Denis was a quiet achiever, but his legacy will be part of Newcastle's social fabric long into the future.

**RICHARD THOMAS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:55:05):** I congratulate Richard Thomas for his 40 years of service at the Junee Shire Council. Mr Thomas joined the council as a junior gardener in June 1980 at just 17 years of age. He worked hard and developed many skills, learning how to drive rollers, sweepers and trucks for the council, gained his loader licence and spent two decades operating trucks and machinery around the shire. But gardening was his true passion and he returned to this work in 2002. Mr Thomas has carefully cared for the shire's cemeteries, gardens and lawns, looking after these important places across the shire's towns, villages and recreational spaces. His dedication to his work can be seen in the immaculate appearance of these places. In his four decades of service he has worked with many bosses and staff, met workers from all walks of life and seen the town evolve. In his own words, he is still enjoying what he is doing. I congratulate Richard Thomas on this magnificent career milestone.

**WOLLONGONG ELECTORATE SMALL BUSINESSES**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (19:56:05):** The social and business restrictions associated with COVID-19 have put incredible strain on business operators, but many Wollongong businesses have innovated to keep their staff employed and their businesses open to support many parts of the community. I thank His Boy Elroy, the Good Times Only Group, Oh Dang cafe, Arthouse Cafe, the Fraternity Club, Wests Illawarra, Five Barrels Brewing, M2 Kitchen, Samaras, Manjit's Wollongong, Lee and Me, Lower East Cafe, One Cake Down, All Occasions Flowers, Brindles Hair and Beauty, Attaboy Restaurant, Cranky's Canteen, Harley and Johns Seafood, Villa D'Oro Function Centre, Two Smoking Barrels, SoCo Kitchen, Coniston Bakery, Corrimal Chamber of Commerce, Illawarra Business Chamber, Illawarra Women in Business, the German Club Wollongong, Lucchini Engineering, Marciano Industry Group, Clarks Mining Services, Destination Wollongong and the Illawarra Menus Facebook page that was set up in support of many local restaurants and cafes. They were

also strongly supported by our local media outlets, which continue to do all they can to raise the need to support small business in the community.

#### ARTEXPRESS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:57:11):** I congratulate two local students whose 2019 HSC artworks have been included in the most recent ArtExpress exhibition. Jade Abrahams from Terrigal High School created an artwork called *After the things of nature* featuring drawn pieces using a mixed media approach. Shona Bolst from Central Coast Adventist School created an artwork called *Content disposition*, which is a collection of handmade pieces that explore the way people live and what they value. ArtExpress is usually hosted at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, but this year the exhibition has moved into a new virtual reality. The exhibition allows viewers to experience the artworks as though they are walking through an actual gallery. I encourage everyone to give it a go. ArtExpress really is the Oscars of the HSC art world. I am delighted that two Central Coast students are among the 50 from across New South Wales. Congratulations again to both Jade and Shona on their excellent contributions to the ArtExpress exhibition this year.

#### INTERNATIONAL CLEANERS DAY

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:58:07):** Yesterday, Monday 15 June, was International Cleaners Day. Cleaners are the unsung heroes that keep our society running. They do their work and then disappear without credit or acknowledgment. During my time with the United Workers Union, I saw just how hardworking cleaners are, how essential they are and how undervalued they are. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted just how important cleaners are. Cleaners ensured our hospitals remained working at top efficiency; they are the frontline soldiers in the fight against coronavirus. Once again I say thank you to all the hardworking cleaners who do so much for so many, often without much in the way of acknowledgement. I thank Lisa, who cleans my electorate office in Charlestown, and the cleaners who support my colleagues and me at the Parliament of New South Wales.

#### JUDITH MEPPM, AM, PSM

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (19:59:05):** I acknowledge Judith Meppem of Northmead for becoming a Member of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for significant service to nursing administration and community health. Judith started her career in 1969 as a registered nurse and in 1970 became a registered midwife. She began at Auburn and Moree district hospitals. Then Judith took on nursing management roles at Prince Henry Hospital, Sydney; Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick; and the Royal Newcastle Hospital. Judith served as director of nursing and midwifery at Westmead Hospital before being the Western Sydney area director of nursing. From 1990 to 2002 Judith served New South Wales as our inaugural Chief Nursing Officer. Judith was awarded the Public Service Medal in 2003 for outstanding public service to nursing administration. The State's Ministry of Health continues to dedicate four annual scholarships in her name. Judith has also served on numerous committees, in advisory roles, and as visiting professor at the University of Technology, Sydney. Congratulations Judith Meppem of Northmead, AM, PSM.

#### KOGIL STREET PRESCHOOL

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:00:03):** I acknowledge Kogil Street Preschool, Narrabri, which recently celebrated 53 years of service to the Narrabri community. The preschool has come from humble beginnings, which all started with a group of community members willing to do anything needed to start a preschool for the children of the town. The preschool offers 39 places for children aged three to five years with long day care hours. The preschool's ability to meet the ever-changing needs of a community is at the very core of its values. Their curriculum is abundant in play opportunities that promote learning such as science, gardening, cooking, construction, maths and literacy. I congratulate Kogil Street Preschool on reaching 53 years of service and on its commitment to providing a quality early learning service in the Narrabri community.

#### ANGELA VAN DYKE

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (20:00:54):** Since 2017 Angela Van Dyke has been the Chief Executive Officer of Riverstone Neighbourhood Centre and Community Aid Service Inc. Angela has a history of over 30 years working for vulnerable people across western Sydney in a variety of roles. Before taking up the role at Riverstone she worked as community engagement manager at SydWest Multicultural Services in Blacktown, for Western Sydney Partners in Recovery contributing to improved outcomes for people living with mental illness, and for Fairfield City Council developing strategic planning and policy on a range of health issues for that community. She had prior experience in community housing, youth justice and ethnic liaison roles in various parts of western Sydney.

Riverstone Neighbourhood Centre has a long and proud history of working with local residents and services to improve life opportunities for local people. Angela has brought her professional experience, compassionate nature, wide range of skills and integrity to this role, ensuring that the service has been maintained through some challenging circumstances for her, the staff and the service. She has won the trust and respect of the local community through her efforts. She is a champion of western Sydney.

#### **PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE TEACHERS**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:02:00):** I thank our teachers who have worked throughout the pandemic and dealt with the challenges carefully and thoughtfully. Often changes were made so quickly that teachers had only days to alter their teaching models from face to face to online. Schools in Port Stephens reacted swiftly and organised drive-by school pick-ups of learning materials, upskilled staff and modified classrooms. They changed, adapted and reinvented a whole new way to teach their students, and they did it with their student and family needs at heart. They just made it work. I looked online in wonder at our local schools as they not only adapted, but went above and beyond to ensure their students were doing okay. I saw Irrawang High School physical education teachers delighting followers with their regular costumed photo shoots; Wirreanda Public School teachers delivering Easter eggs and thoughtful messages to every student at their home dressed as superheroes; and Medowie Public School driving their mascot Bunji to visit and wave to students from his chauffeured car. Education in Port Stephens is in very safe and good hands.

#### **CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:03:06):** I recently joined forces with the Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society to participate in this year's Clean Up Australia Day, which is a fantastic initiative that has been marked on our calendars for over 30 years. Over these past three decades, over 17 million Australians have undertaken Clean Up Australia activities and over a whopping 350,000 ute loads of rubbish have been removed from our local environments. These are great achievements and the numbers just keep growing. This year I donned my waterproof shoes and gloves and set off to Lime Kiln Bay, which is a wetland in my electorate of Oatley. I was expertly led by the Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society to clear the wetlands of rubbish. Knowing the difference that it would make to the thriving ecosystem in the area was a very rewarding feeling. I thank Liz Cameron, the society's secretary, for her invitation to participate in their fantastic clean-up effort.

#### **INTERNATIONAL CLEANERS DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (20:03:58):** International Cleaners Day is an important time to recognise and thank all of our hardworking cleaners who keep us safe and healthy every day. During the COVID-19 pandemic our cleaners have been working at the front line of our community. Their dedication has kept our communities, family, friends and vulnerable people safe and free from further infectious disease. Our cleaners have been working hard to ensure that our workplaces, indoor and outdoor areas, shops, public transport and hospitals remain free from infection. Their work is critical in keeping our buildings clean and hygienic. I especially recognise and thank our cleaners in the Prospect electorate, who work tirelessly in our buildings, public facilities, schools and health services. I also thank the workers and members of the Health Services Union for advocating for and protecting our health workers and healthcare facilities. Their valuable contribution to our community ensures that we can continue to operate in these difficult times. I thank all our cleaners who sacrifice themselves for the protection of our community.

#### **MULGOA ELECTORATE PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (20:05:02):** I congratulate five students from the Mulgoa electorate for their success at the 2019 public speaking competition. In November last year schools across the St Clair and Erskine Park learning community partnered with the Rotary Club of St Marys to set up a public speaking competition that would give local students the opportunity to showcase their abilities, thoughts and ideas in front of a judging panel and audience. The standard of competitors was high, making choosing the overall winners very difficult, but the following five students were the deserving winners: In the high school division, the winner was Erin Galang from Erskine Park High School and the runner-up was Calinda Surene from St Clair High School. In the primary school division, the winner was Matthew Wilson from Clairgate Public School. The first runner-up was Tayla Russell from St Clair Public School and the third runner-up was Troy Hackenberg from Blackwell Public School. I congratulate all those deserving winners. I wish them all the best for their future and look forward to hearing of their next great achievements.

#### **ANTOJITOS RESTAURANT**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (20:06:01):** Chicken soup is an oft-used trope for things that make us feel better, but during the COVID-19 pandemic it took on a new meaning for Newcastle West's Antojitos restaurant and the Victims of Crime Assistance League [VOCAL]. Despite taking a significant hit to his trade as

a result of COVID-19 restrictions, co-owner Eric Flores decided it was still important to give back so he popped a new item on the takeaway menu for the Mexican street food eatery—chicken tortilla soup, with the proceeds of sales going to VOCAL. So far almost \$3,000 has been raised for VOCAL to provide assistance to victims and survivors of domestic violence. But the fundraising has not ceased yet. I thank Antojitos for the fantastic initiative and for continuing to support those in our community who need it the most.

#### **KIAMA ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (20:06:58):** I congratulate a number of Illawarra residents who were recognised in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours List, including distinguished professor Shi Xue for his contribution to science education as founding director of the Institute for Superconducting and Electronic Materials at the University of Wollongong. David Leigh of Kiama was awarded the Emergency Services Medal in recognition of his exemplary commitment to the safety of his local community and to the work of the NSW SES. Mr Leigh has been a member of the NSW State Emergency Service for 25 years.

Wollongong Superintendent Chris Craner, a policeman of nearly 30 years, was honoured with an Australian Police Medal for his passion for community engagement and for helping vulnerable people with boxing and touch football as part of the RISEUP program. David and Diane North of Mount Pleasant were honoured to receive their OAMs together. The couple, who owned Harrison's Pharmacy in the Wollongong mall for 20 years, have a long history of volunteering—David with Scouts and the Illawarra Basketball Association and Diane with the National Basketball League and Red Cross.

#### **CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (20:08:00):** I acknowledge the recipients of Queen's Birthday Honours in the Charlestown electorate. Mr John Deacon of Kahibah, a former teacher, director, producer and puppet maker who has dedicated so much time and effort to Starstruck since co-founding the local schools performance showcase in 1983, received the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the performing arts and education. Mrs Florence Monaghan of Adamstown Heights received her OAM for her service to netball. She has been vice president of Newcastle Netball Association since 2000 and a member of the umpires committee since 1980 and involved in the People with Disabilities program since 1986. Those recipients showcase the Charlestown electorate's community spirit and I congratulate them on their well-deserved recognition.

#### **GUNYAH CRAFT SHOP**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:08:54):** I recognise the great work done by the Gunyah Craft Shop in Grenfell. It is a registered charity that sells a range of crafts and goods to raise money for the local community. The organisation is run by volunteers and members of the community, who contribute either by making the goods or manning the shop. They make a wonderful difference in the Grenfell community. While times have been tough over the past couple of months during the COVID-19 pandemic, the group have done their best to keep the business rolling. Those who make the goods sold at the shop are very talented and produce a wonderful array of metalwork, knitted goods, sewing, baking and preserves and other handmade products. Many different community groups have benefitted from funds raised by the group and they are to be commended for their dedication and effort over the past 47 years.

#### **NSW POLICE FORCE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (20:09:49):** I congratulate the 10 members of the NSW Police Force who were recognised on the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Being awarded the Australian Police Medal is recognition of the profound impact that each member has had on the communities they serve and the way in which their passion and expertise enrich our police force. These officers have a remarkable 344 years of combined service to the New South Wales community and I thank them for their ongoing dedication to public safety. I extend my deepest congratulations to Chief Inspector Nicole Bruce from Richmond Police District, Detective Superintendent Daniel Doherty from the homicide squad, Detective Chief Inspector Peter Faux from state intelligence operations, Superintendent Stephen Hegarty from Marine Area Command, Detective Superintendent Murray Reynolds from Bankstown Police Area Command, Chief Inspector John Klepczarek from Hume Police District, Detective Chief Inspector Gregory Thomas from northern regions operations, Sergeant Jeffrey Farmer from Port Stephens Hunter Police District and Sergeant Ian Miller. I thank them for protecting our families and community.

#### **RONAN REVELL**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:10:58):** I recognise Ronan Revell of Wee Waa. On Saturday 16 May, a bright shiny red cotton picker trundled its way down to a cotton field on the outskirts of Wee Waa. The picker

was produced in 1948 and is a M-12-H model, International Harvester single row cotton picker that Ronan Revell saved from the trash heap and has transformed into an historical treasure that will now call the Wee Waa Museum home. The picker's revival has been a labour of love from Ronan, who has led the restoration project that also involved help from his wife, Wendy, and a dedicated army of volunteers. Thankfully, Wendy shares her husband's passion for preservation because the picker project has often extended beyond their big shed workshop onto the couple's driveway. Its signature international red paint colour has also left its mark on many items of clothing in the Revell household. I commend Ronan on his commitment to this restoration project and the boost in morale it has given the Wee Waa community.

#### **CENTRAL COAST ANIMAL CARE FACILITY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:11:55):** I have stood in this Chamber many times and spoken about the great work that is done by the Central Coast Animal Care Facility and I was humbled to be made its patron. I cannot begin to acknowledge the great work that Dee Walton and her team at the Central Coast Animal Care Facility do for the dogs and cats across the Central Coast community with their no-kill policy. They also rehome animals from other areas around New South Wales. For the past 12 months Dee and her team have been working on a project with her friends Chris Bowen from Claws N Paws; Dr Amelia Cohen from the West Gosford vet; her fantastic teammate Kim; and Sarah, who has been running the Central Coast community rescue, which benefits animals across the Central Coast. The great news is that they have been granted their licence by the Veterinary Practitioners Board, which will enable the Central Coast Animal Care Facility to open its own veterinary clinic, Central Coast Community Vet. This is game-changing for this fantastic team and I encourage all of our community to get on board and support Dee and her team with this project.

#### **DON KENNAUGH**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:13:00):** I recognise local Gilgandra resident Don Kennaugh, who has been livening up the local grocery shopping experience recently by playing the keyboard in Carlo's Supa IGA to raise money for cancer research. Cancer research and fundraising is close to Don's heart after losing his son to cancer eight years ago. It has been his mission to thank Gilgandra and to give back. Don's performances at the IGA have been well received and residents have commended him for putting on a good show. I thank Don for his service to the Gilgandra community.

#### **SEVEN HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:13:38):** Seven Hills Public School is a good local school with terrific community spirit and great teachers and support staff. Seven Hills Public educates over 130 students from parts of central Seven Hills and south-east Lalor Park areas. I acknowledge the young school leaders who have been assisting the teachers, support staff, the community and, most importantly, their fellow pupils in recently challenging times. Well done to Seven Hills Public School captains Avneet Singh and Aahana Sood for their leadership throughout the year thus far. I know they will continue to represent their school and community with pride for the remainder of 2020. Seven Hills Public School has a great P&C and I thank the community support from President Tamara Martin, Vice-President Tahnee de Beer, Treasurer Amanda Jarvis, Secretary Kristin Dunlop and parent representative Fiona Kent. I wish the Seven Hills Public School community all the best for the rest of the 2020 academic year.

#### **SHARON BERIOTTO**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (20:14:33):** I congratulate Glenmore Park resident Sharon Beriotto on receiving the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation Senior Sports award for her achievements in stock sport. Though not a widely known sport, the game is described as bowls on ice. It is similar to the Winter Olympic sport of curling where competitors slide stocks over a bitumen surface aiming for a target or to cover the longest distance. Sharon has been playing the sport for only three years at the Blacktown Kareela Reserve netball courts, but was recently ranked as high as third in Australia for the individual target event and the distance event. To ensure she is always at the top of her game, Sharon trains twice a week and competes regularly both interstate and overseas. I congratulate Sharon on her award and I wish her all the best for her ambition to be the best in this unique sport and competition.

#### **KIAMA ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (20:15:20):** I congratulate a number of Shoalhaven residents who were recognised in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours. Christine Dunstan, OAM, of Berry has achieved a lot in her 54-year career, including the Sydney Theatre Awards Lifetime Achievement award in 2016. She was recognised for her contribution to the performing arts as a producer and mentor. Doctor Richard Morris, a visiting medical officer to the intensive care unit at Shoalhaven District Hospital, was made a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to medicine, and to

emergency and disaster medical response. Bomaderry's Bruce Murphy was awarded the Order of Australia for his service to the Shoalhaven through Lions, Scouts, various charities, and the Shoalhaven Suicide Prevention and Awareness Network. He started his family funeral business in Nowra and was a great help to me as a young person in securing an electronic magnifier. Bevin Hardy of Bomaderry was awarded the OA for service to the community of Bomaderry and to youth through Scouts.

James and Rae Doak from The Arbour in Berry were also awarded the OA for their service to the community through Probus, Lions and various other organisations, including the Seven Mile Beach Landcare Group and the Gerroa Community Association. In the military division of awards, Royal Australian Navy Captain Allen Whittaker, CSC, was awarded the OA for meritorious service in the field of navy aviation capability development. Warrant Officer Stephen Cheeseman was awarded the OAM for his meritorious performance of duty in the fields of naval aviation and personnel mentoring and management. Former commanding officer of the South Coast Police District Superintendent Stephen Hegarty was awarded the Police Medal for his 30 years of service in the NSW Police Force. He is currently serving as the Commander of the Marine Area Command. We have so many wonderful and dedicated people in our community. These citizens are just some of the very deserving people who were recognised on this important occasion.

#### **KATIE CLEMENTS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:16:30):** I congratulate Cowra local Katie Clements, who has been named as a finalist for the 2020 Trainee of the Year at the Western NSW Training Awards. Katie completed her traineeship last year. She was employed by Skillset and hosted by Cowra Early Childhood Services while completing a diploma of early childhood education and care with TAFE NSW. Katie is to be congratulated on her efforts. It is a wonderful achievement to have been nominated for the trainee of the year award. Katie has a passion for the learning and the development of young children. We are very fortunate to have her pursuing a career in early childhood in Cowra. I wish her all the very best for the future.

#### **PIPER CAROL**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (20:17:15):** On New Year's Eve, whilst all the rest of us were celebrating the coming of a new decade, Glenmore Park couple Sean and Raegan Carol were at Nepean Hospital ready to welcome their newest family member. Raegan went into labour with their fifth child in the early hours of the morning and was taken to hospital straightaway. Upon arriving, Raegan and her husband did not think at all that they would have the first baby born in Nepean Hospital in 2020, as other women were already in labour. Surprisingly, after only two hours of labour, Sean and Raegan welcomed their baby girl, Piper, at 4.08 a.m. on 1 January, making her the first baby born at Nepean Hospital for 2020. Piper was born a happy and healthy little girl who was ready to meet her four very excited siblings after only a single overnight stay. The other four Carol children are obviously infatuated with their new sister and the family is settling in well. I congratulate the Carol family and wish them all the very best.

#### **HUMANITY MATTERS**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—**I am delighted to offer my ongoing support to Humanity Matters, a long-standing not for profit community organisation in Bankstown committed to improving the lives of our local youth and providing them with opportunities to shine. Established in 1987 as Bankstown Multicultural Youth Service, the organisation changed its name to Humanity Matters in 2018 to emphasise their strong policy of inclusion and currently runs a number of valuable services designed to reach out to young people in Bankstown and South West Sydney. Their initiatives include the Community Cantina commercial café and events space in Bankstown, the Humanity United Food Truck mobile food service and training facility, as well as holding Street Festivals and various creative arts events throughout the year, with many young people benefiting from these vital community building services. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and commend Humanity Matters, CEO Ms Mary Malak, Street Youth Services Manager Mr Sarkis Achmar and the entire management committee, and applaud and commend their leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring Humanity Matters can continue to serve our local community. I acknowledge and commend Humanity Matters and thank them for their tremendous contribution to our local community.

#### **ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND THE PHILIPPINES**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—**I take this opportunity to commend the Metropolitan of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines, His Eminence, Metropolitan Basilios Kodseie, who joined in calling for the restrictions on places of worship to be eased. This has been a trying time for religious organisations, whose contribution towards efforts to combat the virus by applying social distancing rules have required changes to many of their significant practices and traditions.

I acknowledge His Eminence, Metropolitan Basilios and the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines and commend their efforts in advocating in favour of easing restrictions to allow more people at gatherings in places of worship and their unwavering leadership during this difficult and challenging time. I thank all people of faith for their patience during this period, with having to adjust significant traditions and religious practices, to avoid the spread of Coronavirus and preserve life. I acknowledge and commend the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines and thank them for their tremendous contribution to our community.

### **QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—The Davidson electorate had a number of local residents recognised this year in the Queen's Birthday honours list. Among them is the Hon Tony Abbott, who received a Companion of the Order of Australia for his eminent service to the people and Parliament of Australia. Dr Catherine Foley of St Ives Chase was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia, for her distinguished service to research science and to the advancement of women in physics. Dr Foley was also the winner of the NSW Premier's Woman of the Year Award in 2013. Dr Jennifer Gordon of Roseville was recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia, for her significant service to psychological medicine and to professional medical bodies. Another recipient of the Member of the Order of Australia Award was Dr Emily Matters, for her service to education and professional associations. Congratulations to these people and everyone else recognised in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours list.

### **ST IVES SHOWGROUND**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—St Ives Showground is a valuable recreational resource in my electorate of Davidson providing many benefits for the community. The showground has hosted many organisations and events over the years, including the St Ives Medieval Faire, the Northern Suburbs Agricultural and Horticultural Society, Northern Suburbs Dog Training, the Ku-ring-gai Community Workshop and many others. I acknowledge them all for contributing to our local community. When the coronavirus pandemic hit, it forced the postponement and cancellation of many activities that showgrounds rely on for their income. So I am pleased that Ku-ring-gai Council have secured \$88,000 in funding for the Showground under Phase 1 of the NSW Government's Covid-19 Stimulus package. The upgrade will increase the site's capacity to support existing and new uses such as equestrian and agricultural events, sporting and hobby clubs, a community shed and markets. I am supporting further funding for the Showground under Phase 2 of the NSW Government's Stimulus Package.

### **BRUNO EFOTI**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I recognise Mr Bruno Efoti and Tradies inSight. Having worked as a carpenter and business owner in the construction industry, Bruno observed many tradies and their families struggling with the pressures of business in tough times, and the reluctance of men to talk about the issues they faced. Bruno founded Tradies inSight, a not-for-profit based from his home town of Dubbo, to provide education and support around mental health and well-being, and to link those in need with support services in Western NSW. Bruno identified an absence of mental health support aimed specifically among tradespeople, and men generally. Bruno studied counselling to equip himself with skills to further assist the men who turned to him for help over their depression, marriage breakdown and thoughts of suicide. Bruno understood the environment and atmosphere required for men to open up was critical, and ultimately it revolved around food. Bruno has since toured across the Central West hosting his traditional Tongan Umu and spit-roast meal events, entirely self-funded, for more than 1000 men who joined to share a meal, through which conversation flowed and men opened up with one another. I commend Bruno for his initiative, care and compassion. Congratulations Bruno.

### **ADRIAN "EDDIE" TESLER**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—It is with great sadness that I pay tribute to the late Adrian 'Eddy' Tesler. Mr Tesler recently died at the age of 74 after what can be described as an interesting life. Mr Tesler was born in Holland in 1946 and just three years later arrived on the shores of Australia. His family settled in Taree but like myself, at the age of 17 Mr Tesler decided join the Australian Defence Force—the 1st Royal Australian Regiment B. He served in Vietnam in 1965 and 1966 alongside the American 173rd Airborne unit. After returning to Australia, Mr Tesler and his wife Margaret tied the knot and chose to raise their children Craig and Amanda in Leumeah. Mr Tesler spent his years post-Defence Force working as a mechanic, gardener and handyman. But he was best known as the Scoutmaster at 1st Bradbury Scouts, which he joined in the late 1970s. His guidance and dedication to the scouts was a source of inspiration to many. Mr Tesler was even awarded the Campbelltown Council Heritage Medallion Award in 2010. The loss of Mr Tesler has left a great hole in the Campbelltown community. Rest in peace, Eddy.

**SCOTT GIBBONS AWARDED, OAM**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—I wish to congratulate a community member, Scott Gibbons on receiving a Medal of the Order Australia (OAM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours for his efforts in charity fundraising. Mr Gibbons work with charities and community organisations is extensive. He's a patron of the Enough is Enough anti-violence movement, auctioneer and MC for charities including Egtober Foundation, Variety, the DANNI Foundation's Jelly Bean Ball, Purple Tie charity and Education Cruise. He also works with Foster Care Angels, Homicide Victims' Support Group, Victor Chang Cardia Research Institute and Cave to Waves 4WD Adventures. Mr Gibbons is well regarded within the local community and is exceptionally deserving of this prestigious award. Once again I congratulate him on this outstanding achievement and thank him for his community service over the years.

**KEITH KENT, OAM**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)**—In the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours list a good friend and local champion, Mr Keith Kent of Ingleburn, was awarded an OAM. Few people are more deserving of such an honour. I have known Keith for many years. His community involvement, however, goes back many decades when Ingleburn was a much smaller town. Keith is probably best known for his involvement in Lions Clubs International. The motto of Lions is 'We Serve'. Keith is the embodiment of that motto. Apart from Lions, Keith has been involved in any number of community organisations. From scouts, to P and Cs, to various Council committees and the like, Keith has made his contribution to so many aspects of community life. A number of years ago Keith lost the love of life – his beloved Muriel. Theirs was a marriage and partnership like few others, and I know that Keith would be the first to acknowledge that he shares his award with her. I also know that while not present in person at Government House when Keith receives his award, Muriel will be there in spirit, nodding her approval and beaming with pride. Congratulations Keith Kent OAM.

**RAY JAMES, OAM**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)**—Congratulations to my good friend and long-serving community member, Ray James, on being awarded an OAM in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours list. In receiving this honour, Ray joins his wife Pauline, who earlier this year also received an OAM. Both Ray and Pauline were recognised for their service to veterans, their families and the community. A Vietnam Veteran, Ray served in the Royal Australian Navy for more than 20 years. He spent a further 26 years in the Navy Reserves. Ray is the Acting President of RSL NSW and State Vice President of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia. He was President of the Ingleburn Sub-branch from 2011 to 2019, where he has been a member since 2005. Ray has also been the President of the Macarthur Sub-branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia since 2014. Ray's active interest in supporting veterans extends to working to increase awareness, resources and funding to support veterans' mental health. I commend Ray and Pauline's ongoing support for our veterans and thank them for their extensive contributions to our community.

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS SPEAKING COMPETITION**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I would like to congratulate five students from the Mulgoa electorate for their success at the 2019 Public Speaking Competition. In November last year, schools across the St Clair and Erskine Park learning community partnered with the St Marys Rotary Club to house a public speaking competition that would give local students the opportunity to showcase their abilities, thoughts and ideas in front of a judging panel and audience. The standard of competitors was very high making the choosing of the overall winners very difficult, yet the following five students stood out amongst the rest. From the High Schools division:

- Winner Erin Galang from Erskine Park High School
- Runner up Calinda Surene from St Clair High School

From the Primary Schools division:

- Winner Matthew Wilson from Clairgate Public School
- First Runner up Tayla Russell from St Clair Public School
- Third Runner up Troy Hackenberg from Blackwell Public School

Congratulations to all these deserving winners, I wish you all the best for your future and look forward to hearing of your next great achievement.

**SHARON BERIOTTO**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I would like to congratulate Glenmore Park resident, Sharon Beriotto, for receiving the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation Senior Sports Award for her achievements in stock sport. Not

a widely known sport, the game is described as "bowls on ice" and similar to the Winter Olympic sport of curling where competitors slide stocks over a bitumen surface, aiming for a target or to cover the longest distance. Sharon has been playing the sport for only three years at the Blacktown Kareela Reserve netball courts, but was recently ranked as high as third in Australia for the individual target event and distance event. To ensure she is always at the top of her game, Sharon trains twice a week and competes regularly at competitions both interstate and overseas. This year in March, Sharon will travel to Germany to represent the Australian women's team at the World Championships. Congratulations Sharon on your award and I wish you all the best for your overseas competition. Best of luck!

#### **OUR BUS DRIVERS**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I recognise the tireless efforts of all of our public transport employees and especially the bus drivers of the Eastern Suburbs. Public transport is an absolutely essential service and our bus drivers have been showing up to work every day throughout this crisis, and they deserve our thanks and respect. Our bus drivers, maintenance crew, transport cleaners and all those that has kept our transport system moving are some of the true, local heroes of the pandemic. They have continued to operate services, throughout the shutdown, ensuring that those without access to private vehicles can continue to go about their daily lives, make their appointments, and access supermarkets. I would like to extend my thanks, and the thanks of the Coogee community to our bus drivers. Throughout the crisis you have helped our community get to and from work, to visit family in need of care and to allow people to continue on with their lives. You make our local area a better place to live. Thank you for all of your support throughout this crisis and I promise that you will continue to have mine.

#### **JOHN JAMIESON**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—John Jamieson is an Eastern Suburbs Labor Party stalwart and one of Gough Whitlam's greatest admirers often referring to the period as Labor's Golden years. Known for his love of all old school muscle cars, John can often be seen driving his right hand drive Mustang around the Eastern Suburbs. A Ford Man through and through. While born and bred in Cronulla, John moved to the Eastern Suburbs in the early 90s. In 1989, John started Jamieson Foley & Associates Consulting Engineers and ensured justice for many drivers of old rundown vehicles. John is a forensic engineer and specialist in road safety, working in Australia and internationally. John has been fundamental in shaping the face of Eastern Suburbs progressive Labor politics and has served as the SEC President, as Waverley Branch President, and has been a loyal and long term booth captain at Waverley Public School as well a regular candidate in Waverley Council elections. During the Patricks dispute, John did his bit and provided picketers with needed snacks and refreshments. Wherever and whenever there is a Labor cause, disadvantage or inequity, or a struggle against oppression, John Jamieson will be there, always generous and supporting the comrades.

#### **CHEF BRYCE HIGGINS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Congratulations to local first-year apprentice chef, Bryce Higgins, on being awarded a financial scholarship through the Hunter Culinary Association. Bryce, who has a passion for cooking, was working front-of-house at The Happy Wombat when he was employed as a mature-age first year apprentice. The \$2,000 scholarship will assist with equipment such as knives and cookbooks or allow Bryce, if he wishes, to dine out at high profile restaurants that he otherwise may not be able to afford. Other recipients of the award include Jye Deller of Café Mocha in Bateau Bay; Kirsty Grant of Ettalong Pub; Ebony McGrory Clark of Restaurant Mason in Newcastle; and Tyson Atton of Yellow Billy Restaurant in Pokolbin. Many thanks to the Hunter Culinary Association Chairman, Gus Maher, and the Committee, for continuing to make these scholarships available to talented first-year apprentice chefs and for supporting and mentoring young and aspiring chefs and apprentices. Once again, Bryce, congratulations on your achievements and best wishes for your future career in the industry.

#### **GLENDALE TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL PUSH UP CHALLENGE**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Last month, students and teachers from Glendale Technology High School completed the Push-Up Challenge to increase mental health awareness and to raise funds for Headspace, National Youth Mental Health Organisation. The Push-Up Challenge is a unique project that engages people in learning about mental health. Challenge participants are offered mental health tips and facts daily. The Challenge started in 2018 and runs for 21 days in May, with the target amount of 3046 push-ups. It represents the number of lives lost in 2018 in Australia to suicide. The Glendale Technology High School team consisted of Gavin Wilson, Ellie Singleton, Craig Clinton, Peter Henson, Chad Mayo, Charlene Nash, Principal Anthony Angel, Matt Erich, Dylan Morgan, Leigh Whitehead and Dylan Booth. A combined effort saw the team raise \$562, and complete 24,979 push-ups in the 21 days. The team of teachers found motivation and camaraderie in completing push-ups together while at school during COVID-19. The team advises that they plan to sign up again next year and get

students involved in the Push-up Challenge. Congratulations to all participants of the Push-Up Challenge on a successful challenge for 2020.

#### **BLAZE AID**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I inform the House of the wonderful work that BlazeAid continue to do in my Electorate after the devastating bushfires. In particular I would like to particularly thank BlazeAid Vice President Chris Male, who tirelessly co-ordinates the 25 volunteers currently under her guidance. It has been more than 6 months since the fires. BlazeAid have had 510 properties register for assistance and they have helped repair or replace with their volunteer force 280 fences in my Electorate. With more to be done to help communities, Chris has restated their commitment that they won't leave until the last job is completed. Volunteers are currently being hosted by the Wingham Showground. I applaud the wonderful work that BlazeAid continue to perform for the farmers in the Myall Lakes Electorate and again thank Chris and her team for their commitment and dedication to see the work through.

#### **UNCLE LYALL MUNRO SENIOR**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I recognise Uncle Lyall Munro Senior who sadly, recently passed away. I knew Uncle Lyall through my role as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and through my involvement in events surrounding the Myall Creek Memorial and commemorations. I'd certainly read about him before I met him, including in the postscript to Roger Milliss' Waterloo Creek. He was a proud Kamilaroi man from Moree. He was at the forefront of struggles for justice and land rights for Aboriginal people. He was one of a number of local men who joined the Freedom Rides organised by Charlie Perkins in the 1960s. They protested the exclusion of Aboriginal people from the swimming pools at Moree. He helped set up the Aboriginal Legal Service in the 1970s. He was involved in a range of organisations including the Aboriginal Medical Service, the Aboriginal Housing Company, the Aboriginal Children's Service and many others. He will be missed. Vale Uncle Lyall Munro.

#### **MIA DISTRICT VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTERS**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise and thank the members of the NSW Rural Fire Service - MIA District who fought on the frontline of fires across NSW. This includes full-time staff as well as the many volunteers. The first crew left Griffith on 22 September, 2019 and the last crew came home on 25 February, 2020. Brigades located in the Murray electorate from the Shires of Carrathool, Griffith, Hay, Leeton and Murrumbidgee were deployed to Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Sydney, Clarence Valley, Nowra, Tumut, Tarcutta and Moruya. Some volunteers deploying multiple times to some of these areas. There were 141 MIA District Volunteers deployed for a total of 88.4 weeks which does not include travel times. They were engaged on the fire ground, vehicle movements, Air Radio Coms, Air Base operator and administration support. 85 of these volunteers were deployed multiple times, varying from 2 to 10 times. I want to highly praise the dedication and bravery of these men and women who fought so hard to protect and save our communities.

#### **ROSE ADLER**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I am pleased to bring to your attention the recognition of Mrs Rose Adler of Harden Murrumburrah who has been included in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours list as a recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia. Mrs Adler has left an indelible impact on this tightly knit community through her tireless volunteering with organisations including as a:

- Member of CWA
- Treasurer of Murrumburrah-Harden District Hospital Auxiliary
- Member of Harden View Club
- St Paul's Anglican Church
- Harden CanAssist
- Harden Meals on Wheels
- 1994 Harden Shire Council Citizen of the Year

Mrs Adler's tireless efforts for the community are to be commended and I am so pleased she has received this award.

#### **JOHN R. BARTON**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Today I recognise Mr John R Barton of Young who is celebrating 65 years as a real estate and stock and station agent. Mr Barton, who plans to retire in December this year, started

out in his father's business JA Barton & Co in 1955. Moving to Tamworth after school, John worked as a trainee engineer developing his skills by attending weekly cattle and sheep sales as well as pig and dairy cattle sales fortnightly. In 1960, John started his own business after the purchase of an agency that was closing due to retirement. This move saw John selling residential, commercial and rural properties in the area and later moving on to sell stock at the Young Saleyards. John is a well renowned and respected agent in the Young district and I congratulate him on this wonderful milestone and the services he has provided for the people of Young and surrounds.

#### **VALE JON RUNCHEL**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—I pay tribute to former Maitland, Newcastle and NSW Country rugby union prop Jon Runchel who recently passed away, aged just 39, after a two-year battle with cancer. Jon made a significant and lasting impact on rugby union and the Maitland Blacks and our community. I extend my deepest sympathies to Jon's wife Tara and their two children Jane and Axel, his extended family, his friends and the tight-knit Blacks community. 'Runchy', as he was known, grew up around Maitland and played 119 games for the Blacks. Impressively, all but nine of them were for the club's first 15. Jon played representative rugby for the Wildfires and the Cockatoos, and had stints with the Calgary Saints in Canada and the Las Vegas Blackjacks in the US. Runchy was described by those who knew him as a no-nonsense leader who committed himself 100 per cent; a strong coach and a committed mentor. While COVID-19 limited the hundreds who would have liked to pay their respects to Jon and his family last Friday, on behalf of the thousands in our community who'll remember Jon for generations, I pay our respects. Vale Jon.

#### **NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR WEEK**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—According to The Australian Red Cross, each blood donation can help save up to three lives. During the past year people of Maitland have rolled up their sleeves more than 11,420 times to donate blood and plasma. A quick look at the maths shows the lives of more than 30,000 people have potentially been enriched through these donations. This week is National Blood Donor Week and it coincides with the remarkable milestone of Peter Kirsop, an Ashtonfield donor who has just clocked up his 300th donation. Peter, who is 61, is a long way from finished. He intends to keep donating until he's 81, just as his mother did. As a plasma donor, Peter is able to donate fortnightly instead of every 12 weeks. He is on track to donate around another 500 times and record a total of more than 800 donations. A donor since the age of 18, Peter's commitment to donation was strengthened when his three-month-old daughter Sophie required a major operation and needed donated blood herself. Peter's story is a great reminder that donating blood takes just an hour of your time, but it could make a lifetime of difference to another.

#### **BINGARA MULTI-PURPOSE SERVICE CENTRE AUXILIARY**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise the Bingara Multi-Purpose Service Centre Auxiliary for their commitment to the well-being of the residents at the Bingara Centre. Recently the Auxiliary purchased devices for residents to keep them connected to families during the COVID-19 isolation period. Residents have embraced the technology openly, achieving technical use that they did not believe was possible for them. It enabled residents to stay in touch last Mother's Day. The auxiliary executive, comprising President Jill Smith, Secretary Wendy Reading and Treasurer June Ritter oversee a working membership of 16 from the Bingara. While not everyone may be on hand at one time, Beulah Molloy, Ann Hunter, Bill Galthorpe, Jean O'Brien, Kerry-Ann Thomas, Johnette Walker, Cindy Smith, Tracy Smith, Sheila Fraser, Terri Stonewille, Maureen McManus, Elizabeth Ritter, Russell Reading, Faye Edwards, and Marie Lanigan are committed volunteers. I commend these 19 community-minded people for the selfless time and energy they devote to others as the Bingara Multi-Purpose Service Centre Auxiliary.

#### **GWYDIR INDUSTRIES – DANCING WITH THE STARS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise the volunteers who support Gwydir Industries, an organisation providing employment training and real work experience for people with a disability. The town of Moree sees this industry as a vital contribution to our community and for it to run as well as it does, it needs the extra funds that the Dancing with the Stars event provides. This event brings the community together in support of every facet of the presentation, including provision for the dinner, drawing on local talent for the performances, and local contributions for the auction. It is a community gala that takes enormous organisation. The Dancing with the Stars committee includes Andrew Crowe, Eric Carrigan, Anne-Maree Carrigan, Tony Bailey, Howard Meppem, Lee Estens, and Barb Glennie, who sadly passed away this year. These volunteers devote considerable time over a two year period to provide a major social event, professional and festive in every sense. The outcome is a substantial donation to Gwydir Industries. Why is this important? Because without Gwydir Industries, there would be no employment, training, and sense of value and purpose to a special and valued sector of our community. I commend these seven

community-minded people for stepping up to ensure ongoing security for those attending the services at Gwydir Industries.

#### **ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I recently had the pleasure of attending lunch at the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese. The Archdiocese has a long history that begins in the late 19th century, and has a rich Orthodox community base that includes Lebanese, Greek and Russian worshippers stemming from the first waves of immigration in eastern Australia and Dunedin in New Zealand. In the following years, the Archdiocese continued to grow in both Australia and New Zealand, with the establishment of new missions and parishes, as well as the introduction of Sunday schools and Byzantine music schools. A property was purchased in Illawong, and this remains to be the current headquarters of the Archdiocese. It was great to catch up with his Eminence Metropolitan Basilios and other clergy members to discuss their exciting upcoming projects. I wish all members of the Antiochian a positive year ahead.

#### **AUSTRALIA BANGLADESH SPORTS AND CRICKET ASSOCIATION**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I recently had the pleasure of attending the Australia Bangladesh Sports and Cricket Association's Trophy Ceremony on the 15th of December, 2019. The Association has been active in promoting sport, as well as Bangladeshi culture and heritage, to the Bangladeshi community for over 25 years. 2019 marked the Silver Jubilee Edition of the Association's annual BD Gold Cup, which is a highly anticipated event in the community. In 2019, 12 teams participated in the Cup. It was great to attend the trophy ceremony and congratulate the victorious Randwick Raiders, who won 8 of their 9 matches throughout the year. I would particularly like to acknowledge the Man of the Match, awarded to Adnan Kabir of the Randwick Raiders. I would like to congratulate the Association on another very successful year, and for their continued work in engaging the Bangladeshi community through sport. I acknowledge Chairman Mohammad Alam, who has been a strong advocate for the Bangladeshi community in my local area. Thank you once again to the Association for having me attend the Ceremony. I wish you all the best for the upcoming year.

#### **CITY OF SYDNEY BUSHFIRE FUNDRAISING**

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

#### **ANZAC DAY 2020**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I'd like to put on record the creative commemoration of ANZAC Day in the Sydney electorate in response to the COVID-19 restrictions. People lit candles and held a moment's silence to remember those who sacrificed their lives and their health and wellbeing during war. The City of Sydney lit Town Hall red in remembrance and residents watched the official Canberra and Sydney memorial events online and on TV and listen on radio. Cllr Harriet Price initiated a Paddington home based event with residents standing outside their homes and I've seen the images online with messages about being physically apart but strong feelings of connectedness. I attended a very small ceremony and placed a wreath at Steyne Park with Senator Andrew Bragg, Member for Vacluse Gabrielle Upton and Woollahra Mayor Cllr Susan Wynne. My wreath remembered in particular service people who had to hide their sexuality in times when it was not OK to be lesbian or gay. People across the city and across the country found ways to join in and produce local events and commemorations while also observing distancing restrictions.

#### **BEECROFT MEN'S COFFEE GROUP**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)**—I had the opportunity to meet with a local group of men in local cafe to discuss local and state issues. This group identifies as the Beecroft Men's Coffee Group and consist of twelve gentlemen in their late sixties to mid-eighties. As a group they have met at BeeHive Cafe in Beecroft for approximately twenty years. The group's founding members, Patrick Gauci, Guy Mallam and Michael Williams coming from diverse professional backgrounds decided to make their catch-ups more regular as well as

invite others who may be interested. Their idea was to meet every week to maintain active camaraderie/friendship and enjoy stimulating discussion around the news of the day consisting of each of the members own perspectives. I enjoyed adding my own views and perspectives to their discussion, which at the time was focused on the overseas impact of the pandemic as well as sharing a description of my role as Member for Epping and Treasurer. In times like these, it is good thing to have friendship and a trusted support circle. Many thanks to Patrick, Guy and Michael for the invitation and hospitality. I look forward to coming back soon.

#### **CENTENARY OF THE 1920 AIRMAIL TEST FLIGHT LISMORE-CASINO-TENTERFIELD AND RETURN**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Next Friday, June 26, 2020, marks the centenary of the first official airmail test flight in Australia when pilot Frank Roberts and a cargo of 8000 letters took off from a paddock in Lismore for Tenterfield, via Casino, and return. The then terrible state of the road between the two country towns led Lismore's Chamber of Commerce and Municipal Council to lobby the Postmaster-General's Department for an airmail trial, which was sanctioned. Once the letters reached Tenterfield, they were loaded on to a train for Sydney. I congratulate the President of the Richmond River Philatelic Society, Mr Geoff Wotherspoon and his committee for ensuring that this milestone in Australia's communications history was not forgotten. Mr Wotherspoon has written a book chronicling those heady days – Per Aerial Mail – and organised for Australia Post to issue special commemorative mail. I was honoured, as part of a civic event, to post one of these letters to Lismore Chamber of Commerce President Sarah Smith, mailing it from an historic red pillar box in Woodlark Street, Lismore. On Saturday, June 26, 2020, a light aircraft pilot will deliver the commemorative mail following the original route.

#### **VALE, DR IAN FIELDING, FORMER CHAIR OF THE RICHMOND RIVER BEEF PRODUCERS**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to pay tribute to the late Dr Ian Fielding, who gave distinguished service to the Northern Rivers region as a health professional and as an advocate of the beef industry. I offer my sincere condolences to Dr Fielding's wife Maggie, his four children, and extended family. Born and raised in Orange, Dr Fielding was a much loved and respected surgeon, medical educator, and member of the Kyogle community. After graduating from the University of Sydney, Dr Fielding had a stellar career as a gastro-intestinal surgeon in the United Kingdom, the United States and Sydney. Moving to the Kyogle in 2003, the Fieldings ran cattle properties in Lynchs Creek and Afterlee, leading him to Chair the Richmond River Beef Producers from 2005 to 2011. Dr Fielding was highly sought after as a medical professional, continuing clinical work. From 2008 to 2017, he held the part-time positions of Director of Hospital Skills Program and the Executive Director Medical Services for Northern NSW Local Health District. Ian was a great friend of the local community and was the nicest of man; intelligent, friendly, unflappable. He will be sorely missed.

#### **BEN AND JASMINE HAMILTON**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I would like to formally acknowledge the efforts of Ben and Jasmine Hamilton. Ben and Jasmine developed the organisation Kickin' the Punt to help change the way society views gambling. Having been harmed personally by gambling addiction, Ben and Jasmine have made it their mission to reduce the harm that gambling inflicts on people's lives on a daily basis. Even though they have just started the organisation, Ben has already been featured in the media on several occasions to raise awareness about the problems associated with gambling addiction and the need for urgent reform. I applaud and respect the important work these two individuals are doing in our community as it has the potential to impact the lives of many around the country and the world.

#### **DISASTER RESILIENCE AND YOUTH MENTORING**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Congratulations to Byron Youth Service's Ocean Shores Youth Response Team (OSYRT) and Ocean Shores Community Association (OSCA) for their successful applications for funding through the NSW disaster resilient and future ready Get Ready program. I commend OSYRT for utilising this funding for running skills building and awareness workshops for local youth. These sessions will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the morale and self-confidence of participants and will provide great opportunities for these participants to engage with positive role models. The important initiative being undertaken by OSCA in utilising this funding is to bring to fruition a map of flood and fire risk areas in the locality. The map will also assist locals and visitors to become familiar with important local landmarks and to prepare for emergencies.

#### **SOUTHSIDE MASTERS**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Southside Masters who are the recipients of \$3,000 from the NSW Government's 2020 Local Sport Grant Program. Southside Masters meet every Thursday evening, rain, hail or shine, and cater to runners of all ages and abilities. Based at Sylvania Waters Athletics Track,

the organisation welcomes runners and walkers aged from seven to 75, and encourages those that are not members of the club to participate and run. The running club also organises barbeques throughout the year for members to get together and socialise. Southside Masters will purchase an automated timing system with the secured funding, providing runners with modern equipment and ensuring that accurate results are recorded in a timely manner. Of course none of this is possible without the hard-working volunteers behind the organisation who provide our community with such a fantastic means to socialise and stay fit. I particularly acknowledge the executive committee, including President Bob Fickel, Treasurer Michael Roberts, Secretary David Burns and Handicapper Chris Stratford. I thank Southside Masters for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and providing organised physical activity for members of our community.

#### **PETER OLDE OAM**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Peter Olde of Illawong who has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to Australian native flora. Mr Olde has voluntarily contributed to the knowledge of Australian native flora since the 1970s. He joined the Australian Plants Society Sutherland group in 1977, serving as its president until 1982 and leader of the Grevillea Study group since 1980. Mr Olde's dedication to Australian native flora over this period saw him appointed as a NSW life member in 1998 and receive the Australian Plant Medal in 2015. He has co-written the three volume Grevillea Book, served as Honorary Research Associate at the National Herbarium of NSW, described many new species of Grevillea and collected over 5,000 specimens all over Australia. Mr Olde's passion for our native flora began when establishing gardens in his Illawong home as a newly returned Vietnam War veteran. Mr Olde has stated that growing plants native to the country "was like running the flag up for Australia and doing something important for the environment at the same time." I congratulate Mr Olde for being named in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I want to draw the attention of the house to one of the community organisations that has stepped up in our local area to up to make sure no one in the inner west is left behind during this crisis – the Glebe Youth Service. I had the pleasure to meet the amazing team of volunteers and staff at Glebe Youth Service who help pack and deliver 100 food boxes every week to families in need. I want to acknowledge Eloise Woods and Keiran Kevans as well as Molly Hodson, Michael Sales, Leticia Kurowski, Isabel Mockler, Habil Mawardi, Jeff Hockey, Michael Coleman, Christina Yeomans and Kasper Ewenson. This group of staff and volunteers have been a vital lifeline for the families who have lost work, faced a reduction in income or just struggled to deal with the stress of the pandemic. A strong, caring community is key to getting through tough times and I'm so proud and very thankful that our community has the Glebe Youth Service.

#### **CONGRATULATING RESIDENTS WHO MADE IT ONTO QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to personally congratulate those from my electorate who received Queen's Birthday Honours earlier this month: Frank Austin, Susan Lockwood and Michael Neyland, as well as Scott Saddler and Flight Sergeant Stewart Hassall. Captain Frank Austin of the Mundarlo RFS was awarded an Australian Fire Service Medal recognising 60 years of service. Michael Neyland received the same recognition for 47 years with NSW Rural Fire Service. Former Mount Austin High School principal Susan Lockwood received an OAM for service to education. Former Wagga man Scott Saddler was recognised for his dedication to mentoring and supporting Indigenous Australians, having dedicated two decades to his great work. Flight Sergeant Stewart Hassall also made it onto the Queen's Birthday Honours list this year, for his work in developing the unit to better support the P-8A aircraft and providing a safe and enjoyable workplace' according to the local newspaper. Congratulations to all five recipients, as well as all those who received recognition of their contributions to our Australian community. Thank you for your work for others to make our lives better.

#### **SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS PROGRAM**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I congratulate the recipients of the NSW Government's Sustainable Schools Program in my electorate of North Shore. This program provides schools with the opportunity to engage students in developing a hands-on project, while learning about environmentally sustainable practices. Beauty Point Public School secured funding for their 'Native Flora and Fauna' project, which will see the research, design and creation of gardens to promote native flora and fauna. Middle Harbour Public School was successful in securing funding for their 'Middle Harbour Hive of Activity Project' which will create outdoor habitats for local wildlife, and set up bee hives as part of the schools learning program. Mosman Public School secured funding for their project 'Mother Nature's nurturers' that involves various environmental and sustainable initiatives involving students from years 3-6. In addition, North Sydney Boys High School was successful in securing funding for 'The Learning and Wellbeing Gardens of NSB' that will see the creation of a multipurpose garden to encourage

environmentally sustainable practices. Congratulations to these schools on taking up the mantle of environmental sustainability, and I look forward to seeing the completed projects benefit these schools.

### **QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I acknowledge the recipients of the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours in my electorate of North Shore. The Queen's Birthday Honours recognises the outstanding contribution that Australian's have made to their community and to Australia globally or domestically. Our North Shore recipients were Professor Ronald Oates of Mosman who was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to paediatric medicine, as an advocate for child health and welfare, to medical education, and to professional societies. Ms Elizabeth Christie of Cremorne Point who was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to performing arts administration and to women in business. Mr David Fahey of Cremorne was also awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to emergency response organisations, and to medicine in the field of anaesthesia. And Phoebe Ho of North Sydney was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to medical research, to haematology, and to professional bodies. Congratulations to these recipients of the Queen's 2020 Birthday Honours.

### **CONGRATULATIONS CARRAMAR PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I congratulate the students from Carramar Public School who took the initiative to design and print 3D "Thank You" keyrings to show their earnest appreciation for the hardworking healthcare workers who tirelessly supported and protected our communities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As the local State Member, I am always proud to see what fantastic new ideas and initiatives local students have come up with. It's truly wonderful to see the students of Carramar Public School finding their own unique way to not only show their appreciation for the hardworking frontline support workers, but also for taking the time to acknowledge the invaluable efforts of healthcare workers throughout NSW. On behalf of the Fairfield Electorate, I would like to commend and congratulate the students of Carramar Public School for doing such a remarkable job on this project and for taking the initiative to acknowledge and appreciate the hard work and dedication of others in our community. You've made us all very proud.

### **SYDNEY SIRENS**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—I would like to congratulate our local Sydney Sirens Ice Hockey Team for winning the Australian Women's Ice Hockey League grand final in February. Sydney Sirens are based out of Prestons, and defeated the Adelaide Rush 3 – 0, winning them their second Joan McKowen trophy and Australian Women's Ice Hockey championship. I hear the grand final was an intense game, as the two teams faced off for the title. What a great achievement for the ladies, who showed true determination and skill throughout the entire game, and competition. Well deserved! Once again, congratulations to the Sydney Sirens, and I wish them the best of luck for the year ahead, and hopefully another championship win!

### **PRESTONS PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—I would like to congratulate Prestons Public School for raising over \$4500 from the schools Return and Earn Program. This has been running since Term 3, 2018, and has gained a lot of support from the school's students and community. The Recycle Warriors, as the students call themselves, are encouraged to bring eligible containers to school every Friday. All participating students receive a ticket that goes into a raffle prize draw. Quite the incentive! It is easy to understand why their program has been so successful. So much so, that the funds raised from the program has resulted in an upgrade to the school's playground. It is impressive that Prestons Public School is committed to improving their school and our local environment through these sustainable programs. Once again, I would like to congratulate Prestons Public School for running such a successful Return and Earn Program for the whole school to enjoy. Thank you.

### **TAMWORTH BLOOD DONORS, JOHN CLIFFORD AND LESLIE FUTCHER**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation)**—I recognise the local blood donors who are being celebrated this week for rolling up their sleeves and saving lives, by giving their blood and plasma. National Blood Donor Week runs from 14 to 20 June and more than 100 Tamworth residents have been dubbed 'Lifeblood Legends' by the Australian Red Cross this year after reaching the milestone of 50 donations. One of those people is John Clifford, who has given blood and plasma for half a century. He's made 175 donations - all in Tamworth - starting as a teenager in 1970 and making his 175th on Friday morning. Tamworth's Leslie Futchter comes in at the top of the list for the city, with about 400 blood and plasma donations over the past 50 years. This is just a snapshot of the extraordinary people who are blood donors in Tamworth and right across the region. Their efforts can mean life or death in some cases, especially for those who donate less common blood types. Thank you to all blood donors for your service and spirit, your contribution to the wider community is never underestimated and always gratefully appreciated.

## 2020 QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—The South Coast community is the best in the world. We help each other out in good times and bad, and make sure we're there for those in need, which is why it is no surprise that 9 from our region have been awarded in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours. Shoalhaven District Hospital's Doctor Richard Morris, has been awarded the AM, a Member of the Order of Australia, for significant service to medicine, and to emergency and disaster medical response. Bomaderry's Bruce Murphy was awarded the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the community of the Shoalhaven through Lions and the Shoalhaven Suicide Prevention and Awareness Network. Bevin Hardy, of Bomaderry, was awarded the OAM for service to the community of Bomaderry, and to youth through Scouts. Berry husband and wife James and Rae Doak were also awarded the OAM for service to the community of the Illawarra through Probus, Lions and various other organisations. Christine Dunstan, of Berry, was awarded the OAM for service to the performing arts as a producer and mentor. Royal Australian Navy Captain Allen Whittaker CSC was awarded the OAM for meritorious service in the field of navy aviation capability development. Warrant Officer Stephen Cheeseman was awarded the OAM for his meritorious performance of duty in the fields of naval aviation and personnel mentoring and management. Former commanding officer of the South Coast Police District, Superintendent Stephen Hegarty was awarded the Police Medal. Congratulations to all award winners and thank you for everything you do to support our community.

### ADRIAAN PESCHAR, OAM

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—Congratulations to Adriaan Peschar, who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours. Mr Peschar has worked for the people of Newcastle for many decades, with his service including as Chairman of the Christ Church Cathedral Completion Appeal and the Post Earthquake Restoration Appeal, in addition to being the founding chairman of the Hunter Region Olympic Committee. As part of the Board of Directors for NBN Television he also assisted with many Telethon fundraisers. He also held the position of Deputy Chancellor at the University of Newcastle and spent 15 years on the Newcastle advisory board for the Salvation Army, making a difference in the lives of some of our community's most vulnerable. Mr Peschar's recognition with an OAM is well-deserved. Thank you for your enduring commitment to the people of Newcastle. It is sincerely appreciated.

### JESSICA MORRIS

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise Jessica Morris, a proud Wiradjuri woman from Port Macquarie who is the face of the new regional team leading Aboriginal health outcomes for the North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN). As a qualified specialist in her field, Jessica has led the charge across a wide range of health positions in the Mid-North Coast for over 13 years. She is widely respected and admired by her peers for her extensive experience in health promotion, project planning, implementation and evaluation which fits in well with the regional teams' goals to reduce health inequalities, increase access to services and support disease prevention for Aboriginal people. As the Aboriginal Health Coordinator for NCPHN, Jessica will oversee the Birpai and Dunghutti areas, with a targeted approach aimed at building relationships between local indigenous communities, seeking specific areas of health needs and designing solutions to improve health outcomes across the board. Specialising in a Master's Degree in Public Health, it is no doubt that Jessica has the skills to embrace the difficult task of closing the gap in indigenous health. I acknowledge Jessica and thank her for striving to create a better future for our Aboriginal people living in our local community.

### EMILY RATHBONE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise the sensational funding achievements of local Port Macquarie girl Emily Rathbone for raising an enormous \$6,507 for the Leukaemia Foundation. As our communities adjust to the new social distancing restrictions of COVID-19, many loved fundraising events on the annual calendar have been rightfully postponed to ensure our most vulnerable are safe. Despite the limitations currently in place, Emily Rathbone from Kendall Community Preschool has generously sacrificed her most treasured locks to raise funds for the World's Greatest Shave. Supported by Jade McDonald from Little Glimpses Photography and Dana Bell from Hair by Dana, Emily took to Facebook on Anzac Day, in her own home to live-stream her campaign to raise funds for those diagnosed with blood cancer. Not surprisingly, her shave was a huge success which has exceeded beyond expectations, smashing her projected goal of \$4,000 in literally hours of her campaign commencing. Living without her 30cm locks has not fazed Emily in the slightest as she hopes her donation of hair could make a personal difference and brighten the day for a person undergoing treatment for leukaemia. I would like to thank Emily for her inspirational fundraising achievements, a remarkable woman giving hope to others.

### INNER WEST PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Public Sector Workers have been serving on the frontline from day one of the COVID-19 health crisis. Thank you to the 5,250 public sector working in the Summer Hill electorate for their dedication to supporting our community throughout this pandemic and keeping us all safe. Health workers at RPA, Canterbury Hospital and the testing clinic in Summer Hill have been working around the clock, administering thousands of COVID 19 tests. Teachers and Principals have supported families, putting in long hours to ensure students have the resources they need to learn from home. Cleaners have worked 24/7 to keep public spaces, schools and workplaces safe throughout the pandemic. Transport workers have kept us moving. It's clear that NSW has come through an unprecedented health crisis, in large part due to the dedication of our public sector workers. Thank you for holding our community together during our time of need. You deserve our most heartfelt thanks. You deserve your pay rise.

### WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—World Environment Day (5 June 2020) is a reminder of how important it is for each and every one of us to defend our local environment and take up the fight against climate change. This World Environment Day, I thank the many inner west environmental activists and groups who are fighting to protect our local inner west environment. The Mudcrabs regularly host clean up events along the Cooks River. Last month alone, they pulled 20 bags of plastic litter from the river. Inner West Council Bushcare Group helps to build and protect habitat for native wildlife. Volunteers host working bees at local parks around the inner west, getting their hands dirty planting native flora. Young people in my electorate care deeply about their local environment, from climate strikers to school groups formed to protect whales and koalas. And organisations like Reverse Garbage, Boomerang Bags Inner West and The Bower work tirelessly to divert resources from landfill. Thank you to all the passionate inner west residents who continue to fight for real action on our environment. I stand with you. Happy World Environment Day.

### ADAM GOODES MURAL

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—I draw the attention of this Parliament to the powerful new mural of Adam Goodes painted last Thursday on a building on the corner of Foveaux St and Crown Street Surry Hills in the electorate of Newtown. The mural was painted by Hamish McBride, Laura Paige, Megan Hales, Jacqueline Butterworth and Kailin Hegel who are some of Australia's best artists specializing in realism and who were commissioned by Apparition Media to do the piece. Apparition Media had approached the landlord of the building who is a Swans fan late last year and the company and now the community are hopeful that it will remain there permanently. The mural comes at a time when the community has rallied together for the Black lives matter and Aboriginal lives matter movements and celebrates a living Aboriginal icon. Adam Goodes was an incredible footballer and demonstrates incredible strength and leadership in calling out racism on and off the field. We are incredibly proud to have this mural erected in our electorate and thank the artists, the building owner and Apparition Media for doing so.

### MEDIA BIRTHDAY HONOURS

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—The 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours celebrated two well-known media personalities in the Hunter Region who have touched the lives of many in the Charlestown Electorate. Aaron Kearney was inducted into the Order of Australia for service to the broadcast media as a radio presenter. Aaron has had a long and distinguished career in regional journalism, working to make sure that stories which are so often forgotten can be told. His is a familiar voice for many in the Hunter Region, and his reputation for integrity is outstanding. Jill Emberson, who sadly passed away at the end of 2019 after a long battle with ovarian cancer, was inducted into the Order for service to people living with that disease. She could have been inducted for many reasons: she was an excellent journalist, a trusted voice for the local community, and a tireless advocate. A Medal of the Order of Australia is a fitting recognition for a life well-lived. Vale Jill.

### XO CAFÉ BAR

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—Last Thursday, 11th June 2020, XO Café Bar on Ware Street, Fairfield held a special celebratory event in support of NSW Police Legacy to show their appreciation for the dedicated men and women of the NSW Police Force and the Fairfield City Police Area Command. The event was well attended throughout the day as the staff did a tremendous job serving up delicious food and beverages while managing and enforcing safe distancing procedures to ensure the safety of all those who attended to show support on the day. NSW Police Legacy is an amazing charity which goes a long way towards providing compassionate support to the broader Police family through a variety of services, provisions and continued advocacy. As COVID restrictions begin to ease, it's truly great to see a local Fairfield business taking the initiative to provide whatever support they can in order to assist the Police Officers who never stopped supporting us. I wish to take this

opportunity to commend and congratulate everyone from XO Café Bar for their support for our local Police Officers and that of NSW Police Legacy and wish them all the very best now and into the future.

#### **BAPS SWAMINARAYAN TEMPLE**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—During this pandemic, the BAPS Swaminarayan Temple packed and delivered over 18,000 hot meals and 1200 care kits to those families, migrant workers and international students who were either self-isolating or suffering from financial hardship. On 29 of March, I was delighted to join their charity service, which made a huge difference as we fight COVID-19 together. The BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha followed the principle of "In the joy of others, lies our own" to devote selfless service to our society. In Australia, there are tens of thousands of volunteers from BAPS Charities continually upholding this spirit of service; enriching their own lives and lives of those they served. Hence, it has become important to me to acknowledge their tremendous contributions especially during this uncertain time. Thank you all again for looking after those in need, as no one should be left behind.

#### **HINDU COUNCIL**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—A local superhero in the Granville electorate deserving appreciation during the pandemic is the Hindu Council Australia. Alongside Karma Kitchen the Hindu council Australia provided almost 25,000 meals to members of our community in need during the Covid-19 crisis. Once again, most of the recipients of these packages were international students who were hit hard during the Covid-19 crisis. Basic grocery supplies were delivered to families and students in need. They also made food "kits" and distributed over 2,000 kits across the country since the beginning of April, equating to roughly 55,000 individual meals. It was heart-warming to see the coronavirus crisis bring out the best in members of our community and I am grateful to have been a part of it.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 20:21  
until Wednesday 17 June 2020 at 09:30.**