



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday, 17 June 2020

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 17 June 2020

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Bills

CRIMES AMENDMENT (SPECIAL CARE OFFENCES) BILL 2020

MENTAL HEALTH AND COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT FORENSIC PROVISIONS BILL 2020

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL 2020

First Reading

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

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

Announcements

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP EVENT

The SPEAKER: I thank all members who took part in the thought leadership event this morning with Claire Harvey, Deb Knight and Hugh Riminton. It was very well received and part of the series of thought leadership events that comprise the professional development program. Thank you to everyone who took part. Tomorrow I will mention another event that will be hosted in this Chamber on 30 June to coincide with Parliament week. We have some very special guests for that.

[Notices of motions given]

Notices

PRESENTATION

[During the giving of notices of motions]

The SPEAKER: I remind members that that the standing orders require notices of motions to be emailed to the Legislative Assembly office.

Bills

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT (WATER ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY) BILL 2020

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 3 June 2020.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (09:45:55): I speak to the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020, which deals with a very important issue. It is important that we make clear that members of Parliament in particular have a responsibility to declare their water interests because, quite frankly, water is an incredibly valuable resource, not just for the food and fibre it provides but because the water economy—the purchase and sale of water interests and water entitlements—is a multibillion dollar industry in this community each and every year. Its regulation certainly needs some tightening up. A good place to start is making sure we understand exactly who in this Chamber—or the other Chamber—owns what water interests and what they are doing with those interests. I start with those comments.

It is an interesting time for water today, as I speak to this particular bill. We have a similar bill in the Legislative Council of the New South Wales Parliament about water transparency, which is a little bit broader, that deals with things we all probably should know and are entitled to know. I have a bill in the Legislative Council dealing with the drought of record—the fact that since 2003-04 our water sharing plans have been unable to consider drought and flood events that have happened since that time. We also have an ongoing ICAC inquiry

that is looking at water dealings back in 2013, 2014 and 2015 under this Government, with a particular focus on two Ministers of this current Government who are no longer in this place and senior bureaucrats in Water at that time. We also have an Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] inquiry looking into the nature of water registers, what information is held and not held and whether or not that is suitably transparent. We have international corporations buying and selling billions of dollars worth of water entitlements on the market and irrigation corporations that essentially have a wall at the front of their organisations where they register their water access licence. A series of interests is sitting behind that that we cannot see.

If someone was interested in laundering money in New South Wales right now, sadly, unfortunately and unfairly for our farmers, water is a place that someone might do that. I make the point at the start of debate on this bill about a few of its elements. About 15 months ago there was an election in New South Wales. Down in the electorate of Murray, for the first time in a very long time—possibly ever—the New South Wales voters in that region turned their backs on the National Party and brought into this House a member of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: It used to be a Labor seat.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I recognise the interjection that it used to be a Labor seat. It brought into this House a member of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I have met with those people on a number of occasions since the election. Fundamentally, their single most important issue has been water. Their commentary was that, fundamentally, they felt The Nationals had not served their water interests adequately, properly, fairly, transparently or decently, so they turned their backs on them. Some 15 months ago a new member of Parliament was elected in the electorate of Murray. Her name is Helen Dalton and she started talking about the need for transparency around water ownership for members in this House and in the other place. For 15 months she has been talking about that. She introduced her own bill late last year, but unfortunately it expired early this year. The Legislative Council is now dealing with what is essentially her bill.

I think we are seeing this bill from the Minister for one reason: The Government has been embarrassed and shamed into bringing it into the House. The Government is in its tenth year of government. It could have done this at any time in the past 10 years—that is about 220 sitting weeks, or about 660 sitting days. We could have had this bill about transparency for water ownership a long, long time ago, but we have not. I recognise and thank the new member for Murray for her persistence and for bringing this bill to the House. I will make one more comment about the member for Murray and a number of members of The Nationals whom I will resist the temptation of naming. I will talk about their misogynistic, aggressive personal attacks and bullying on the member for Murray through online forums like Facebook and Twitter—look for yourselves. If that is a standard that members of The Nationals and the Government applaud, support, endorse and appreciate, then do nothing and say nothing. But if the members sitting on the Government benches in front of me—whom I believe are fundamentally decent—look at some of those comments online, attacking the member for Murray, they will call it out for what it is: It is absolutely disgusting.

As we often say in this place—and rightly so—the standard you walk past is the standard you accept. There are members on the Government benches—none of whom are in the Chamber right now; if they were I probably would name them—who would not be employed in any other workplace in this State or this country given their conduct on very public platforms. No other workplace would tolerate it. On one particular evening when I entered the debate it would have taken every ounce of my self-control to not throttle them had I been anywhere near them. It was disgusting behaviour by men, not just against another MP, but against a female MP. We all know that our society has problems with male-female relationships, respect and appropriate conduct.

The bill will require members of Parliament to publicly disclose their interests in water access licences, share components of water access licences and contractual rights to receive water from irrigation corporations, which are wonderful things. It will also require members of Parliament to publicly lodge returns disclosing water trading activity within 14 days of becoming a party to that particular activity. It will provide for the compilation and maintenance of registers of water trading returns by the Clerks of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly. We already have a couple of water registers in New South Wales. The Water Access Licence Register is essentially held by and registered through the Land Titles Office. The other is the NSW Water Register, which is a pretty handy tool inasmuch as it is free, easy to access, and available. It is not so handy in terms of being able to see who is doing what, where and to what value. These are the inadequacies.

I went online last week and had a look at a number of the trades happening inside of the register. There are a couple of funny things. First, you have to enter your registration number. Second, you have to enter the volume that you are trading in litres, megalitres or gigalitres. And third, there is a column for entering the price at which that trade takes place. It might interest members to know that there is a whole host of trades of water taking place in New South Wales at zero dollars and zero cents. This alone has to alarm us in terms of the adequacy of the register. Surely we are not trading, giving away or handing over water regularly given how valuable it is and,

more recently, how scarce it is. Quite frequently it is zero dollars and zero cents. That is something we need to work on. Each water licence or water interest has a registered number. It is the same as if you own land or property—house, unit or strata part—with a lot or a deposited plan [DP] number. If you have the lot or DP number, or if you know someone's lot or DP number, you can follow those transactions historically or on a day-to-day basis.

It is the same with water. If you have a person's water licence or water interest number, unless it is sitting behind an irrigation corporation you can follow and look at those transactions on a day-to-day basis. As I understand from reading the website, the transactions are normally up to date within 24 hours to 48 hours. They are there and available. If a member of Parliament, for example, were to register a licence number or numbers with Parliament, we have the option to track the purchase or sale—the sale in particular—of water from that licence number built into our publicly available free system. This brings me back to clause 6C, to require members of Parliament to publicly lodge returns disclosing water-trading activity within 14 days of becoming a party to the activity. I do not have a particular problem with that, except that it seems to singularly target one particular member of this House, possibly one particular member of the entire Parliament. We should not be moving legislation that targets individuals.

However, having said that, if we want to embrace a 14-day reporting process why do we not embrace it for everything? Why do we not have a 14-day reporting process for buying or selling shares, buying a property, receiving a gift, or getting an upgrade somewhere when we are travelling? Why not have a more broadly applicable 14-day transparency process if it is such an important issue for the Government? In this instance the 14-day rule will affect one MP and that is not fair. There are a lot of good new reasons to not have it more broadly. One is that all MPs would be bogged down with paperwork on a fairly regular basis, so why do we not then remove that element in this bill and say, "You know what? The six-month reporting process that all MPs do will suffice."

We already have the public register, which is available, and members have to be clear about their pecuniary interests—the licence numbers of the water they own. If we are so inclined and interested we can go online and follow their trades, not on a 14-day basis but on a daily basis. All that is possible right now; all we need is the licence number. I do not know that we need this particular element of the bill. I would welcome any member of the Government—the Minister or anyone else—explaining why we are going to apply the 14-day standard to this one particular element of our pecuniary interests instead of the whole lot. I reckon it is pretty inexplicable—except that it targets a particular member of Parliament.

One other matter I mention in closing is the issue of trusts. Because I am a nerdy, detail kind of guy, I have gone through the pecuniary interests of all members—mainly those on the other side. Do members know that a bunch of people on the Government benches—it might surprise members of the public to learn this, and I know my mum reads my transcripts—own nothing? A whole bunch of Coalition MPs own nothing. Owning nothing at our mature age and given our very reasonable wage is a bit of a surprise. That is fundamentally because many members of Parliament have things called "trusts" and inside their trusts they are able to have a whole bunch of assets. One potential asset they could have in a trust is water.

Late last year the Clerks made a ruling, couched in a bunch of caveats, that said, "Look, it seems that a member of Parliament should declare their water interests in whatever form they are in, but they need to get their own legal advice." In part, that is why the bill is before us: to emphatically clarify that water is not just a "maybe" or a "probably should" declare. The reason the bill is before the House is to announce absolutely that members must declare their water interests, and it provides a form of declaration for those interests. But as for trusts, not so much. It is hard to imagine that anybody who does not own property, hold shares or have other business interests would set up a trust. But that is not declared. I know this because I have looked and I am surprised at how poor some of those opposite are—how destitute they are. I am glad they are not homeless. I guess their families are looking after them.

I come back to the issue of trusts. I foreshadow that I will move an amendment to the bill to deal specifically with trusts and how they connect to water. All members with trusts can breathe a sigh of relief because I am not going into their property assets or shares—we will have that conversation another day. Today, within the confines of this particular bill, I have prepared and shared an amendment that specifically calls on every member of Parliament with water shares, ownership, entitlements or interests inside a trust to declare them on their pecuniary interest statement. They will be required, just like the other one member of Parliament, to update any transactions of a water nature within 14 days of that transaction. That is an important amendment to the bill.

I hope that members will support the amendment and that they appreciate the implications of this 14-day rule for water. I hope that members are wondering why it applies to this one particular element of their pecuniary interests and not others. More broadly, I hope that members support the bill because, as politicians in New South Wales, we need to lead from the front when it comes to transparency. I will not be opposing the bill but I will be seeking to amend it. I thank the Minister for bringing the bill to the House.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (10:05:04): I speak in debate on the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020 and thank the Minister for bringing it before the House. I concur with the earlier comments of the member for Cessnock about the importance of water—a precious resource and perhaps our ultimate resource on this dry continent—and how we need to rise above politics and partisan behaviour. Water issues have been part of debate on the land for many decades, and periodically measures have been implemented to deal with concerns about the handling of this precious resource. Over a number of years questions have been raised about the trading in water entitlements, particularly when that is separated from ownership of productive farming and grazing land, with one consequence being the opportunity for speculation and profit-making as the objective, rather than enhancing productivity in the food bowl that thrives or falls on the fortunes of the basin flows.

The water market predates the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, with the expansion of water markets arising from a broader suite of reforms underpinned by the Council of Australian Governments Water Reform Framework initiated in 1994, and then the National Water Initiative in 2004. A necessary precondition to the development of the water market was the separation of water from land, which enabled water to become a tradeable property right. I note the good work of the Coleambally Irrigation Co-operative Limited, and that of other irrigation districts in my electorate, West Corugan and Murray Irrigation. In a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission inquiry into water markets in the Murray-Darling Basin the Coleambally Irrigation Co-operative Limited wrote:

The separation of land and water has allowed investment by government in water for the environment. In parallel it has opened investment and succession planning options for farmers, brought capital to irrigated agriculture and increased asset values.

The submission goes on to note that a range of participants trade water in the Murray-Darling Basin. Farmers use water markets to source water to meet their short-term needs, such as finishing a crop, or to address long-term needs or risks, such as managing long-term water availability risks. Other groups who trade in water markets include irrigation infrastructure operators, urban water authorities, environmental water holders, indigenous users and communities, water brokers and exchanges, investors and others, with some being significant users and traders of water at different times and for a range of reasons.

The volumes, frequency and range of trade on water markets have increased over recent years, driven by a range of factors. The increasing reliance on markets by traditional irrigators and the entry into the market of new classes of participants has led to changes in agricultural production in the Murray-Darling Basin, with some industries expanding and others declining. State laws establish the legal entitlements—the property rights to water—and largely determine whether those entitlements can be traded, and subject to what rules. Interstate agreements have enabled trading between States in the southern Murray-Darling Basin markets, and these arrangements are now subject to the water trading rules under the basin plan. Water markets rely on regulatory and governance arrangements that operate at Commonwealth, State and sometimes local levels.

State governments generally make water market policy and are the resource managers and regulators in their own jurisdiction with responsibility for monitoring water use. States split those responsibilities amongst or within government departments, State-owned water corporations or other independent entities. State-owned regional or rural water corporations provide a range of water management and delivery functions. Depending on the State, water corporations may monitor water use and undertake enforcement. As such, it is vital that there is a high level of confidence that those making the decisions do not have a conflict of interest. This underpins confidence in everything that is done thereafter. It is a foundation stone for action. Our concern today is with transparency on the part of parliamentarians because of the potential for a conflict of interest to arise or the perception of influence. The overview of the bill states:

The object of this Bill is to amend the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (the Regulation) as follows—

- (a) to require Members of Parliament to publicly disclose their interests in water access licences, share components of water access licences and contractual rights to receive water from irrigation corporations,
- (b) to require Members of Parliament to publicly lodge returns disclosing water trading activity within 14 days of becoming a party to the activity,

Provision is then made for the compilation and maintenance of registers of water trading returns by the Clerks of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. A real focus is on water trading activity, not just on ownership. The definitions of clause 3 are amended to include water trading activity within various limitations such as the transfer of a water access licence under section 71M, a term transfer, the assignment of a right relating to a share component of an access licence under section 71Q, the assignment of a water allocation under section 71T, the interstate transfer of a water access licence under section 71U, the interstate assignment of a water allocation under section 71V, and a disposition of property that affects a person's right to receive water from an irrigation corporation under a water supply contract or other contract.

Provisions in clause 6C (3) cover the nature of what must be disclosed in a water trading return, namely, the date of the water trading activity; the purpose and nature of the water trading activity; the impact of the water trading activity on, or creation by the water trading activity of, any water interests that are required to be disclosed by the member under clause 8A; and details of any financial benefit to the member resulting from the water trading activity. This is detailed and adds clarity to the task. There is now no mistaking what is required and what must be revealed. All of this sits within the framework of the review currently being undertaken by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC].

The inquiry, which was referred to the ACCC on 7 August 2019, involves a thorough consideration of the tradeable water rights and water market in the Murray-Darling Basin. The ACCC has been asked to recommend options that might lead to enhancements of the markets for tradeable water rights, "including options to enhance their operations, transparency, regulation, competitiveness and efficiency". Consultation has been taking place with a wide range of water market participants and other persons involved in water markets in the Murray-Darling Basin, and the date for an interim report has been extended to 30 June this year, with a final report to the Commonwealth Treasurer by 30 November. This report will seek to address a number of critical questions on water trading and markets. We acknowledge and appreciate concerns about water trading, and this highlights the importance of the ACCC inquiry that will inform planning moving forward. In its submission to the ACCC inquiry, the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation [RAMJO] writes:

RAMJO believes that the intention of the Water Trading Market, and the ability for primary producers to on-sell their water allocation, was a move in the right direction for those in the agricultural industry to create flexibility and opportunities for supplementary farm income. However, these unintended consequences have distorted the market and have decreased the accessibility of water for producers and threatened their livelihood.

As has been said elsewhere, we have to ensure that our water system, water ownership and trading rights create a system that is fit for purpose. We must listen, and we must address issues in the water trading system. I am hopeful the ACCC recommendations will lead to a period of productive water policy design. As we await the recommendations of the ACCC inquiry, we are preparing the framework for action, removing a barrier to the highest levels of confidence in how water is managed in our State. Members of Parliament need to take the lead on this initiative by readily disclosing their water interests and any water trading activities. In the past there may have been an element of confusion on this score. Attention has settled on the rights and entitlements held by parliamentarians for their prominent role in making laws and regulations for the management of our precious water resources. This is a piece of the puzzle that we can act on, that we can remedy now, today. I support the bill.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (10:13:56): I contribute to debate on the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020 on behalf of The Greens. We support the bill and any increase in transparency around water licences and water trading in New South Wales. The Greens do not care whether the bill is in response to an individual MP or not. The Greens have been pushing for a long time for an increase in transparency.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Why aren't Mr Shoebridge's properties—

Ms TAMARA SMITH: I note the interjection by the Minister. We do note that there is a private members' bill that goes much further towards a public register for disclosures and that is a model we push for: a public register. Capturing a handful of MPs for water trading or having a pecuniary interest in water will do nothing about the corporations and large conglomerates that are trading. That is why there needs to be a public register of disclosures. The Greens have long been calling for a Federal royal commission and giving public officials real teeth to enforce compliance with the law. The Greens welcome complete transparency around who is trading water and buying water licences, whether corporations, entities, MPs or anyone else. We also want a moratorium on anyone trading water who is not an actual farmer. We would like to see speculation around water gone until a Federal royal commission explores all the layers of complexity about managing a river and water ecosystems with longer and more frequent droughts.

We know that Water NSW has been denuded over many years and does not have the scientists or rigor that it used to. It is important to note that whether we are talking about the Murray-Darling Basin, the Murray River, the Darling River, or the many rivers, creeks and aquifers across this State, that these resources do not belong to any individual person, any individual corporation, any sector or any State. These are intergenerational resources that are managed in trust for every person in this country and for future generations. We have a responsibility as members of Parliament to protect and ensure that we have clean water for drinking and growing food into the future. That is the end game. Let us not get too caught up in this bubble. I am frustrated. Yes, we welcome greater transparency, but if we move at this snail's pace towards what really is required we are in big trouble and every farmer out there knows that.

The Greens believe what this should look like is a prohibition on water speculating and trading on agricultural and rural land for businesses that do not grow food. Recently, we saw this in a small way in my electorate. I am pleased to place on the record that Ballina Shire Council has now amended its local environmental planning instrument so that commercial extraction of water from the Alstonville plateau, prime agricultural land, to sell overseas to soft drink companies, is no longer permitted. In some ways this bill is hyperbole terrain. Whilst it goes some way towards transparency let us not forget the bigger far more intractable problems we have. We know that the Murray-Darling Basin has been plagued by scandal after scandal: incidents of water theft, corruption, mismanagement and maladministration.

The Government knows that these issues are becoming more palpable and that it has to act. That is why last year we saw the Federal water Minister announcing that Mr Mick Keelty would act as the inspector-general to investigate issues associated with the Murray-Darling Basin. We all welcomed that announcement. What have we seen? Very little indeed. We know that the inspector-general has carried out a number of meetings, but has no power to act. There is no legislation that gives the inspector-general the power or terms of reference that will allow him to do his job. What this shows is a common theme of lip-service by the Liberal-Nationals to the people living in the Murray-Darling Basin, the communities relying on the river, and those downstream who desperately need the river to be managed fairly, properly and sustainably. Where are the investigation powers that will allow the inspector-general to get in there and sort out what is going on?

Where are the referrals from the inspector-general to a national corruption body? Oh, there is no national corruption body. Where is that mechanism? These are the things that the Government promised would happen—I am being very clear that the Federal Government promised this—and yet we have none of them. The inspector-general has no statutory powers, so there is no ability to do that job and there is still no anti-corruption body to which he could even refer issues of corruption and maladministration. Fortunately, in New South Wales, we can. We have a corruption watchdog and I look forward to seeing what comes of investigations in this State. Many people from diverse stretches of the Murray-Darling Basin—small farmers and irrigators, those who live in the communities that rely on a healthy river and those in the lower ends of the system who are struggling in what is a mismanaged river system—are calling out for a royal commission because we cannot trust the Government to clean up its own act; to clean up this State when it comes to behaving badly and to make sure this is all done in a transparent manner.

I note that in doing this the Minister is heading in that direction, but there is so much work to do. With warmer and warmer temperatures and longer and longer droughts, time is of the essence. We have seen The Nationals in New South Wales fast track approvals for new dams and pipelines, overriding environmental protections with devastating negative impacts on downstream communities and the health of river systems. The Greens have demanded that the Government rule out giving any public funding to dam and water infrastructure projects that circumvent environmental assessment and do not abide by proper environmental protections. The Murray-Darling Basin is in crisis. It is being exploited by water barons and big corporate irrigators, which are pushing up the price of water and squeezing family farms out of water. Urgent and immediate action is required to prevent more mass native fish deaths and more devastation for family farms, river communities and the environment.

We call on the State and Federal governments to impose a moratorium on non-water users buying up water while the Murray Darling Basin remains in crisis. That is the type of action I would like to see the Minister bringing to this House. I commend the work of our Federal Greens senators last year in calling for a bill to establish a commission of inquiry into the Murray-Darling Basin. We know that after decades and decades of infighting and blame shifting between the different States upstream and downstream, and the Federal Government, that the Murray-Darling Basin Plan was meant to deal with the real issue that confronts us all: The system has been over-allocated. Too much water is being taken out and not enough is being left to keep the river alive and give it a chance of sustainability. Of course, those river communities right throughout the basin need a living river if they are communities that are going to survive.

I do not think there is anyone here who is deliberately trying to destroy river communities' and farmers' livelihoods, but the corruption and mismanagement is there for all to see. Farmers and family farms throughout the Murray-Darling Basin are struggling today because they cannot access the water they need at an affordable price—water that allows them to keep doing what they are doing. Nearly a decade ago communities decided that we needed to get more water back into the river to give it a fighting chance to ensure that river communities would be sustainable, because everybody knows there are no jobs on a dead river. What we have is \$13 billion that has been spent; the example, only a few short years ago, of millions of dead fish in places such as Menindee; and farming communities everywhere struggling with an environment in crisis. However, a select handful of people and businesses have done very well indeed out of the mismanagement of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and they are laughing all the way to the bank.

They have had huge publicly funded handouts, water bought from them at an inflated price, public money handed to them to implement irrigation and efficiency works that they were going to fund themselves anyway, and they have had it subsidised by the taxpayer. The Productivity Commission's five-year assessment of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan was bleak: Only two of the 11 metrics were on track. It raised these concerns and said that the Murray-Darling Basin Authority cannot be trusted to oversee itself. The bill and the private member's bill up for debate in the other place start us on the road, but there is a very long way to go.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (10:24:16): I speak in support of the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020, which is an important first step to improving the transparency and accountability of water use within New South Wales. The debate around water use and water in general has, unfortunately, become very politicised, often by those with the least amount of knowledge about the issue and with no actual connection to the land. I think that is something that the member for Murray and the member for Barwon would agree with. A straw poll of some of my Sydney-based friends opened my eyes to how little people in the city understand about water. One of them thought that 105 per cent of water in a river can somehow be used for irrigation—105 per cent!

The rest of them had also assumed much more than 50 per cent of a river system like the Murray Darling can be used for irrigation. We know that the figure is actually much lower than that. I then asked them about harvestable rights: What percentage of water that falls on a farmer's land are they allowed to use? Most of them assumed 100 per cent. Little did they know it is one-tenth of that. So it is important to acknowledge first-up that there are people living in our metropolitan areas who have absolutely no idea how little water is actually allocated to farms and farmers for the purposes of growing food and fibre. One thing we can all agree on is that transparency and accountability of our water and our water use is very important. Water access licences and their share components are not specifically listed as a form of pecuniary interest currently required to be disclosed under the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 by members of Parliament in either this House or in the other place.

The bill will clarify and strengthen transparency and accountability of the parliamentary disclosure requirements by clearly defining what water licences and rights require declaration as a pecuniary interest, and it will require continuous declaration of water trading activity. I was a farmer before coming into this place, so I know better than most the value of water. It is important that we restore the faith of our regional communities in how we use and trade water, starting in the Parliament. Those who listened to my inaugural speech will remember that I come from a farming background. For nearly 70 years our family has lived in the Woolgoolga area and grew bananas for the first 45 of those years. Now we grow berries and Australia's only native food crop, macadamia nuts. In the month of February we had over 1,500 millimetres of rain where our farm is located. In one single evening we had over 200 millimetres of rain.

Coffs Harbour, only 30 minutes' drive away, had about one-tenth of that. On the coast we can see wildly varying rainfall patterns between different valleys and that is one of the complicating factors of water allocation. My family also has water access licences—they are on my returns. I thank the member for Cessnock for his introduction to year 10 business studies with trusts and business models. One thing he neglected to note—and I think it is just from a lack of experience—is that a lot of family farms operate as discretionary trading trusts because it helps better manage the ups and downs of farming: Some years you lose money, other years you make good money and other years you may break even. It is important we look at that at some point, but that is for later down the track.

I also put on record that our water licences are used for farming purposes and they are not traded at all. I know the member for Murray has proposed an alternative bill on this issue, which potentially exposes the names and addresses of mum-and-dad farmers across the State. I hesitate to support that because we all remember the disastrous impact the Orwellian "Aussie farms" website had on the privacy of our regional communities: Farmers' private homes were listed on a Gestapo-like hit list. Farmers were living in fear of protesters, trespassers and useless trolls from the inner city. Their family homes, children and farms were at risk. I also note that the ABC has defended The Greens position with the following headline:

Greens back farm trespass, saying it can be 'reasonable'...

That is in the ABC. Any change to the public register must balance improving transparency with protecting the privacy of mum and dad farmers. I note that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has called this disclosure tedious paperwork. I hope that they will move beyond petty politics and support the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (10:29:46): I contribute to the debate on the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020, a Government bill introduced by the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. In doing so, I will refer to two related bills which are more than relevant to the

issues we are considering this morning. Firstly I refer to a private members' bill that was previously introduced by the member for Murray, Helen Dalton, of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I understand that a bill virtually identical to the member for Murray's private member's bill has been introduced by her upper House Shooters, Fishers and Farmers colleague the Hon. Mark Banasiak. That is Helen Dalton's original bill in a slightly different form.

For today's purposes, I will be referring to the latest iteration of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers bill as the Dalton bill, given that Helen Dalton was the author and instigator. It is fair to say that she has been its vocal champion. The Dalton bill is the only one relevant to the discussion today. In fact, it is the only reason the Government has proposed the bill before the House. In dealing fairly with these issues, it is entirely appropriate to compare and contrast the proposition before us today with the Dalton bill, given the significant history, of which we are all aware. The Dalton bill sought to address two fundamental issues: water rights and transparency. The Government's bill is a far lesser version of the Dalton bill, lacking in both style and substance. Nevertheless, the Opposition will not be opposing its proposition because we welcome every step towards greater transparency.

The Dalton bill raised the notion that water rights are of such value and consequence that they ought to be disclosed by parliamentarians when taking office. The Dalton bill also set out that any changes to those holdings ought to be disclosed during the course of a lawmaker holding public office. As parliamentarians, we are required to disclose on a regular basis any interests that we have, particularly in property. The Dalton bill sought to include water rights on the list of items parliamentarians should disclose in order to make it abundantly clear that these are valuable assets that warrant disclosure. We absolutely support that proposition. It is a very simple proposition and a simple ask of the Parliament. The Government bill before us today has adopted that proposition put forward by the member for Murray. The Minister has, of course, tried to claim it as her own but we know it is not.

The question is: Why has the Government sought to copy that element of the Dalton bill and paste it into a bill of its own rather than supporting the member for Murray's initial proposition? The Minister will say that there is a substantial difference between her bill and that of the Dalton bill. But the difference is insignificant and is clearly contrived. The answer to the question is: It is pure petty politics. It stems from the fact that the member for Murray was elected and endorsed by her community in 2019 and sent The Nationals packing. Since then the entire Nationals party and the water Minister in particular have treated the member for Murray disgracefully and by extension her entire community who voted for her to represent them. We have all seen it here; it has been very unbecoming. Her community has seen it too.

I would like to think that the Government's decision to adopt this element of the Dalton bill is founded on a new realisation of how important water rights are to this community and how critical they are to farmers, communities and the environment. But I am far from convinced. It seems far more likely that it is paying lip service to the issue and to prevent the embarrassment of failing to act. It is also important to note that the Dalton bill went further than the Government's bill. It imposed obligations on the Government to ensure that there was easy access to information about those who hold water licences. It also sought to impose an obligation of disclosure when water licences were being purchased. These are both very reasonable positions. Both could have been managed and adopted by the Government as well but it has chosen not to do so.

Those additional elements of the bill that are absent from the bill today would have increased transparency and reduced corruption. Looking across the State, the demand for increased transparency in relation to water rights is loud and it is growing louder. The Nationals party remains deaf to that call. It begs the question: Why would The Nationals not want to increase transparency? Why would The Nationals not want to reduce corruption when it comes to water rights? Could it be that they are afraid of a spotlight being shone on what has been happening and who they have been giving special treatment to, all the dodgy deals that have beleaguered this community, particularly in the Murray-Darling Basin?

With the impacts of climate change biting deeper and with prolonged drought becoming more frequent, water scarcity, water security and the right to water are issues of critical significance to those living on the land, to entire communities and to entire ecosystems. We need not look any further than the increased trade and investment in water shares to understand the massive value now being placed on water. Increasing water scarcity is a worldwide problem. Consequently there are investors across the globe investing in our water rights—water that families and farmers here need to survive. Unless we can see the problem we cannot fix it. The Nationals are not interested in seeing it and they most certainly do not want to fix it. Otherwise we would not be having this debate today and the Government's bill would reflect the Dalton bill. Simpler still, the Government could have supported the Dalton bill and it can still do so when it is debated in the upper House.

The Government is not interested in solving the problems facing rural and regional New South Wales. It is more interested in scoring cheap political points, and that what it is trying to do today. The bill is a political fix to allow the Government to do as little as possible without supporting the Dalton bill. Worse still, it is setting a higher standard for those parliamentarians who have water licences than those who own property or houses. It

looks a lot like retribution and not like good government. The Government's bill does not go far enough to increase transparency and openness. It comes after the Government relentlessly attacked the member for Murray. It made outrageous allegations against her to the Speaker, which shows just how desperate The Nationals have become.

The situation now is that the Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government is being forced to fast-track dam approvals because it has done nothing since it was elected in 2011. It was galling to see last year Nationals MPs screaming across the Chamber about the lack of dams and water infrastructure when they are the ones who are responsible for building and maintaining dams and they are the ones who are required to ensure water security and water infrastructure in New South Wales. The fact that the Government has been forced to fast-track a number of dams only proves the charges against them. They have been sitting on their hands for nine years and when push comes to shove they cannot point to any achievements; they just blame everyone else. It is no wonder regional people are fleeing from the Nationals party.

Since 2011 The Nationals have been responsible for managing primary industries and regional water in New South Wales. Since 2011 every Minister in these portfolios has been a Nationals MP, and our State is not better for it. In fact, it is much worse. Take a look at what they have overseen, look at their track record when it comes to water. The Murray-Darling Basin is in crisis and families and communities are struggling to survive. That is why the Government has made it very clear that it does not want to open itself up to the transparency and accountability proposition in the Dalton bill. That is why this House is being forced to consider the Government's lesser version of that bill. I commend the member for Murray for her work and for putting up with what has been a sickening campaign against her by the Government, particularly by the Nationals party. The only way the Nationals party will claw back any support is by earning it. They have to do some work to earn the respect of the community and their votes.

I commend the work of the shadow Minister for Water, the member for Cessnock, Clayton Barr. He gets it. He understands the importance of transparency and the importance of water to these communities. Sensibly, he is proposing an amendment to the Government's bill to ensure that parliamentarians cannot avoid their responsibility to disclose their interest in water by making a purchase through a trust arrangement. If the Minister was seeking to improve transparency through this bill, increase accountability and reduce corruption, this amendment would be supported by the Government. We should not kid ourselves, the bill does not go to the heart of the problem: water accessibility and availability. A good start would be to have a policy on the impacts of climate change but the New South Wales Labor Opposition will not oppose any measure which will increase transparency in this place.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (10:39:39): I support the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020. Water is one of our most valuable assets. At a micro level water is one of our most basic human needs. That is why ensuring water security for our towns and communities is one of our most important priorities and why the New South Wales Government is investing \$1 billion towards water and sewerage projects in regional New South Wales in pursuit of improvements in public health, water security, environmental outcomes and social benefits. In the Cootamundra electorate alone this program has funded improvements in sewerage infrastructure in Ardlethan, Junee, Barellan, Gundagai and Grenfell.

More recently the New South Wales Government has provided drought emergency funding of \$94,500 to deliver a pump and pontoon to access "dead water" at Lake Rowlands and pump it to the existing outlet supplying the villages of Woodstock and Gooloogong, also in my electorate. Central Tablelands Water has also recently received \$100,000 to undertake a feasibility study to provide potable water to the village of Caragabal in my electorate. During drought this village has relied on buying bottled water. I believe that ensuring a secure and reliable water supply and adequate water infrastructure for every town in New South Wales should be top priority.

The prosperity of a region also relies on thriving local industries. A reliable supply of water is critical in this respect, whether it be manufacturing, viticulture, tourism, mining, horticulture or agriculture. Extending the wall on Wyangala Dam will not only increase the ability to store water in periods of high flows but will also allow for better regulation and release of stored water. This will improve flood mitigation and provide greater certainty to all water users, whether it be towns, industry, the environment or Indigenous water users. Water for the environment and cultural uses is also a critical part of water planning.

The New South Wales Government's \$10 million Native Fish Rescue Strategy focuses on ensuring New South Wales waterways are restocked with key native fish species affected by drought. Just recently we announced that more than two million native fish fingerlings, including Murray cod, were expected to be released into the State's waterways this summer following the largest fish breeding program in New South Wales. The Narrandera Fisheries Centre in my electorate is a leading native fish research and breeding facility; it has played a key role in this strategy. I was only too pleased to announce a \$4 million upgrade to expand this facility last year. Finding the right balance between the demands of different water users is no easy task, but it is what we are

striving to achieve. Transparency and integrity in water markets are important to provide confidence that water is efficiently allocated to productive, social, economic and environmental purposes.

The Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020 shows that the Government is focused on equitable and transparent distribution of water. By including water assets as a form of pecuniary interest requiring disclosure, the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020 recognises that water is one of our most valuable assets. Parliamentarians have the responsibility of representing the people of New South Wales and it is only right that they should set an example by declaring pecuniary interests in water, and that there should be greater transparency and accountability at this level. Transparency and accountability are critical for community confidence in those in whom they have placed their trust to represent them. The bill will amend the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 to make it clear that members of Parliament must disclose interests in water assets as pecuniary interest.

Schedule 1 [3] to the bill inserts clause 6C into the regulation, which directs that a member must lodge a return with the Clerk of the House in which the member sits within 14 days of becoming a party to a water trading activity and sets out the information that must be provided in a water trading return, including the details of any financial benefit. Schedule 1 [5] to the bill inserts clause 8A in the regulation to require a member of Parliament to disclose in a primary return and an ordinary return the water access licence number, the share component of each water access licence in which the member has an interest and the nature of that interest. Limited exceptions to this include where the member's interest in the water access licence was in the capacity of an executor or administrator of the estate and not a beneficiary, or where the interest is only in the capacity of a trustee acquired in the ordinary course of any occupation of the member which is not related to their duties as a member.

Clause 8A requires a member to disclose each right to receive water from an irrigation corporation under a water supply contract or other contract to which the member was a party. If the member has an Australian Business Number [ABN] connected with an interest that must be disclosed, the ABN must also be disclosed, adding transparency about company ownership of water rights related to a member of Parliament. The definition of a "water trading activity" is defined in schedule 1 [1] to mean specified dealings under the Water Management Act 2000 and also a disposition of property that affects a person's right to receive water from an irrigation corporation under a water supply contract or other contract. This is essentially the buying and selling of water licences, allocations and delivery rights and will capture interstate transfers and trades. Schedule 1 [1] also sets out other relevant definitions.

Schedule 1 [6] to the bill inserts clause 19A, which requires that the Clerk of either House compile and maintain a register of those water trading returns. By ensuring that water assets held by members of Parliament within the return period and any financial benefits derived from them are transparent, the bill complements other government reforms to increase transparency of water management. These include establishing an independent regulator, the National Resources Access Regulator, to lead on compliance matters, take enforcement action and develop a robust metering framework. Other commitments have been greater investment in technology, databases and analytics around compliance in water management, and more accessible information on water management available to the public. The Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020 is another important building block for ensuring public confidence in water management in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (10:48:21): I speak to the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020. The bill seeks to increase transparency on only one asset class and only for the 135 people who work in this Parliament. I note it is likely only one member of either House is known to hold this asset class—water. I also note that it was not until my colleague the member for Murray brought a bill to the House regarding water transparency that there was any interest or movement in this space. If this level of transparency is a good idea for one asset class, why not all? Far more members of both houses would own property or shares.

I would suggest the need for probity regarding property and shares is far higher as there is more scope for a perceived conflict of interest to arise in these transactions and decisions. So why stop with one asset class? Why not hold all members to the same level of transparency for all transactions they profit from? Currently the Pecuniary Interest Register does not require a member to disclose the profit from trading shares, or developing or selling real estate. The Pecuniary Interest Register does not require the disclosure of assets held by a related party such as a spouse. Again, we have one standard for one asset class and a different standard for others. If we are to be taken seriously by the people of New South Wales about probity and transparency, have a real go.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (10:50:05): I support the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020 brought before this House by the Minister for Water, Property and Housing and thank her for doing so. The member for Port Stephens stated in her contribution to debate that nothing is being done or has been done regarding water. That is a complete load of rubbish. In my part of the world over

the past 18 months, \$30 million has been injected through Dubbo Regional Council to find other sources of water—that is, to explore further groundwater scenarios. I am sorry if the member for Murray is not happy with that situation. It will also look at ways to deal with effluent, including pipelines. There is \$8 million of funding for a cofferdam to access deep remnant water at Burrendong Dam. Any suggestion that nothing is being done or has been done regarding water is misleading.

In very simple terms, in this bill the Government is committed to the integrity of parliamentary disclosure obligations. And, on that front, transparency and accountability in water markets are fundamental to providing assurance to communities and stakeholders that water is being used productively, efficiently and, most importantly, in accordance with the law. Transparency and accountability are critical to ensuring community confidence in the dealings of the Parliament, and that relates to members of all political and ideological persuasions. The Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020 strengthens parliamentary disclosure transparency and accountability by requiring the disclosure of water assets as a pecuniary interest.

Right now under the disclosure regulations members of Parliament are not specifically required to disclose water assets or any dealings with water assets, but that should change. It is something that most members in this House have agreed upon today. I place on the record that I have disclosed the stock and domestic bore I have as part of my primary place of residence. It is not a fancy bore; it is serviced by a beautiful old windmill that pumps to a holding tank and reticulates to a couple of troughs for any stock to drink from. I have had it mentioned that I may be old fashioned, but that is just the kind of guy I am. It serves my needs very well. I do not currently trade water and never have traded water. I do not have any particular problem with the trading of water so long as it is done in an open and transparent way, and that is what we are talking about today.

Parliamentarians have previously received advice from the Clerk that some water licences and water rights do require a specific declaration, but these rules are far from clear. We know the people of New South Wales, and particularly regional and rural New South Wales, have a particular interest in the disclosure by their elected representatives of pecuniary interests around matters such as water. There has certainly been heightened interest in that issue over the past few years as we battled through one of the worst droughts in living memory. That is why, through this bill, the Government is taking action to ensure a clear, consistent and comprehensive approach to dealing with water asset disclosure in the Parliament. These reforms will require the disclosure of water access licences and their share component; a contractual right to receive water from an irrigation corporation, along with any water entitlements associated with that right where there was an interest at any time during the primary/ordinary return period; the nature of the interest in the water licence or right; and, if applicable, the relevant Australian Business Number [ABN].

It will also require disclosure of water trading for any purpose, any money made, and the change to net water holdings within 14 days of the trade. As was stated last week in a letter to the editor of the *Deniliquin Pastoral Times*, that is a significant point of difference to a bill put forward by a member of the crossbench that lapsed earlier this year. In that bill there was no requirement for a member of Parliament to declare when water was traded nor disclose the value of any particular trade, which I think we would all agree is an interesting thing to omit from a bill that was supposedly all about transparency. This bill put forward by the Minister addresses that, and is one of several significant improvements. These requirements will clarify the existing disclosure obligations as they relate to water assets. Any water access licence held must be declared, even if it is a stock and domestic licence.

Any right to receive water through holding shares in an irrigation corporation must be declared. Any ABN associated with a licence or right must be declared, and any trading of water must be declared within 14 days of the trade taking place. Common sense dictates that some rights, such as basic landholder rights and town water supplies, should be excluded. These are not covered by the new measures and will not need to be disclosed. Similarly, Ministers holding water rights on behalf of the Crown are not captured, and administrators of deceased estates of which they are not a beneficiary and members acting as trustees will be exempt. By clarifying and strengthening water-related disclosure obligations the Government is ensuring greater transparency and accountability from members of Parliament to the people of New South Wales. That can only be a good thing. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (10:56:06): I contribute to debate on the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020. I note that the Minister for Water, Property and Housing is present in the Chamber. I support the intention of the bill, which is to strengthen the transparency around decisions taken by members of the House or Ministers and strengthen accountability measures. I note that there is significant interest in this issue by members of this House, which has been heightened by the inclusion, at the last election, of the member for Murray. That is not to say that there has not been considerable appropriate interest shown by the Minister; however it is now at a heightened state.

The bill in isolation is an important step, but in the overall challenge of properly managing our domestic, agricultural and environmental water needs, it is surely only a modest step. It is absolutely essential that the people of New South Wales have faith in how their State is governed and that decisions are made by people without conflicts of interest, personal involvement or financial incentives. It is not just about doing the right thing; it is about being seen to do the right thing. I agree that I do not have the knowledge of the issue that many regional members or those who are or have served as Ministers would have. That was alluded to by the member for Coffs Harbour. That said, I have a real concern with the whole idea of saleable or tradable water rights. My personal view is that water belongs to everyone and that successive Federal and State governments have failed to properly supply or regulate our water resources.

The very notion that they cannot manage what the environment provides has clearly brought us to the problems with the Murray-Darling. It is a diabolical mess that has stripped rights from family farms and channelled them to large corporations. Water licences or assets should be included on asset registers/pecuniary interest registers. I was surprised to learn that they were not already a declarable interest for members of this House. We declare real estate, business interests, shares and other assets, so why would we not include valuable water assets? The bill will require members to disclose, both in a primary return and in an ordinary return, a water access licence number, details of the share components in that licence or a right to receive a water entitlement from an irrigation corporation. It will also require members to declare an interest in a business that has water access entitlements or licences. Those are all good things.

But I have several concerns about the original bill, in particular as it relates to trusts and/or spouses. This has been raised, in particular by the member for Cessnock. We know how trusts operate—or we think we do—and they generally operate in anything but a transparent way. That has the capacity to significantly undermine public confidence in how things are done, how decisions are made and why. Trusts are not something we see in great use by the general public and, while, as the member for Coffs Harbour stated, there will be practical reasons for some farmers to use them, they are disproportionately used by the wealthy, not the income or asset poor. The bill should be extended to include requirements for a member to declare an interest in water access rights, entitlements or trades, if those assets are held in a trust. The bill should also be extended to include the spouse of a member, in the same way that other assets are declared. This is a question of transparency and accountability. While I accept that the bill goes a long way towards achieving that, there are loopholes that we must close. I thank the Minister for bringing the bill before the House and commend it to the House, recognising its inherent limitations.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (11:00:10): I contribute to debate on the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020. I congratulate the New South Wales water Minister, Melinda Pavey, on finally, at long last, addressing water transparency. After nine long years of allowing politicians, foreign corporates and even foreign governments to buy, sell and make a profit from our water, and keep their identity secret, this Government has finally decided to do something—very little, but something; baby steps. I wonder why it has finally decided to act? The Nationals have spent the past six months obstructing, blocking and delaying my bill, which is a comprehensive bill for water transparency and, now, the Government has come up with this woefully inadequate piece of legislation in an attempt to take our attention off the real issues.

Peta Credlin of Sky News used to work for the Coalition, but even she could not defend this lame piece of legislation. "There's a hundred ways you could drive a truck through this bill," she told viewers last week. "What is this Government hiding?" she asked. Good question, Peta. Let me tell members how many semitrailers we could drive through the bill. For a start, it is not retrospective. For the past six months, the Government has been delaying my bill. How easy would it have been for a Nationals MP to sell all their water in that time? Super easy. Or they could have transferred all their water to their wife's or husband's name very easily. And guess what? The bill does not cover the spouses of politicians. Of course it does not—another big loophole; another easy way for MPs to dodge transparency. And guess who else the Nationals are protecting? The Nationals donors and foreign corporations. That is right. Under Pavey's bill, Chinese and Canadian companies can keep buying our most valuable resource and keep their identities secret. And they are buying vast amounts.

Why on earth would one set up a water registry bill and not cover foreigners? We all know ICAC is currently investigating The Nationals for water corruption. This investigation has been ongoing for three years. That is a lot of corruption to unearth. There were many allegations, such as allowing big corporates to pump water during embargos. So how interesting is it that The Nationals do not want water corporations to fess up to their water ownership? We have to ask why. The Chinese government has bought 7,000 megalitres of our water in northern New South Wales. Melinda Pavey is fine with that. She is happy for this State-owned company to keep its identity secret—happy as Larry. Why? If foreign governments own our water, should Australians not have the right to know about it?

Australians who apply for unemployment benefits have to declare their water ownership on their Centrelink forms. But Melinda Pavey is happy for the Chinese government to buy up our water and keep its ownership secret. The Nationals' excuse for not having a transparent water register is a corker and it was brought up in debate today. It says it is worried about plant and animal activists—terrorists!—invading the privacy of farms and looking for plants grown under irrigation. How ridiculous. I am an irrigator; I own water to produce food. It is pretty clear to everyone who drives past my property what I do. Everyone knows an irrigator owns water. But it is not obvious if the Chinese government owns water; it is not obvious if a Sydney trader owns water; it is not obvious if a Federal politician owns water; and it is not obvious if a Cayman Island company owns some of our water.

Those are the groups that my bill will capture and Pavey's bill will exclude—why? Later I will move a couple of amendments that will prove whether or not the Government is genuine about water transparency. Because I suggest that it is not. Why not make this bill retrospective? I want to know how many State MPs owned water during the drought and made millions off the misery of our farmers. I want to know who sold their water in the past six months, while The Nationals were obstructing my bill. On and on they obstructed and delayed. We all know politicians have assets in their partners' names. Why not include spouses and partners of politicians? If they do not have anything to hide, they will support my amendments and put some meat on this powder puff bill. Otherwise, we will know that the bill is about hiding the truth and not revealing it.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:06:50): I contribute briefly to the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020. I must say, listening to the member for Murray make her contribution and highlighting the issues that will be sought to be amended later, I ask the Government to seriously consider supporting those amendments to reinforce and strengthen the current bill. I have listened to the various contributions to this debate by the member for Cessnock, who is in the Chamber, the member for Port Stephens and even the member for Lake Macquarie. The bill was brought about as a direct result of the private member's bill of the member for Murray that was introduced late last year pre-COVID. It is almost a copy-and-paste exercise. I do not say that in any disrespect to the Minister, but it would appear as though the meat of the bill, the substance of what was sought to be achieved, has been omitted.

It would appear this has become some sort of retribution or criticism of my colleague the member for Murray, Helen Dalton, who has always been open, accountable and transparent about her water interests. In fact, she sought advice to disclose her water interests when she was elected to this place back in March 2019, following that historic win in the Murray electorate. This is an issue that affects not only regional communities; it is of public interest to all people in New South Wales. We, as elected members of this place, have an obligation and a duty to disclose pecuniary interests. Unlike the member for Cessnock, I have not gone through everyone's pecuniary interests. I do not have very many at all, but no doubt there are members of Parliament—whether it is in this House or the other place—who have significant pecuniary interests. The public should know whether they are making decisions where there is a potential for a conflict of interest or a perception—an adverse perception, perhaps—of a conflict of interest.

We need to remove the secrecy that surrounds this issue. Water trading, water assets and water rights are big business. Water is a valuable commodity made even more valuable during these times of drought. The public and the citizens of New South Wales need to know whether those who are making decisions that affect their livelihoods are being unduly influenced by people in this place—elected members of this Parliament—who have an undisclosed pecuniary interest or one that has been transferred to their spouse or that is in a trust or that they have sold off during the past six months while the bill of the member for Murray was on foot.

I share the concerns expressed by the member for Cessnock in relation to some of the criticisms made of the member for Murray, specifically on social media by certain members of The Nationals. They should hold their heads in shame not only for attacking a colleague but also for attacking a female colleague in this Chamber in a way that amounts to bullying and harassment. It is totally unacceptable and unprofessional. Is a blight on every one of us who tries to do the right thing that some colleagues are prepared to slander, defile, harass, humiliate and intimidate members of this Chamber via social media. It is totally unacceptable and it should be called out for what it is. The primary objective of the bill of the member for Murray was to increase transparency around retrospectivity and the issue of disclosure by spouses. They are primary, significant issues that are not captured by the bill that the Minister has brought before the House. When the time comes to consider the amendments, I hope we can put politics aside, put the best interests of the citizens of this State at the forefront of our decision-making and support those amendments.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (11:11:57): In reply: I thank those members who have contributed to the debate, particularly the shadow Minister and member for Cessnock. He made a very good contribution. I will pick up on one issue. The member implied that The Nationals had always represented the electorate of Murray—or Murrumbidgee in its former incarnation. The electorate of Murrumbidgee—now Murray—was actually held by Labor from 1924 to 1931. The Country Party then held it

for another eight years and it was then held by the Labor Party until 1988, including four years under the stewardship of the Australian Labor Party's Al Grassby. The electorate has an interesting history. It is a proud and great electorate, full of endeavour, enterprise, energy and people who have made a new life in this wonderful country. I have many friends down there and my heart is a little down there because I was raised on a dairy farm south of that electorate. It is important to me. I declare that my father had water. We sold the farm in 1981—it was a great little dairy farm.

Mr Clayton Barr: You would have been just a girl at the time.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I was a very young girl. I thank the member for his contribution. The member said that the standard one walks past is the standard that one accepts. I have been in this Parliament for 18 years. I started in the other place and now I am here. I have a great husband who has supported me every day during that time. The member for Cessnock has met him. He is an easygoing, laconic fellow who has done a great job supporting and raising our kids. But I have never seen him so upset at the behaviour he has witnessed recently—people lashing out at me on social media, videos from this Chamber being edited and posted by a member to misrepresent and misinterpret what I said.

So let us talk about it going both ways. We just heard allegations that were both unfair and unjust. Water is a very difficult issue and tearing people asunder, tearing communities apart, is not what is required in the future. We need leadership on this issue because we need water for our communities. We need to fight for those communities together. There need to be improvements, and we are making those improvements. We introduced the Natural Resources Access Regulator to ensure that those who have done the wrong thing get found out. We are proud of that. There have been ongoing investigations and I wish they would finish. I wish they were on the public record—I really do—and that time will come.

I acknowledge the member for Albury. He is a brilliant member from the south. His knowledge of water is very strong. He has brought some of his constituents from West Corugan to me and we have been able to help them. It was good to hear him talk so proudly about the Colibri irrigation system—a most modern exciting area—and the investment that has gone into the region. The member for Ballina had a go at us for building dams, saying we are damaging the environment, and then she supports the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. Give me a break! It is just extraordinary. We are doing a great job building capacity and improving water security for farmers across this State, despite the many opponents we have in achieving that goal.

The member for Coffs Harbour understands water. His family understands water. He talked about the 200 millimetres that fell on his property. At Coffs Harbour we had 20 millimetres on the same night. Bananas and blueberries require water, and coastal New South Wales has incredibly generous rainfall at times. The member talked about harvestable rights. Yet there are those who continue to pull each other apart rather than work towards a better outcome. I acknowledge the contributions of the member for Port Stephens, the member for Cootamundra and the member for Dubbo, who talked about his windmill for stock and domestic use—which will be on his declaration. Is there a happier member than the member for Cootamundra, with 650 gigalitres going into Wyangala Dam? I acknowledge the short contributions of the members for Barwon and for Orange. It is important that we all contribute to this debate because transparency is at its heart.

The purpose of the bill is simple: It will restore trust in the water market and in the people who make decisions in relation to that market. I foreshadow that I will move amendments to the Government's bill—which we will circulate now—in relation to a public register more generally, outside the 135 people in the two Chambers of the New South Wales Parliament. That needs to happen. As I told the member for Cessnock, we need to see what the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission report says, but we acknowledge that there should be better accountability—public accountability—for the 10 per cent of water that is held by international interests, just like there is with the Australian Stock Exchange. If one owns 5 per cent of the shares of any Australian company, it needs to be declared. That is appropriate. If one is a big water trader—a big player in the market—that information should be available for local communities to see.

But we do have some genuine issues. The Victorian Government recently surveyed its farmers and found that they are petrified of Aussie Farms 2.0 and of their private information being made available more broadly. Yes, one can drive past a paddock and see what is in it, but one does not see all of it and many farmers do not want that level of availability of information. The survey from the Victorian Government—a Labor government—showed that I think around 84 per cent of farmers were very concerned about their private details being made available on a public register, just like any shareholder of any company. If one is a major player there does not need to be consideration of that to restore integrity, faith and respect in our water market. Many people have been trying to tear it apart for their own political ends. We need to come together and be strong because water is a very big part of the future of regional New South Wales. We need to be able to distribute that water fairly to our communities. In April I was at the junction of the Murray and the Darling and saw the Murray River flowing as

if it were in minor flood, yet we were two years into a drought. So I understand why those communities are concerned and upset. We are working very hard every day to ensure that there is better accountability.

Multiple reviews and investigations and even ongoing ICAC inquiries were also mentioned in debate. They are worrying, but I want them available for the community to see in order to answer questions. They may answer the conspiracy theories that abound. The member for Cessnock also questioned why the 14-day rule applies to this and not to other asset classes. I found it interesting that his amendments refer only to water classes and to trusts. Our communities have made a clear distinction between water ownership for productive purposes and water ownership for short-term trading for economic gain. The water market is extremely volatile, especially when there is not enough water and we are in our third year of drought. Decision-makers potentially have the opportunity to manipulate that market and benefit from it.

The public have made it clear: They need to know every time a member comes into this House to vote on an issue such as drought, which could economically benefit a member with a high-security entitlement—the quantum of those entitlements. We want water transparency; that has been called for over and over. We need to understand how any one of us—135 members of Parliament—may benefit from it. Other asset classes have strict trading rules around them that are monitored by agencies such as the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. The water market has been allowed to operate for too long in secrecy and this is the first step to improve transparency for parliamentarians and, as my amendments show, generally the big traders and the big users of water across Australia. Our hope is that through greater participation and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] review further advancements can be made.

Touching briefly on the zero-dollar trade issue raised by the shadow Minister, we find largely that these are internal environmental transfers. The shadow Minister looks at me sceptically, but we are happy to give him a briefing on that. There is a lot of miscommunication and conspiracies put out around that matter. Our understanding is it is largely for environmental transfers. As for the member's amendments, it is a longstanding and ongoing practice that the trust structure is a legitimate way to manage conflict. Having assets in a trust that is managed independently puts distance between the day-to-day operations of the trust and the member. That said, all income derived from a trust must be declared so the assertion that members are secretly profiteering from trust ownership is blatantly incorrect.

Finally, I must debunk the myth that this bill is aimed at a particular member. The bill will apply to all 135 members of Parliament. More specifically, the need for the bill was created by a conspiracy generated by a particular member that all of us on this side of the Chamber are secret water barons—I have a water tank. The bill brings water holdings out into the open, in full view of the public. With regard to the contribution of the member for Port Stephens, I will touch on some of the issues she raised. I thank her for recognising the fast tracking of dam construction. I will correct her: It is not that we did nothing for nine years; it is more like 30 years. The last major dam was constructed in 1987 and we are proud to be fast tracking the construction of two new dams whilst doing the planning work for a third. I am very happy that we have Labor Party support—from the shadow environment Minister and a lady raised in Albury—for fast tracking a dam.

I also refer to her mention of dodgy deals—about which the Labor Party knows a lot, especially near the area represented by the member for Port Stephens. She said that we need to move away from the Obeid and Macdonald era and into an era of new transparency on the part of members. That is the purpose of the bill. I also recognise the contribution of the member for Ballina. She asked why the bill applies only to members and not to other large corporations. I note that the bill deals specifically with amendments to disclose requirements. However, when the ACCC completes its review into the water market she should expect changes to be incorporated that we will include in our amendments to the platform of the bill. I thank members for their contributions to debate on the bill—from members who hold water entitlements or whose families hold such entitlements to members whose communities rely on this vital factor in production.

We on this side of the Chamber recognise the huge importance of water to the environment, our economy and our communities. That is why the bill is so vital. The member for Coffs Harbour referred to his survey of friends. In fact, somewhere between 14 per cent and 25 per cent of river flows across the inland of New South Wales go to production and irrigation purposes. His survey of his friends in Sydney suggests they think it is more than 50 per cent—probably 100 per cent. Our challenge is to get the message out that it is good to store water. We could have rivers completely dry today. More fish, frogs, native flora and fauna, and platypuses would be affected if we did not have the storages we have right now—this very day. The Peel River and the Lachlan River would have been empty months and months ago. It is extraordinary to appreciate that, according to data from the past 80 years on which we base our water sharing plans, we are a continent of plenty of rain—the member referred to 200 millimetres falling in one night just north of Coffs Harbour. Having the infrastructure to store and manage water means that the environment also wins. Our communities win, our towns win and our industries win. We export 70 per cent of what we grow to Asia and to other places. We are part of a world market and we need to

pull together those who support irrigation, who support water and who support growing regional New South Wales. We should not tear each other apart. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Clayton Barr, Mrs Helen Dalton and Mrs Melinda Pavey.

Consideration in Detail

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: By leave: I will propose the bill in one group of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2, and schedule 1 be agreed to.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (11:27:46): By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2020-092C in globo:

No. 1 **Water Access Licence Register**

Page 3. Insert before line 1—

Schedule 1 **Amendment of Water Management Act 2000 No 92**

[1] **Section 71 Water Access Licence Register**

Omit "The Access Register" from section 71(3).

Insert instead "Subject to section 71H, the Access Register".

[2] **Section 71H**

Omit the section. Insert instead—

71H Public access to information in Access Register

- (1) The Minister is to make the information recorded in the Access Register available to members of the public in accordance with this section.
- (2) The information is to be made available through an electronic search facility on a publicly accessible website.
- (3) The information is to be made available on payment of the fee (if any) approved by the Minister.
- (4) The regulations may make provision for or with respect to—
 - (a) the authentication of searches of the Access Register, and
 - (b) the certification of the results of those searches, and
 - (c) the restriction of access to personal information recorded in the Access Register for the purpose of protecting the privacy of that information.
- (5) This section does not limit the application of Part 6 of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* to the Access Register.

[3] **Section 71J Access to the Access Register**

Omit the section.

No. 2 **Long title**

Insert "to amend the Water Management Act 2000 with respect to public access to information recorded in the Water Access Licence Register;" after "An Act".

It is important that we create respect, accountability and trust in relation to water. We need water to grow our regions, production and capacity. It is also important that, by restoring that trust, we relate it not only to the 135 members of this Parliament but also to the wider industry that is a part of the water market created in the 1990s. That water market was supported and voted for in large part by farmers. It was designed to allow those who wanted to invest in their farms and buy water from their neighbours in their valley to continue to do so. Out of that arrangement a water trading market has grown. I agree that more information needs to be available on a public register.

The Government amendment also talks to the issue of privacy, which is important, especially for the small family farm. They do not want the details of their trade and properties available to all. There is good reason for it: The Aussie Farms' public declaration of that website caused fear and anxiety to our farming community. I agree that for big corporates, big players, big water holders and certainly for international investors, having that information available more directly is important. The amendments allow for that information to be available. But the Government will not do it alone; it will wait to see what the Australian Competition and Consumer

Commission says and it will coordinate with the Federal Government so that the information is available in a proper way. The Government amendments make it clear that it will be a part of the information going forward, as it should be. I commend the Government's amendments to the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:30:51): The Labor Opposition supports the amendments. One of the disappointments is that currently there is a sense of a framework in a bill in the other place. But I appreciate the conversation that I had previously with the Minister, which she reiterated today, about an Australian Competition and Consumer Commission process that ultimately could inform the nature of a future reformed access register. I raise a concern about section 71H (3), which is about the fee payable to do any search or observation of water registers, as is the case with land title registers. Undoubtedly, paying a fee is a barrier to participation in any part of life and it is no different with the registers. For example, prior to the privatisation of the land titles office a search was in the range of \$9.90, \$11 or \$12. Post privatisation, searches are now in the range of \$28 per search. The \$9.90 charge was already a barrier to participation; the \$30 charge as a result of privatisation is a bigger barrier. The Minister has the ability to approve payment of a fee for a searchable register. I urge her to assure the House that the search fee will be at the cheapest possible end.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2020-092C be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (11:33:16): By leave: I move the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendments Nos 1 to 11 on sheet c2020-085A in globo:

No. 1 Disclosure of water interests

Page 4, Schedule 1[4]. Insert after line 24—

spouse, of a person, means the following but, if more than one person would qualify as the person's spouse, means only the latest person to qualify—

- (a) a person to whom the person is legally married (including a husband or wife of the person),
- (b) the person's de facto partner.

No. 2 Disclosure of water interests

Pages 4 and 5, Schedule 1[5] (proposed clause 8A), line 27 on page 4 to line 7 on page 5. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

8A Water interests

- (1) A Member must disclose in a primary return and an ordinary return—
 - (a) the water access licence number and share component of each water access licence in which the Member or the Member's spouse (if any) had an interest—
 - (i) in the case of a primary return—on the primary return date or at any time during the period of 5 years ending on the primary return date, or
 - (ii) in the case of an ordinary return—at any time during the ordinary return period, and
 - (b) the nature of the interest in each water access licence, and
 - (c) each right to receive water from an irrigation corporation under a water supply contract or other contract to which the Member or the Member's spouse (if any) was a party—
 - (i) in the case of a primary return—on the primary return date or at any time during the period of 5 years ending on the primary return date, or
 - (ii) in the case of an ordinary return—at any time during the ordinary return period, and
 - (d) the nature of the interest in each right, and
 - (e) if the Member has an ABN that is connected with an interest described in paragraph (a) or (c)—the Member's ABN.
- (2) An interest described in subclause (1) need not be disclosed by a Member in a primary return or an ordinary return if—
 - (a) the Member or Member's spouse had the interest only in his or her capacity as the executor or administrator of the estate of a deceased person and neither the Member nor the Member's spouse was a beneficiary under the will or intestacy, or

- (b) the Member or Member's spouse had the interest only in his or her capacity as a trustee and acquired the interest in the ordinary course of any occupation which is not related to the Member's duties as a Member.

No. 3 Disclosure—forms

Page 6, Schedule 1[13], line 1. Insert Page 6, Schedule 1[13], line 1. Insert "or your spouse" after "in which you".

No. 4 Disclosure—forms

Page 6, Schedule 1[13], line 2. Insert "(or at any time during the period of 5 years ending on that date)" after "pledge of loyalty".

No. 5 Disclosure—forms

Page 6, Schedule 1[13], line 4. Insert "or your spouse" after "to which you".

No. 6 Disclosure—forms

Page 6, Schedule 1[13], line 5. Insert "(or at any time during the period of 5 years ending on that date)" after "pledge of loyalty".

No. 7 Disclosure—forms

Page 6, Schedule 1[15], line 15. Insert "or your spouse" after "in which you".

No. 8 Disclosure—forms

Page 6, Schedule 1[15], line 18. Insert "or your spouse" after "to which you".

No. 9 Disclosure—forms

Page 7, Schedule 1[17], line 8. Insert ", or your spouse has held any of those rights or interests" after "contract".

No. 10 Disclosure—forms

Page 7, Schedule 1[18], line 15. Insert "or your spouse" after "in which you".

No. 11 Disclosure—forms

Page 7, Schedule 1[18], line 19. Insert "or your spouse" after "to which you".

As I have mentioned previously, there has been much criticism of the bill in the media. As Sky News host Peta Credlin said, there are "a hundred ways you could drive a truck through this bill." The amendments I have moved will close two of those gaping holes. The first thing we must do is make the bill retrospective. If the Government is serious about transparency, why is it covering up for every politician who may have sold their water in the past year? The Government spent six months blocking and delaying my bill. During that time it would have been dead easy for members to sell their water.

The bill means absolutely nothing if it is not retrospective. What is the Government hiding? I want to know how many State MPs owned water during the drought and made millions off the misery of farmers. We deserve to know that. The second gap that my amendments seek to close are the water interests of the wives, husbands or partners of MPs. The oldest trick in the book for politicians is to hide their assets in their partners' names. If a Nationals MP's wife owns \$10 million worth of water, should we not have the right to know about it? Will the MP not get a benefit from that water? If the Nationals MP is making decisions that impact on the price and profitability of water, should we know about it? The amendments are vital. Without them, one could drive a fleet of trucks through the bill. If the Government genuinely wants transparency, it will support the amendments. If the Government votes against them, it is covering up for one of its own.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:35:35): The Labor Opposition supports the amendments. I will focus on two elements in the amendments. The first is retrospectivity and the reason the member for Murray is asking members of Parliament to declare whether they have had a water entitlement or water interest in recent years. Part of the logic of supporting that demand is that in November last year a ruling by the Clerks suggested that members should have always declared a water interest, but that it may not have been as apparent as it could have been. As members of Parliament, we read the pecuniary interest forms and try to follow the rules, instructions and guidance in them. It is fair to say that to the best of my recollection water is not listed anywhere in those forms as an example of the type of thing that MPs should declare.

If members should have been declaring their interest in water all along, and due to error, omission, a genuine mistake and an honest absence of awareness they have failed to do that, I do not seek to persecute them. I am happy to accept that the error was a genuine, honest omission. However, over the past five years a number of significant decisions about water have been made by members of the New South Wales Parliament. Historically, members may have failed to declare their water interests when they should have. They could have and should have sought a ruling from the Clerks but may have failed to do so. However, a discretionary disclosure process is available to members on any given day through which they can amend their disclosures. In supporting

these amendments, I encourage members to do that and to acknowledge that if in the past five years they have held a water share—

Mr John Sidoti: It's actually an obligation.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: —it is an obligation to declare that. On good faith, I am happy to accept that some members might have got it wrong.

Mr John Sidoti: If you know, you should.

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

Mr John Sidoti: It's an obligation to disclose. If you know, you should be making it.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: The member for Drummoyne makes a good point. Given the clarification from the Clerks and debate on the bill, if any members of Parliament know that in the past five years they have held water, they should make the disclosure. I show some sensitivity to the amendments relating to members' spouses. I agree that members of Parliament have opportunities to prevent some transparency around their assets by putting things in the name of their partner. That is against the spirit of the disclosures. Morally, it is the wrong thing to do. Technically, it does not break the rules. Every politician must wrestle alone with that issue. My view is that the management of assets and finances in a relationship is a conversation for that relationship. In some instances, that is 100 per cent open and shared and each person knows who owns what. In other instances the partners—the spouses or de factos—keep their assets distinctly separate.

In the particular case of water interests, I support the suggested amendments that require spouses to declare those interests. I support the amendments for two key reasons which are, in fact, outlined in the Government's bill. Under the bill, members must disclose any water asset entitlements connected with an ABN—highly likely to involve a spouse or a partner—and any water assets and interests in an irrigation corporation, which is fantastic. If the Parliament decides upon those two disclosure requirements then, in the singular instance of water about which we are talking today, it is reasonable to require water interests held in the name of a member's spouse to be declared as well. For those reasons, I support the amendments.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (11:41:06): Again, members talk about leadership, about the need to come together to support all regional communities who need water to survive and thrive, and yet the member for Murray continues to peddle a conspiracy theory. It is a disgraceful act that makes us all sound like water barons—if only! I respect people who have worked hard and used the new system that created the ability to trade water and buy water.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Do you?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I do. I do!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Murray has had her opportunity to speak in the debate.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: But I do not respect the suggestion of a massive cover-up. As the Clerk of the House highlighted in November 2019, any member of Parliament who had significant water holdings or interests, or was trading or making money, had to declare those things. It does not suit the narrative of the member for Murray, but it is the truth. The truth is that everyone who supports water being more fairly distributed to our regional communities must come together, not tear us asunder. The Government opposes the amendments. The results are in: There is no conspiracy. We will declare our bores, our stock and domestic licences. Unlike the bill proposed in the other place, the Government's bill says that any member who trades water must declare it. What is the issue with that?

Members should be proud of the water they have accumulated and done well with. They should be proud of it because it is a good thing to be a successful farmer. But do not pretend in this Chamber that conspiracies exist when they do not. We want farmers to be successful and to do well. We do not want farmers to be cast in an evil light. That is what the amendments suggest, which is why the Government opposes them.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:43:35): I refer to the Minister's comments about conspiracy. I could not agree more that we need to get rid of conspiracy theories. Conspiracy theories are generated by information gaps, by an absence of access to information, by a lack of information. That is what creates conspiracy theories. It happens in families and in relationships.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: In our branches.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: It happens in our branches and in every playground and classroom across the State. It happens from the age of zero until death. If one has only certain pieces of information and there is a gap

in the middle, it is human nature—reports by psychologists and psychiatrists all over the world affirm this—that in trying to understand how those pieces of information sit together people will fill in the gaps themselves. They will fill the gaps with snippets of information. Sometimes the result is a crazy, mad conspiracy. Sometimes it is entirely accurate. For example, since the member introduced the bill several months ago there may or may not have been a purchase or sale of water assets. The way to remove the conspiracy theory is to put the facts on the table. That is what the bill is about, so I support the amendments. Interestingly, in doing so, I support the Minister in her desire to get rid of any conspiracy. The way to do that is to ensure all information is on the table.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendments Nos 1 to 11 on sheet c2020-085A be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes42
Noes45
Majority.....3

AYES

Aitchison, J	Atalla, E	Bali, S
Barr, C	Butler, R	Car, P
Catley, Y	Chanthivong, A	Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T	Daley, M	Dalton, H
Dib, J	Donato, P	Doyle, T
Finn, J	Greenwich, A	Harris, D
Harrison, J	Haylen, J	Hoening, R
Hornery, S	Leong, J	Lynch, P
McDermott, H	McGirr, J	McKay, J
Mehan, D (teller)	Mihailuk, T	Minns, C
O'Neill, M	Park, R	Parker, J
Piper, G	Scully, P	Smith, T
Tesch, L	Voltz, L	Warren, G
Washington, K	Watson, A (teller)	Zangari, G

NOES

Anderson, K	Ayres, S	Barilaro, J
Berejiklian, G	Bromhead, S	Clancy, J
Conolly, K	Constance, A	Cooke, S (teller)
Coure, M	Crouch, A (teller)	Davies, T
Dominello, V	Elliott, D	Evans, L
Gibbons, M	Griffin, J	Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S	Henskens, A	Johnsen, M
Kean, M	Lee, G	Lindsay, W
Marshall, A	O'Dea, J	Pavey, M
Perrottet, D	Petinos, E	Preston, R
Provest, G	Roberts, A	Saunders, D
Sidgreaves, P	Sidoti, J	Singh, G
Smith, N	Speakman, M	Stokes, R
Taylor, M	Toole, P	Tuckerman, W
Upton, G	Ward, G	Wilson, F

PAIRS

Lalich, N	Hazzard, B
Saffin, J	Williams, R

Amendments negatived.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:57:47): By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos. 1 to 5 on sheet c2020-090B in globo:

No. 1 **Disclosure of water interests**

Page 5, Schedule 1[5] (proposed clause 8A). Insert after line 7—

- (3) If a Member has a relevant connection with a trust on the primary return date or at any time during the ordinary return period, the Member must disclose in a primary return and an ordinary return—
- (a) the water access licence number and share component of each water access licence in which the trust (or a trustee of the trust on behalf of the trust) had an interest—
 - (i) in the case of a primary return—on the primary return date, or
 - (ii) in the case of an ordinary return—at any time during the ordinary return period, and
 - (b) the nature of the interest in each water access licence.
- (4) In subclause (3), a Member has a **relevant connection** with a trust if the Member—
- (a) is a trustee of the trust, or
 - (b) is a settlor of the trust, or
 - (c) is otherwise responsible for the affairs of the trust, or
 - (d) is a beneficiary of the trust.

No. 2 Disclosure—forms

Page 6, Schedule 1[13], line 5. Insert "If you had a relevant connection with a trust (within the meaning of clause 8A(4)) on the date on which you took the pledge of loyalty, you must also disclose the water access licence number and share component of each water access licence in which the trust (or a trustee of the trust on behalf of the trust) had an interest on that date and the nature of the interest in the water access licence." after "in the right."

No. 3 Disclosure—forms

Page 6, Schedule 1[15], line 19. Insert "If you had a relevant connection with a trust (within the meaning of clause 8A(4)) at any time during the ordinary return period, you must also disclose the water access licence number and share component of each water access licence in which the trust (or a trustee of the trust on behalf of the trust) had an interest at any time during that period and the nature of the interest in the water access licence." after "in the right."

No. 4 Disclosure—forms

Page 7, Schedule 1[17]. Insert after line 9—

- (a2) had a relevant connection with a trust (within the meaning of clause 8A(4) of the *Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983*) that has had any interest in water access licences, or on behalf of which a trustee has had any interest in water access licences, which are additional to those already disclosed in your most recent return, or

No. 5 Disclosure—forms

Page 7, Schedule 1[18], line 21. Omit "return.". Insert instead—

- return, and
- (c) if you had a relevant connection with a trust during the supplementary ordinary return period—the water access licence number and share component of each water access licence in which the trust (or a trustee on behalf of the trust) had an interest during the supplementary ordinary return period that is additional to the interests that you have already disclosed in your most recent return.

I will keep my comments brief. I know there are a lot of people lingering outside, waiting to come back in and vote. I ventilated most of my thoughts on trusts and on the need for transparency on water interests right into the heart of the trusts that different members in this Chamber may hold. When the Minister responded she said that a member does have to declare an income from a trust, which is absolutely true. However, a member does not have to declare the nature of the income from the trust, so it is not possible to know whether it is because that trust disposed of assets in property, or perhaps plant equipment, shares on the Australian Stock Exchange, or water. That is the gap that is missing.

It is not that income from trusts does not already have to be declared. The bill moved by the Minister has had the support of the Opposition, but I am looking to make a constructive addition to the bill in the way of the transparency that the Minister herself seeks. I believe it is important that all members of Parliament are also required to declare water interests held, exchanged or traded inside a trust of which the member of Parliament is a trustee, is a settler of the trust, is otherwise responsible for the affairs of the trust, or is a beneficiary of any such trust. I commend these amendments to the House.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (11:59:52): I respectfully say that the Government will be opposing the amendments moved by the shadow Minister. As per the member's amendments, it has been a longstanding, ongoing practice that a trust structure is a legitimate way to manage conflict. Having assets in a trust that is independently managed gives distance between the member and the day-to-day operations of the trust. That said, all income derived from a trust must already be declared, so

the assertion that members are secretly profiteering from trust ownership is blatantly incorrect. As such, the Government opposes these amendments.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:00:32): I briefly go back to the conspiracy element that the Minister spoke about earlier. I support the need to get away from conspiracies, which are the absence of information. Based on the Government not supporting my amendments, essentially what we have left are two opportunities for conspiracy. We have left an opportunity for spouses and an opportunity for trusts. Given the opportunity today to deal with closing the door on those conspiracy theories, unfortunately the Government has sought to leave those two doors wide open, and that disappoints me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendments Nos. 1 to 5 on sheet c2020-090B be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes43
Noes45
Majority.....2

AYES

Aitchison, J	Atalla, E	Bali, S
Barr, C	Butler, R	Car, P
Catley, Y	Chanthivong, A	Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T	Daley, M	Dalton, H
Dib, J	Donato, P	Doyle, T
Finn, J	Greenwich, A	Harris, D
Harrison, J	Haylen, J	Hoenig, R
Hornery, S	Kamper, S	Leong, J
Lynch, P	McDermott, H	McGirr, J
McKay, J	Mehan, D (teller)	Mihailuk, T
Minns, C	O'Neill, M	Park, R
Parker, J	Piper, G	Scully, P
Smith, T	Tesch, L	Voltz, L
Warren, G	Washington, K	Watson, A (teller)
Zangari, G		

NOES

Anderson, K	Ayres, S	Barilaro, J
Berejiklian, G	Bromhead, S	Clancy, J
Conolly, K	Constance, A	Cooke, S (teller)
Coure, M	Crouch, A (teller)	Davies, T
Dominello, V	Elliott, D	Evans, L
Gibbons, M	Griffin, J	Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S	Henskens, A	Johnsen, M
Kean, M	Lee, G	Lindsay, W
Marshall, A	O'Dea, J	Pavey, M
Perrottet, D	Petinos, E	Preston, R
Provest, G	Roberts, A	Saunders, D
Sidgreaves, P	Sidoti, J	Singh, G
Smith, N	Speakman, M	Stokes, R
Taylor, M	Toole, P	Tuckerman, W
Upton, G	Ward, G	Wilson, F

PAIRS

Lalich, N	Hazzard B
Saffin, J	Williams, R

Amendments negatived.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 1 and 2, and schedule 1 as amended be agreed to

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I move:

That this bill now be read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

PERSONAL INJURY COMMISSION BILL 2020

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 3 June 2020.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (12:09:46): I lead for the Opposition on the Personal Injury Commission Bill 2020. Firstly, I acknowledge my colleague the Hon. Daniel Mookhey in the other place for leading the Opposition on this important bill and his work on it. We reserve our final position until this bill is before the upper House so that we can undertake meaningful stakeholder consultation. The bill makes a multitude of changes to the dispute resolution process for both workers compensation and compulsory third party [CTP] insurance. NSW Labor is concerned that the process requires further examination into the provisions of this bill.

I ask the Minister to provide details of consultation the Government undertook prior to introducing this bill, as we have heard from numerous stakeholders about a rushed consultation and legal restraints applied to that process. In introducing something like this, particularly a new commission like this, the Government, all parties and key stakeholders have to consider the unintended consequences of rushing a bill through because it needs to be done before the winter recess. I acknowledge that the Government understands this and the bill will get through this House, but there has to be an understanding that there are many issues that have been brought to us and the Government.

The Personal Injury Commission Bill proposes the consolidation of the compulsory third party insurance and workers compensation dispute resolution systems into a single commission. It follows a 2018 recommendation from the upper House Standing Committee on Law and Justice's statutory review of the workers compensation and CTP insurance schemes. Currently, the State's Insurance Regulatory Agency [SIRA] administers dispute resolution in the CTP scheme. The Workers Compensation Commission [WCC] undertakes dispute resolution in the workers compensation scheme. SIRA's principal task is regulating New South Wales insurance markets with dispute resolution as an adjacent function. The WCC is a specialist tribunal with deep expertise in complex medical and legal disputes. In 2019 the two schemes received more than 110,000 claims. Most were in the workers compensation scheme. Some 17,000 of these claims were disputed, 7,000 in the WCC and 10,000 in the CTP scheme. The Standing Committee on Law and Justice's recommendation reads as follows:

That the NSW Government consolidate the workers compensation scheme and CTP insurance scheme dispute resolution systems into a single personal injury tribunal, by expanding the jurisdiction of the Workers Compensation Commission, but retaining two streams of expertise.

Labor in committee pushed for the streamed structure and I acknowledge the work of my colleagues who did that. The workers compensation scheme is a complex system—much different to CTP—and therefore requires a depth of expertise in its dispute system. Each scheme holds different cultures, processes and relationship dynamics. For instance, a motor accident is commonly a one-off event often between strangers, whereas workers compensation can be a prolonged injury—physical or psychological—with an interpersonal relationship of employer-employee involved. NSW Labor strongly believes that expertise based in the Workers Compensation Commission needs to be retained through separate divisions and we hold concerns about the commitment to keeping that structural separation in place.

The bill establishes a rule committee to develop the practices and procedures for proceedings before the commission and before medical assessors, merit reviewers or mediators. In his second reading speech, the Minister referred to the need for a rule committee to ensure the independence of the commission and representation from each division. Preliminary discussions with stakeholders suggest these provisions may need strengthening. Finally, I request the Minister provide a detailed explanation about the exclusion of legislation regarding Workers Compensation Independent Review Office's [WIRO] Independent Legal Assistance and Review Service [ILARS]. The same 2018 Review of the Workers Compensation Scheme recommended:

That the NSW Government preserve the Workers Compensation Independent Review Office and Independent Legal Assistance and Review Service in the workers compensation scheme, and expand its services to claimants in CTP insurance scheme disputes.

In the Government's reply to the report, the Minister stated:

The Government supports the functions and services provided by WIRO and recognises its valuable role in the workers compensation scheme. The proposed consultation covering the establishment and operation of a consolidated tribunal will consider the feasibility of any expansion into the CTP insurance scheme.

We ask the Minister to address this recommendation in his reply and outline what consultation was undertaken on this specific recommendation. Why did the Government exclude ILARS from the scheme? While we will not impede the bill in this House, we call on the Minister to address these concerns. My colleague the Hon. Daniel Mookhey and I will continue to undertake consultation and reserve our final position for the debate before the upper House. Labor will not oppose the bill in this House, but we reserve our position in the other place.

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (12:16:24): I support this bill as—once upon a lifetime ago—my first job after finishing high school was working for a workers compensation insurance company. It was in Glebe and it was called Innes-Owens. My role was an administration assistant in the claims processing area, preparing and sorting documents relative to the various claims and liaising with the workers compensation claim officers. What I saw working in the old workers compensation scheme was an overly adversarial, antiquated and largely inefficient system. The same doctors and lawyers would work for plaintiffs, and the same different doctors and lawyers would work for insurance companies.

Something to note was that there were certain patterns to the documents, invoices, reports and health providers that would be received for the claims particularly for certain injuries. Let us just say that one could often tell which doctor was involved in the claim if it would reasonably determine whether the claim was going to be fraudulent and from an insurance perspective would require investigation at a higher level than genuine workers compensation claims would. One side would say there should be compensation and the other side would say there should not. The outcome of such a system was extensive cost to the process, overcompensation in some cases and expense to insurers, and ultimately higher premiums for businesses. Higher premiums were a cost to business and ultimately a disincentive to employ people.

The old workers compensation scheme ultimately went bankrupt and, in the case of the insurance company that I worked for, a takeover, a recession, a scandal and a trip to the NSW Supreme Court. So from those early heady times of working in the world of insurance, I later found myself back in the game in 2000 working for AMP and have since then had an interest in the efficient operation of our insurance system. This Government reformed the workers compensation system and there was much work to be done to reform it. It has also made changes to motor vehicle compensation.

The time has come to consolidate the administration of these two personal injury systems. If one breaks an arm at work currently one's injury and compensation claim will be dealt with by a different system from the system if one has the exact same injury in a car accident. There is no logical reason why the treatment and compensation for the same injury should not be dealt with in the same way and by the same body regardless of the circumstances causing the injury. That is what this bill achieves. The bill implements the Government's response to recommendations 1 and 2 of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice's 2018 review of the workers compensation and motor accident schemes.

The committee found that it can be confusing for people to navigate disputes in the workers compensation and compulsory third party schemes. The committee recommended consolidating the workers compensation and compulsory third party [CTP] dispute resolution systems into a single personal injury tribunal by expanding the jurisdiction of the Workers Compensation Commission, but retaining two streams of expertise. We want to improve the customer experience for all users of the system and reduce any process trauma for injured people navigating disputes in these schemes. My experience 30 years ago in workers compensation claims showed me that the customer experience for genuine claimants then was very poor and I am glad that this bill introduces an improvement in the customer experience.

A single Personal Injury Commission will bring several improvements to the current system. It will offer customers a one-stop shop for workers compensation and CTP dispute resolution with a single digital registry. There will be one website and one phone number for customers involved in motor accident or workers compensation disputes who need to access the services of the commission. When members of the public need to access these services, they will not be confused about where they need to go. A small number of people have a dispute in the workers compensation scheme and CTP scheme at the same time and will need to access the services of the commission. Rather than go different places as is the case now, they will go to one place and have one seamless customer experience to have those disputes resolved.

The commission will be customer-focused, with consistent customer service standards. There will be more certainty, efficiency and streamlining of decision-making. There will be enhanced public confidence in independent decision-making in the motor accident scheme by moving it out of the regulator—the State Insurance Regulatory Authority—to an independent commission. Decisions will be published across all schemes in accordance with the commission rules, guiding and assisting parties to a dispute, promoting public confidence and transparency in commission decision-making and reducing disputation in them. There will be financial savings. Economies of scale in administration and accommodation will be available. There will be efficiencies in

allocating resources and workload across different jurisdictions while retaining specialisation and expertise in the schemes.

Great opportunities for operational harmonisation and customer service improvements will make it easier for people to navigate the system. There will be reduced duplication of processes, such as in the appointment of medical assessors. The president of the commission will appoint medical assessors who assess disputes under either or all of the schemes in a single commission. The structure of the commission will allow it to not only deliver quality services now but provide it with a sound foundation for the commission to grow and respond to future changes and demands. The Government is committed to maintaining affordable green slip insurance premiums. The Government expects the Personal Injury Commission will have minimal impact on green slip insurance premiums.

Existing rights to legal representation in the workers compensation and CTP schemes have been retained in the Personal Injury Commission. A person who is a party to proceedings before the commission is entitled to be represented by a legal practitioner or an agent. This is consistent with the existing rights to representation before the Workers Compensation Commission or in a claims assessment before a claims assessor in the CTP schemes. To facilitate this approach, the bill does not alter the costs framework that currently exists in the workers compensation and CTP schemes. The State Insurance Regulatory Authority is also reviewing how injured people may best be supported as they navigate disputes in the schemes. The commission's statutory objects include that the commission will be accessible, professional and responsive to the needs of all of its users. This means ensuring that self-represented parties have appropriate support and access to its processes and services.

Compensation entitlements and benefits under the workers compensation and compulsory third-party schemes are not impacted by these changes. The bill broadly maintains current workers compensation and CTP dispute resolution pathways and places them into separate divisions. No changes have been made to the compensation and benefits entitlements in the underlying workers compensation and CTP schemes. The Government adopted this model after considering feedback from stakeholders who strongly advocated for a minimalist change approach. Further, the bill preserves the underlying substantive law concerning the entitlements of injured people to damages or other compensation or assistance under workers compensation legislation or motor accidents legislation.

There is no change to court access under the schemes as the Personal Injury Commission Bill preserves the existing dispute resolution models and processes in the workers compensation and CTP schemes and transfers them into the commission. I support the bill, which consolidates the administration and the process of Workers Compensation and CTP insurance schemes. It will provide consistency and simplified procedures to persons who suffer motor vehicle or work-related injuries and enable them to focus on gaining optimum health outcomes instead of having to focus on navigating complicated claim and paperwork systems.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:25:05): I support the Personal Injury Commission Bill 2020. I thank the Hon. Victor Dominello, the Minister for Customer Service, for introducing the bill. It is focused on improving the customer experience for all that use the personal injury system, helping to reduce the unnecessary stresses that can be caused to injured people who are working through disputes within the workers compensation and motor vehicle accident schemes. The bill builds upon the work that is already undertaken by the Government and it delivers on its commitment to create a single dispute resolution body for both compulsory third party [CTP] insurance, motor accidents and workers compensation cases.

The bill follows the recommendation in the report of the 2018 Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice of consolidating the workers compensation and CTP dispute resolution systems into a single personal injury tribunal by expanding the jurisdiction of the Workers Compensation Committee, but retaining two streams of expertise. Additionally, it delivers on the recommendations of multiple law and justice committee inquiries and follows extensive consultation with scheme providers including lawyers, insurers, unions and internal stakeholders such as the Workers Compensation Independent Review Office, the Workers Compensation Commission, icare NSW and the State Insurance Regulatory Authority.

The independent Personal Injury Commission, created through the bill, will be headed by judicial officers who will operate within the jurisdiction of the existing Workers Compensation Commission and the State Insurance Regulatory Authority's motor accident Dispute Resolution Service, which is delivered by specialists and experienced workers compensation and motor accident divisions. This change aims to create a tribunal that follows on from the success of Service NSW focusing on a consolidated and modern approach. I am happy that in championing this change and trying to bring Service NSW into the management of personal injury disputes, the Minister is helping to shift dimensions by reducing paperwork, long wait times and bureaucracy while also, importantly, placing customer experience at the forefront.

If the Personal Injury Commission runs anything like the Liverpool Service Centre, I know the residents of New South Wales will be extremely pleased. The Service NSW centres are extremely helpful and reduce what used to be a time-consuming experience. The Liverpool Service Centre is the busiest Service NSW in the State at the moment. We are all looking forward to a new Service NSW centre opening very soon around the Edmonton Park area, which was an election promise. We are working hard to make that happen. Through the provision of the single Personal Injury Commission, it will allow for multiple positive benefits compared to what we are currently seeing. One of the most important benefits is that it will offer injured customers a one-stop shop, reducing the need to go to multiple dispute resolution entities located within the schemes.

Customers have to deal with many agencies in many different ways, such as the Workers Compensation Commission, which deals with workers compensation disputes; the State Insurance Regulatory Authority, which deals with motor accident disputes through the Dispute Resolution Service in the 2017 CTP scheme; the Claims Assessment and Resolution Service; and the Medical Assessment Service within the 1999 CTP scheme. The changes in the bill consolidate those four bodies into one. Users of a new, single commission will benefit from fewer forms, less complexity, a harmonised process and better access to dispute resolution across all schemes. Now when injured people need to access those services, they will not be confused about where they need to go. Through the creation of one body, there will be advantages of economies of scale in administration and accommodation. There will be efficiencies in allocating resources and workload across different jurisdictions while retaining specialisation and expertise in the schemes. That will deliver benefits to the community and stakeholders by way of value for money and a more consistent user experience.

The objectives of the bill will help to ensure that the new independent Personal Injury Commission is accessible and responsive to the needs of all users, encourages early dispute resolution and resolves the real issues between parties justly, quickly, cost-effectively and with as little formality as possible. Importantly, decision-making and the conduct of its members is a key focus to ensure that the new commission promotes public confidence. A rule committee will make rules to regulate the commission's practice and procedure, allowing for the strengthening of its independence and ensuring appropriate representation from both schemes. Additionally, the bill creates an aligned and integrated membership structure for the appointment of members, medical assessors, merit reviewers and mediators. In leading the organisation, the president of the commission will be responsible for directing the business of the commission, managing members, facilitating the adoption of good administrative practice in the commission, giving directions about practice and procedure, and appointing decision-makers and mediators.

Under the president's direction, divisions will be managed by division heads, who will be responsible for managing the business of the commission in their respective areas. They will play an important role in ensuring that there is specialised jurisprudence, knowledge, practice and procedure appropriate to the divisions. Additionally, a public servant principal registrar role will be created to assist the president in managing the business and affairs of the commission. The role is like that of the principal registrar of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The principal registrar will oversee the commission's day-to-day operations, including its staff, registry, budget and digital platform, and ensure that the commission maintains a high level of customer focus. The president and the division heads will be responsible for leading the members of the commission.

The overall structure divides the independent decision-making functions of the commission from administration delivered by the registrars and other public service employees. Once again, I thank the Minister for Customer Service, who is in the Chamber, his staff and the department for the work that was done to bring the bill to the House—and the work being done to bring a new Service NSW centre to my electorate, which I know is coming soon. I know that many customers who utilise these services, especially at a time when they may be under a large amount of stress, will benefit from the changes outlined in the bill. I am also happy to see the New South Wales Government continuing with its commitment to create a single dispute resolution body for compulsory third party insurance motor accident and workers compensation cases. The bill reduces the unnecessary stresses for those who use the personal injury system and, as such, I commend it to the House.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:32:48): If passed in its current form, the Personal Injury Commission Bill 2020 will consolidate the compulsory third party [CTP] insurance and workers compensation dispute resolution systems into a single Personal Injury Commission. The bill makes good on a 2018 recommendation from the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Law and Justice, which undertook a statutory review of the workers compensation and CTP insurance schemes. However, I share the concerns of the shadow better regulation Minister and member for Canterbury that there has been too little consultation with stakeholders, resulting in considerable concern that unintended consequences will arise from the passage of the bill. Good legislation is something that is considered and developed after wide consultation with stakeholders. This legislation has not been through that process. It is well known that haste and a lack of consultation when legislating often lead to drafting errors and amendments. Why not get it right the first time and consult with those who will be impacted by the legislation?

The intention of the bill is to allow for the creation of a new Personal Injury Commission, making the dispute resolution process easier to navigate for injured road users and workers entitled to compensation. That is a worthy intention. When a person is injured at work or on the road that, in itself, is traumatic enough. Yet the trauma is often compounded by having to navigate the complexity of the dispute systems process in the workers compensation and motor vehicle accident schemes. Too often the process adds insult to injury. The bill creates a Personal Injury Commission, which is intended to improve dispute resolution, resulting in greater efficiencies and hopefully a better experience for injured people. Where once claimants had to deal with multiple dispute authorities, now the bill provides that they will deal with just one. In 2019 about 7,000 compensation applications were made to the Workers Compensation Commission and about 10,000 claims were made against the CTP insurance scheme. That is a total of about 17,000 compensation claims.

Under the current scheme, anyone who disputes a CTP insurance claim must take their complaint to the government bureaucrats at the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA]. That sees a conflict of interest in which the regulator of the CTP insurance scheme also resolves disputes. All too often, that has led to unfair results for the claimant. In my office at the moment there is a box of files brought by a constituent who has been through the mill and back in trying to have his personal injury claim resolved. He is so traumatised by the process he has been through that he has basically walked away from the claim and just decided to leave that box of files, which is his property, in my office. It is hoped that creating a single commission will increase the rigour of decisions, taking them out of the hands of bureaucrats and putting them into the hands of an independent tribunal. As I said before, that is a worthy intention.

The creation of the Personal Injury Commission and a consolidated tribunal with separate workers compensation and CTP insurance divisions will also address another important issue within the current scheme: the inequality of expertise in dispute resolution between the Workers Compensation Commission on the one hand, and the CTP insurance scheme on the other. The primary role of the SIRA is to regulate the New South Wales insurance markets; its role in dispute resolution is secondary. By contrast, the Workers Compensation Commission undertakes dispute resolution in the workers compensation system as its primary function. It is a specialist tribunal, which has deep expertise in complex medical and legal disputes. It is important that that expertise is preserved. By creating a single body, the Personal Injury Commission, people making claims to the CTP insurance scheme will now also have their matter dealt with by a tribunal.

If the bill passes, it is expected that claimants will now receive the same standard of service as claimants seeking workers compensation. Additionally, a single Personal Injury Commission will be more cost-effective than creating a second independent commission to deal with CTP disputes in a more efficient manner. Until now, people who suffered injuries have been confronted with a complex dispute resolution system under which they were required to fill out an array of forms and wander down myriad pathways when disputing a claim. The Personal Injury Commission will result in all people disputing a claim following the same procedures and steps to resolve the dispute, which will result in better access to dispute resolution across all the schemes.

The bill is an important step forward for claimants. Too often, I have heard complaints from my constituents about the complexity of the system, which I referred to before; too often, I have seen how unfair the decisions can be. Having said that, it is important that stakeholder groups impacted by the bill are consulted properly. I do not think the bill should be rushed through unnecessarily without consultation. We should ensure that we get the considerable personal injury claim resolution structure right and consult stakeholders properly. It is my understanding that amendments will be moved in the other place to allow consultation to occur. That is the right thing to do. We should take the time to get it right.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:39:49): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Personal Injury Commission Bill 2020. The bill creates a new Personal Injury Commission [PIC] that will resolve disputes for injured road users and workers seeking compensation. The changes consolidate the workers compensation scheme and compulsory third party [CTP] insurance scheme dispute resolution systems into a single personal injury tribunal by expanding the jurisdiction of the Workers Compensation Commission while retaining the two streams of expertise. Currently, the State Insurance Regulatory Authority deals with motor accident inquiries and the Workers Compensation Commission handles worker injuries. The new PIC will handle both and be independent of government. The change increases the independence and rigour of decisions regarding no-fault motor accidents and workers compensation claims. It takes those decisions out of the hands of bureaucrats and puts them in the hands of the independent tribunal.

In 2018 the New South Wales Parliament Standing Committee on Law and Justice conducted a review of workers compensation and CTP insurance schemes. The committee recommended the reforms contained in the bill. I acknowledge the effort of all committee members on the matter. Reforms to simplify the dispute resolution system for injured road users and workers who make a compensation claim have been coming for some time. The changes made by the bill represent the Government's response to the committee's review. I acknowledge the

Minister, who is in the Chamber, the Minister's staff and all stakeholders who have worked so hard to bring the reform into being. The committee reached a consensus about whether the workers compensation scheme and CTP scheme dispute resolution processes should be consolidated into a single personal injury tribunal, deciding that a single tribunal will provide claimants with certainty, efficiency and more streamlined decisions. Stakeholders supported that approach and sought reassurance about independence and judicially led decision-making in the model.

On that basis, the committee has recommended that the New South Wales Government consolidate the workers compensation scheme and CTP insurance scheme's dispute resolution system into a single personal injury tribunal by expanding the jurisdiction of the Workers Compensation Commission while retaining the two streams of expertise. The Greens support the request made by the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union, Unions NSW and the Australian Lawyers Alliance that the bill be delayed until the beginning of August to allow for more consultation with relevant stakeholders. We recognise the bill is an important reform that provides a positive example of how reform can be achieved in a way that includes all stakeholders and makes constructive use of the parliamentary committee process. I acknowledge the importance of the reform for everyone involved in seeking compensation in these matters. Often the process is life changing, so it is important that the Government gets it right and supports those people. The Greens do not oppose the bill. We acknowledge and thank everyone involved in developing the bill, including the Minister and the Minister's staff.

Debate interrupted.

BUILDING AMENDMENT (MECHANICAL SERVICES AND MEDICAL GAS WORK) BILL 2020

First Reading

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

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I advise the House that I have received a written authority from the Hon. Mark Buttigieg, MLC, advising that the member for Keira will have carriage of the bill in the Legislative Assembly. I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for tomorrow.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Debate resumed from 3 June 2020.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:46:19): As Chair: I address the House on behalf of the Legislation Review Committee regarding its report entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 11/57*, tabled out of session on 25 March 2020. In that digest the committee examined eight bills introduced in the prior two sitting weeks and found issues in all eight bills. The committee also examined 47 statutory instruments and found issues in six. I draw the attention of the House to some of the issues raised. The Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Complaint Handling) Bill 2020 is a private member's bill. It seeks to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 by providing that the president of the Anti-Discrimination Board must decline a complaint on certain grounds.

One of those grounds is where the respondent to a complaint has a cognitive impairment and it is reasonably expected that the impairment was a significant contributing factor to the conduct that is the subject of the complaint. The committee acknowledged that the intention of the amendment is to protect people with a disability. However, by inserting a requirement to decline such complaints, the bill may impact on the right to protection against discrimination. In the circumstances, the committee referred the provision to Parliament to assess whether it is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.

I turn to the Evidence Amendment (Tendency and Coincidence) Bill 2020. The bill implements recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The bill amends the Evidence Act 1995 in relation to the admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence. The purpose of tendency evidence is to show that an accused had a tendency to act in a particular way or to have a particular state of mind. Coincidence evidence is intended to show that it is improbable that two or more similar events occurred coincidentally. Under the current law, tendency or coincidence evidence is not admissible unless the court determines that the evidence would have significant probative value. The bill relaxes the test about the circumstances under which tendency and coincidence evidence can be used against a defendant. The amended test requires that the probative value of the evidence outweigh the danger of unfair prejudice to the defendant. Under the current test, the probative value of the evidence must substantially outweigh any prejudicial effect on the defendant before it can be used.

The bill provides that tendency evidence relating to a child sexual offence is presumed to have significant probative value. These changes may impact the defendant's right to a fair trial, including the right to be presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond reasonable doubt. The committee noted that the bill includes some safeguards—for example, the presumption that certain tendency evidence is of significant probative value is rebuttable. The committee also acknowledged that some of the bill's changes relating to tendency evidence apply only to proceedings concerning a child sexual offence and that particular evidentiary hurdles may be faced by victims of child sexual offences in court proceedings. However, the committee noted that the bill may increase the risk that evidence unfairly prejudicial to a defendant is admitted in a particular case. In the circumstances, the committee referred to Parliament the matter of whether the defendant's right to a fair trial is adequately protected by the bill.

Finally, I comment on the committee's review of the Firearms and Weapons Legislation Amendment (Criminal Use) Bill 2020. The bill proposes to expand police search powers in relation to a firearms prohibition order made against a person who, in the opinion of the New South Wales police commissioner, is not fit to possess a firearm. The existing power allows police to search a person who is the subject of a firearms prohibition order, their premises and vehicles without a warrant. The bill allows police who enter such premises to search any person present who is reasonably suspected of possessing a firearm, part of a firearm or ammunition. That may potentially include persons who are not the subject of a firearms prohibition order and are not involved in criminal activities. The bill may thereby increase the risk of arbitrary searches and impact on the right to privacy and personal physical integrity. While the committee acknowledged that the intention behind the amendments is to assist the removal of illegal firearms from the community, it referred the expanded search powers to Parliament to consider whether they are reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances. I commend the digest to the House.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Debate resumed from 3 June 2020.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:51:11): As Chair: I address the House on behalf of the Legislation Review Committee and its report entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 12/57*. The committee continued to meet to consider legislation during April and May when Parliament was not sitting regularly owing to COVID-19. Videoconferencing was used for this purpose. I thank the members of the committee and the secretariat for the work they put into ensuring that we could continue our scrutiny of bills and regulations before this place during that time. As a result of this, digests Nos 12 to 14 were tabled out of session with the Clerks. Not surprisingly, a lot of the legislation the committee considered in those digests was emergency legislation designed to respond to the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. Given its emergency nature, this legislation contained a number of extraordinary provisions and raised a number of issues upon which the committee commented.

I will concentrate on digest No. 12, tabled out of session on 22 April 2020, which considered two bills relating to COVID-19: the COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures) Bill 2020 and the Treasury Legislation Amendment (COVID-19) Bill 2020. One notable aspect of the COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures) Bill 2020 was that it contained a number of Henry VIII clauses. Henry VIII clauses allow the provisions of primary legislation to be overridden by regulation or Executive action. For instance, the bill provided that regulations could be made under a number of Acts within the Justice portfolio. They would provide for altered arrangements for criminal proceedings for the purpose of responding to the public health emergency caused by the pandemic. Any such regulations could override the provisions of any Act. Similarly the bill provided that the local government Minister could make regulations to modify the application of the Local Government Act 1993 for the purpose of responding to the public health emergency caused by COVID-19.

In ordinary circumstances those provisions would be an inappropriate delegation of legislative powers. However, where the committee noted them in this extraordinary legislation, it found that in each case they were reasonable measures that allowed a flexible and timely response to the public health emergency. Further, the committee noted various safeguards. For example, in each case the time during which such regulations could be made and the time during which the regulations could last was limited. Similarly the regulations could only be made if Parliament was not sitting and was not likely to sit within two weeks. Given the circumstances, the committee made no further comment. The bill contained other extraordinary provisions to respond to the public health emergency, including provisions allowing the local government Minister to postpone council elections and provisions allowing relevant authorities to restrict visitors to correctional centres and youth detention centres.

It also allowed for increased use of audiovisual links to conduct local council meetings, criminal proceedings and certain mental health assessments. Under ordinary circumstances such provisions would impact unduly on various rights such as voting rights, the right to humane treatment in detention, the right to participate in public life, the right to a fair trial, and the rights of people detained in mental health facilities. Again, in each case the committee noted that the provisions were an extraordinary measure to respond to the public health emergency created by COVID-19 and that they were accordingly time-limited. The committee also noted various other safeguards that applied. For example, visitor restrictions at correctional centres would not stop the Ombudsman or the Inspector of Custodial Services from visiting. In the circumstances the committee made no further comment.

The other bill with which digest No. 12 concerned itself was the Treasury Legislation Amendment (COVID-19) Bill 2020, which responded to the economic impacts of COVID-19. The committee found that there were no issues in the bill that warranted its comment. That concludes my remarks on digest No. 12 of this Parliament. I encourage everyone to read the full digest, which is available on the committee's webpage. I also note that during the COVID-19 crisis the committee has compiled all of the reports put together on bills and regulations relating to COVID-19. They are also available on the committee's webpage. I commend the digest to the House.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Ms FELICITY WILSON: I move:

That in accordance with Standing Order 306 (7) the reports of the Legislation Review Committee, being orders of the day *Legislation Review Digest No. 13/57* and *Legislation Review Digest No. 14/57* be considered together.

Motion agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that the House take note of the reports.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:54:54): As Chair: I address the House on behalf of the Legislation Review Committee regarding digests Nos 13 and 14 for this Parliament. As the Parliament was not sitting regularly in May due to COVID-19, both digests were tabled out of session with the Clerks. Digest No. 13 was tabled on 5 May 2020 and digest No. 14 was tabled on 14 May 2020. Similarly to digest No. 12, much of the legislation considered in digests Nos 13 and 14 was emergency legislation designed to respond to the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19. All up the committee considered 45 regulations for these digests, 16 of which related to COVID-19. Of the 45 regulations considered, 11 regulations warranted comment from the committee and nine of those regulations related to COVID-19.

I draw the attention of the Parliament to some of the issues raised in digests Nos 13 and 14. The Residential Tenancies Amendment (COVID-19) Regulation 2020 and the Retail and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19) Regulation 2020 contained provisions to limit the ability of a landlord to enforce certain rights under residential and commercial tenancy agreements such as terminating a lease due to failure to pay rent. The limits applied if tenants were experiencing economic hardship as a result of COVID-19. In ordinary circumstances, prohibiting landlords from exercising their rights as agreed upon in a lease would impact unduly on freedom of contract—the freedom of parties to choose the contractual terms to which they are subject. However, the committee found that in the current extraordinary circumstances the provisions were a reasonable response to the far-reaching economic consequences of COVID-19. It also noted that the time during which the provisions would apply was limited to no more than six months after their commencement. Given those considerations the committee made no further comment.

Another regulation considered by the committee for these digests was the Public Health Amendment (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2020. The regulation allowed penalty notices to be issued to a person for failure to comply with public health orders made in response to COVID-19. This included orders that required people to self-isolate, to spend time in quarantine and to stay away from certain locations such as residential aged care facilities. The committee therefore found that this regulation was part of a regime that restricted freedom of movement, a right protected by article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Australia is a party. However, the committee further noted that article 12 recognises that derogation from this right may be warranted in certain circumstances, including to protect public health. As the regulation was part of a regime to stop the spread of COVID-19 and its provisions were time-limited, the committee considered that it fell within the public health exemption and that the limits it placed on freedom of movement were reasonable in the circumstances. It therefore made no further comment.

The final regulation on which I comment is the Public Health Amendment (COVID-19 Spitting and Coughing) Regulation 2020. This regulation provided that a penalty notice of \$5,000 could be issued to an individual who contravened the Public Health (COVID-19 Spitting and Coughing) Order 2020 by intentionally spitting or coughing on a public official or on another worker while the worker was at their place of work, or travelling to or from it, in a way likely to cause fear about the spread of COVID-19. The committee noted that it would prefer large, on-the-spot penalties such as this to be set down in primary legislation and not left to the regulations. This would foster a greater level of parliamentary oversight concerning the provisions. However, the committee noted that, given the severe circumstances surrounding COVID-19, it was important for the relevant authorities to have flexibility to respond quickly and appropriately to emerging public health issues. The committee further noted that being able to include significant matters in the regulation may further this objective because responses would not be delayed by the need for an amending bill. Given the extraordinary circumstances, the committee made no further comment.

That concludes my remarks on digests Nos 13 and 14 of this Parliament. I encourage everyone to read the full digests, which are available on the committee's webpage. As I noted earlier, because the committee's reports on legislation relating to COVID-19 are spread across a number of digests, the committee has decided to compile its reports into the one document and to publish this document on its webpage. The document will be updated and republished as new reports on legislation relating to COVID-19 are tabled by the committee. The committee hopes that this will aid in ease of reference. I commend the digests to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:59:41): I contribute to debate on Legislation Review Digest Nos 13 and 14 of this Parliament. In these digests the committee considered 45 regulations and commented on 11. Most of them were COVID-19 related, to deal with the current health emergency, and I encourage members to refer to them. In particular, *Legislation Review Digest No. 13/57* refers to an important regulation: the Building and Development Certifiers Regulation 2020. This is a controversial issue. It deals with the re-regulation of the private building industry in response to a number of problems identified in that industry. Members might want to refer to that for their own interest and those of their constituents.

Most of the COVID-19 regulations are time-limited. For example, the Local Government (General) Amendment (COVID-19) Regulation 2020 expires six months after it commences or on an earlier date decided by Parliament by resolution of either House. Most of the COVID-19 regulations are in that form. I remind members that the committee has determined that any COVID-19 related regulations or comments on regulation and bills are to be collected on the Legislation Review Committee's homepage on the Parliament's website. In closing, I thank the secretariat and my committee members for their work. I commend both digests to the House.

Reports noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:02:00): As Chair: I address the House on behalf of the Legislation Review Committee on its report entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 15/57*, tabled on 2 June. In this digest, as was the case with previous digests, the committee continued to consider emergency legislation related to COVID-19. It also considered two private members' bills. In addition, the committee considered 11 regulations of which it reported on two. Turning first to the COVID-19 related legislation. In this digest the committee considered three cognate bills: COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures—Attorney General) Bill; COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures—Miscellaneous) Bill; and COVID-19 Legislation (Emergency Measures—Treasurer) Bill.

As with the previous emergency legislation that the committee has considered, these bills contained a number of extraordinary provisions. For the most part, the committee found that though these extraordinary provisions impacted on a variety of personal rights and liberties, they were reasonable in the circumstances to respond to the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19. For example, the COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures—Treasurer) Bill extended the date by which the Treasurer would be required to present the 2020-2021 budget to Parliament. It also allowed the Treasurer, on the lapse of the 2019-2020 appropriations, to authorise much larger payments from the Consolidated Fund and for a longer time than would otherwise be possible before the 2020-2021 budget was presented.

The committee noted that the bill thereby included a wide and ill-defined administrative power affecting the right of citizens to know how public money is being spent. However, it further noted that the delayed presentation of the budget would allow the Government to allocate resources when it has a greater idea of the economic impacts of COVID-19. Given this, the committee acknowledged that until the budget is presented, it is

necessary to grant the Treasurer extraordinary powers to spend consolidated revenue so that agencies are funded. The committee also acknowledged certain safeguards in the bill so that citizens continue to get information about how public money is being spent. This includes a requirement for the Treasurer to continue to publicly release certain monthly financial statements unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so. In short, given these safeguards and the extraordinary conditions created by COVID-19, the committee considered that the new powers granted to the Treasurer were reasonable and made no further comment.

While the committee generally considered that the extraordinary provisions contained in these three COVID-19 bills were reasonable in the circumstances, there were a few exceptions. On occasion, the committee found that a provision may impact unduly on personal rights and liberties. For example, it noted a provision in the COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures—Miscellaneous) Bill 2020 that would allow an unauthorised medical practitioner to require a person to undergo medical testing if the person was reasonably suspected of having certain medical conditions, including COVID-19. The committee recognised that the provision was intended to protect public health through increased testing. However, it found that by requiring a person to submit to medical testing, the provisions may unduly trespass on the right to personal physical integrity. The committee therefore referred this matter to the Parliament for consideration.

I turn now to legislation not related to the pandemic. As mentioned, the committee considered two private members' bills in this digest. One was the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020. This bill seeks to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 by introducing a new ground of unlawful discrimination, discrimination on the grounds of religious beliefs or activities. However the bill would create an exception for religious ethos organisations. Such organisations would be taken not to have discriminated on the grounds of religious beliefs or activities if they fulfilled certain criteria. For example, if they genuinely believed that their conduct was consistent with the doctrine or beliefs of their religion. The bill defines religious ethos organisations quite broadly to include private educational authorities, charities and any other body that is conducted in accordance with the doctrines, tenets, beliefs or teachings of a particular religion.

The committee found that, if passed, the bill may thereby protect behaviour of certain organisations, including educational authorities and charities that is currently deemed to be discriminatory under the Anti-Discrimination Act. For instance, it might mean that if a school or charity gave preference to a person of its religion in areas covered by the bill—like employment or education—this behaviour would be protected. In making these observations the committee acknowledged that the bill seeks to balance freedom of religion with other human rights. However, it referred the provisions to the Parliament to consider whether these are reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances. That concludes my remarks on the fifteenth digest of this Parliament. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:07:06): I contribute to debate on *Legislation Review Digest No. 15/57* of this Parliament. The committee considered six bills, of which it commented on five. It also considered 11 regulations, of which it commented on two. Of the bills commented on and examined by the committee, three were quite far-reaching COVID-19 related bills. As I have said previously, they are collected on the committee's website. The COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures—Treasurer) Bill authorises the Treasurer to make allocations outside of the budget of 2019-20. These important and far-reaching bills have been collected on the committee's website for further reference by members of this place and by the public.

The committee also commented on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020, a private member's bill currently before the other place. Religious freedom is an issue that excites those of a conservative frame of mind, and while the bill is currently before the other place if it does reach this House I encourage members to refer to the committee's comments. Those extensive comments outline in detail the effect of this private member's bill and the impact that it would have on the rights and liberties of the people of New South Wales were it to become law. I thank my fellow committee members and the secretariat who supports us. I commend the digest to the House.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:09:48): As Chair: On behalf of the Legislation Review Committee I refer to the report entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 16/57*, tabled on 16 June. In this digest the committee examined 11 bills introduced in the last sitting week, finding issues in eight. I draw the attention of the Parliament to some of the issues raised. The Crimes Amendment (Special Care Offences) Bill 2020 implements certain recommendations made by the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice in its report

Adequacy and scope of special care offences. Under the Crimes Act 1900 it is a criminal offence for an adult to have sexual intercourse with, or to sexually touch a 16-year-old or 17-year-old who is under the adult's special care. This Act prescribes what a special care relationship is for the purposes of this offence.

When examining the scope of special care offences the standing committee found that sexual intercourse between a young person and their adoptive parents may not be explicitly criminalised. The bill responds to this concern by expanding the definition of "special care relationships" to capture relationships between a young person and his or her parent or grandparent whether by way of biology or adoption. The committee noted that this change will have the effect of expanding an existing offence and criminalising conduct that may have been previously lawful. However, the committee found that the expanded offence is appropriate. Special care offences acknowledge that in certain circumstances the power dynamic between an adult and a 16-year-old or 17-year-old displaces the young person's capacity to give free and voluntary consent to engage in sexual acts. An adoptive parent is in a position of authority over their son or daughter and this means that any sexual acts that occur between the parent and the young person are inherently exploitative and should be appropriately dealt with by the law. Given those considerations, the committee made no further comment.

The committee also examined the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment (Forensic Provisions) Bill 2020. This bill establishes a new defence of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment which replaces the current defence of mental illness. This change provides that a person is not criminally responsible for an act if, at the time it was carried out, he or she had a mental health or cognitive impairment and as a result of this did not know the nature or quality of the act, or did not know that the act was wrong. When a defence of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment has been established a jury will have to return a special verdict of "act proven but not criminally reasonable".

Debate interrupted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Announcements

PARLIAMENT HOUSE VIRTUAL TOURS

The SPEAKER: I alert all members to some new virtual tour videos that are now available on the Parliament's website. With our doors shut to the public, an internal team of staff across the three parliamentary departments has worked to replicate on video some of the key components of our normal parliamentary tours. They can be found temporarily under the "About Parliament" section of our website. I thank all those who have contributed.

Notices

PRESENTATION

[During the giving of notices of motions]

The SPEAKER: The member for Lane Cove will be heard in silence.

Later,

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

Question Time

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:17:47): I direct my question to the Treasurer. Yesterday the Treasurer's finance Minister advocated for a 15 per cent GST like Singapore. Does the Treasurer support the call of his finance Minister to increase the GST?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:18:02): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. When it comes to taxes, we on this side of the House believe in lower taxes. We believe in fairer taxes and that is why in the last four budgets we have cut taxes by \$5 billion.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Members of the Opposition talk about tax in this House but at the last election the member for Keira, a member of the Labor Party, ran a campaign of stifling economic growth in this State by increasing taxes. Yesterday in this place Labor members talked about jobs and blue collar workers, but

what happened on the day that the Federal Treasurer said that the country was heading into a recession? The Labor Party opposed blue collar jobs in the gas industry right across this State. They need greater leadership from people like Dan Walton, who stands for the working class. He is the light on the hill for the NSW Labor Party.

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: He has not raised the GST.

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

Mr Chris Minns: We need jobs not GST, Dom. You're the new John Hewson.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Kogarah to order for the third time. If he continues to interject I will not hesitate to remove him from the Chamber.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Government has always believed in lowering the tax burden, creating jobs and increasing productivity and prosperity for the people of our State. If we want to talk about who should be doing their job, the Leader of the Opposition should not be hiding in her office today and not doing her job.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Which standing order does the member's point of order relate to?

Ms Sophie Cotsis: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The Treasurer has not answered the question about whether he supports 15 per cent GST. We have not heard him say "GST".

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer is being relevant to the question.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Yesterday the great Labor leader in Victoria, Dan Andrews, walked out to a press conference and said he would exhaust every question. That is what leadership is.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: If you lopped off every rotten branch of NSW Labor, all you would be left with is a sizzling stump.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Our community is in the middle of a recession, possibly going into a depression—

The SPEAKER: Thank you. I understand the member's point of order.

Mr Ryan Park: We have a right to an answer to a very sensible question—

The SPEAKER: I have given the Treasurer a little discretion. He will come back to the GST matter shortly.

Mr Ryan Park: —relating to the Government's agenda to increase and advocate for an increase to GST.

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira will resume his seat. I have ruled on the point of order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Keira has obviously forgotten that the Liberal Party is the party of lower taxes. The proof is in the pudding: There have been \$5 billion in tax cuts and the Government has increased the payroll tax threshold. The Labor Party went to an election to stifle businesses across the State and increase taxes on every small business and farmers in the middle of the drought. That is what you get from an out-of-touch Labor Party, which thinks that by increasing taxes—

Ms Sophie Cotsis: So you support an increase in the GST?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We believe in lowering the tax burden. We believe in having an efficient tax system that drives productivity and job growth.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Mr Speaker, Labor members asked the question.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Treasurer is talking about taxes and is being sufficiently relevant at the moment.

Ms Jodi McKay: Not once has the Treasurer mentioned GST. He should rule it out. Does he support an increase in the GST?

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The GST is the tax. We believe in lower taxes.

Ms Jodi McKay: Rule it out.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Journalists in the press gallery are waiting for the Leader of the Opposition to do a press conference so she can answer questions and do her job. The Victorian Government is dealing with the sins of the Victorian Labor Party but nothing compares with the crimes of NSW Labor. Its members are in hiding today.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I have just ruled that the Treasurer is being sufficiently relevant in talking about taxes.

Ms Kate Washington: How can he possibly be relevant when he is talking about all of this and has not even mentioned GST?

The SPEAKER: He has, actually. The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The party on the Government side of the House reduces the tax burden, red tape and regulation. The Labor Party is stopping blue-collar workers from getting a job in the gas industry. It has turned its back on the people whom it is meant to represent, whereas on the Government side of the House we will always stand up for every worker across the State—whether it is a white-collar, blue-collar, men or women. Whilst the Victorian Labor Party is bringing in the administrators, we should be bringing in the liquidators to deal with NSW Labor. Leadership requires you to stand up when there are issues. Evil hides in darkness. The Leader of the Opposition should release the report, stand up and take action, and do her job.

JOBKEEPER

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:23:10): My question is directed to the Premier. The Reserve Bank, OECD and Minister Victor Dominello have all warned against suddenly ending JobKeeper in September. Given that Minister Dominello thinks it would be an "iceberg" for New South Wales, what specific actions has the Premier taken to ensure that JobKeeper payments continue?

The SPEAKER: The member for Baulkham Hills will remain silent. The member for Canterbury is on only one call to order, but she is interjecting too much.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:23:57): It is worth recapping that the Labor Party demonstrated that, when it was in government, New South Wales unemployment was the highest in the nation. We now have the lowest unemployment, although we are facing major challenges.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As we know, 221,000 people lost their jobs in April. We are concerned with how many others could lose their jobs once JobKeeper finishes, but let us put on the record that the Federal Government's JobKeeper policy announcement was, I believe, one of the best public policy announcements the nation has ever seen, especially in times when the Federal budget as well as all the State budgets are under enormous pressure. JobKeeper cannot be kept forever but the Federal Government decided to keep it in place for six months and told States to plan ahead, in preparation of which the New South Wales Government has taken a number of actions. As much as everybody would love receiving those dollars forever, it is simply a fantasy to assume that JobKeeper should, or would, go on forever; it has a time limit. With all due respect, the States have been given six months' notice of that time limit.

That is why the New South Wales Government has done a number of things. First, it accelerated the infrastructure pipeline by bringing forward \$3 billion to ensure that the jobs are there and boots are on the ground in the bush and the city so that medium- and small-sized projects can hit the ground running. We also supported small businesses that were able to continue during COVID. The Government has also ensured that with the coronavirus spread under control to some extent—and I thank everybody involved in that process—we are now in the process of easing restrictions. From 1 July, further restrictions will be eased. It means that many businesses that had to lay off staff can now consider bringing back staff. It is well known that outside the public service in New South Wales—and NSW Labor continues to forget this point—the 90 per cent of people who are at risk of losing their jobs and getting reduced hours and payments are under enormous stress. That is why the Government has done a number of things.

In addition to the \$3 billion and the more than \$10 billion in other stimulus to support small businesses, it is accelerating projects that can have approval. For example, this morning I was at the Sydney Fish Market with some colleagues. That project has been talked about for a long time. Within eight weeks, construction will start. In addition, two dozen other projects have been accelerated because we know that infrastructure equals jobs and construction equals jobs. The Labor Party makes irresponsible comments without thinking about the hard work

that must go in. I give full credit to Minister Dominello. I remember that when he made those comments—which are a fact—he said that had the New South Wales Government not acted and taken the steps that it has, we were facing a big cliff at the end of September. But because of the Government's policies, we will not. Is it not ironic that every time the Treasurer provides his economic statement or the Government makes an announcement about keeping jobs and growing jobs in the State, the Labor Party opposes every decision? If Labor had anything constructive to say, we would be willing to listen. But it does not. As usual, the only jobs Labor members care about are their own.

Every time the Government makes a statement or announcement about bringing forward acceleration of jobs or creating new jobs, Labor members oppose it. The people of New South Wales have had a gutful. They want to see a government taking action, bringing forward projects, helping small business, freeing up the economy and easing restrictions at the appropriate time. We are definitely in that space. I thank all my colleagues, especially those who were in the task force—the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer and Minister Dominello—who helped talk to industry about how we can get them through COVID. In fact, the last time I checked with Minister Dominello, more than 40,000 businesses have downloaded the COVID Safe checklist. We thank the business community for working with the Government to ensure that we get those jobs back. We want to ensure that we continue to grow the economy. Rather than throw around petty political statements, Labor members should sit up and take notice of what the State Government needs to do.

COVID-19 AND HOSPITALS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:28:50): My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Given the majority of today's Bureau of Health Information data was for before the COVID-19 pandemic, why is one in 10 patients at Campbelltown Hospital waiting a shocking 10½ hours for emergency care?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:29:14): I thank the member for Keira for his question. If the member thinks that the majority of the March quarter had nothing to do with COVID, he must have been living in a completely different world. First, I thank all health workers in New South Wales; not only public health workers but also health workers who were aware from the first few weeks in January that the State was facing a major crisis. In the early phase when the first announcements came out of Wuhan in the Hubei Province of China, it was clear that serious questions existed over human-to-human transmission. Anyone with medical understanding knew it was likely that the situation would come to Australia. In fact in January New South Wales recorded four cases of COVID-19. Three of those were gentlemen in their 40s and 50s and the other was a 21-year-old girl—all here, all in January and all with COVID.

As I said, I do not know what world the member is living in but perhaps it took a little while for him to switch on. The medical staff—the nurses, doctors and paramedics—and the cleaners and administration staff were all aware of what was coming. They did their best and stepped up amazingly well. We saw an incredible response. We also saw, both in emergency departments and in elective surgery, that doctors and staff were doing their best. In the March quarter 64,600 people came through New South Wales emergency departments. That occurred with the knowledge that we had people who required a test for COVID-19, or what was then called the "novel coronavirus". Staff were acutely aware that they had to look at alternative models. As was the case for other hospitals, Campbelltown Hospital was evaluating how it would address what we all assumed would be a substantial increase in the number of people who wanted and required a COVID test.

Ms Jodi McKay: They were waiting for 10½ hours for emergency care.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Do not tempt me. I will not say what I could say about you, Jodi. Do not tempt me, but if you do it is on for young and old. I am backing Chris for leadership. We saw doctors and nurses acting extremely well. We had a higher number of patients in the least urgent category of cases, particularly in emergency departments. I remind members that the Government is spending the best part of \$700 million on building new facilities, which Labor never did. Labor never even thought about it in Campbelltown.

Mr Ryan Park: We rebuilt every major hospital. Get the fantasy out there and we will listen.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. All I will say is—

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: Stay calm, Brad.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Yes, I will. Even most Opposition members know that the member for Keira should never be the health Minister or the Premier. Yet again, he is proving it now. The attack on the staff of Campbelltown Hospital by him, the shadow health Minister, is appalling. Like every health worker in New South Wales, the staff of Campbelltown Hospital did their damndest in what was a one-in-100-year event. I am backing the hospital staff, not him.

MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (14:34:19): My question is directed to the Premier and Aboriginal affairs Minister. Will she condemn the member for Upper Hunter and Parliamentary Secretary for comparing systemic race issues felt by Indigenous Australians to abortion?

The SPEAKER: The subject matter of the question is potentially volatile. Members will not interject while the Premier answers the question, particularly the member for Canterbury who behaved inappropriately in the House earlier today.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:34:43): I confess that I have not seen the post referred to in the member's question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition will remain silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I understand that the member subsequently issued an apology in relation to the post. I caution all members to ensure that their language does not cause unnecessary offence. The member has done the right thing by issuing an apology.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: What do you think about it, Premier?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Sorry?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Given the question relates to issues relating to First Nations people, I place on record some New South Wales Government initiatives to support our Indigenous and First Nations communities throughout New South Wales. I am especially proud of the 35 per cent reduction in the number of Aboriginal children and young people—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the third time. I call the member for Baulkham Hills to order for the first time. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the second time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I said, I am very pleased with the progress the Government is making in a number of areas regarding our Indigenous and First Nations people.

Mr David Harris: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier has answered the question. If the member is taking a point of order other than relevance, I will hear it.

Mr David Harris: The question was clear: Will the Premier condemn the member for Upper Hunter and Parliamentary Secretary for his comments? So far the Premier has made comments about Twitter. As a Parliamentary Secretary, the member for Upper Hunter is an officer of the Parliament. Are his comments acceptable?

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Premier has answered the question. The Premier may continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I refer the member to my earlier comments. As I said, I have not seen the post that has caused offence but, as I also said previously, I understand the member for Upper Hunter has since apologised, which was the right course of action.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I do not want to hear speech. I want to hear a legitimate point of order. Under what standing order is your point of order taken?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: It is to correct the Premier. The member for Upper Hunter has not apologised. Rather, he said, "if offence has been taken." It is offensive. That is not an apology.

The SPEAKER: I place the member for Maitland on three calls to order. I warned the member not to do that, but she has done it.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Actions speak louder than words. It is important to us to make sure—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I ask all members in this place to continue to work hard to make sure that every citizen in this State has equality of opportunity, notwithstanding their circumstances or background. That is how this Government and this Parliament will be judged. I urge all members to focus on those important matters.

NSW POLICE FORCE TACTICAL OPERATIONS UNIT

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (14:38:51): My question is directed to the Premier. Given reports today that, first, the NSW Police Force Tactical Operations Unit publicly mocked the Aboriginal acknowledgement of country; secondly, a report last week exposed that the NSW Police Force disproportionately prosecutes Aboriginal people for minor drug offences; and, thirdly, that no-one in the NSW Police Force has ever been found guilty of, or been held accountable for, deaths in custody in this State, what will the Premier do immediately to address systemic racism in the NSW Police Force?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:39:23): Whilst the member for Newtown might feel strongly about the issue she has raised, I do not support the inference in the last part of her question. I thank the men and women of the NSW Police Force for keeping us safe, but I also acknowledge that all police forces, including our own, need to continue to work hard to ensure there is no unconscious bias and that every officer is doing the right thing. The NSW Police Force has proudly undertaken, and continues to undertake, a number of initiatives to deal with the matters raised by the member for Newtown. Firstly, the NSW Police Force does have a Multicultural Policies and Service Plan.

The plan targets training for police commands to address not just conscious bias but also unconscious bias, which all of us have whether we like it or not. The NSW Police Force is making every effort to deal with that unconscious bias. As the House would know, there are also a number of Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers throughout the NSW Police Force. They are dedicated civilian officers within local area commands and police districts who work very closely with Aboriginal communities and organisations, and promote awareness of Aboriginal issues to police in the absence of crimes being committed.

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance.

The SPEAKER: I will not hear any further from the member for Newtown. The Premier is being highly relevant to the question.

Ms Jenny Leong: I am asking about systemic racism. I talked specifically about statistics that demonstrate there is a disproportionate level of representation of Aboriginal Australians in the New South Wales prison system. People are dying, Premier, and I am asking you to please address it as a systemic issue.

The SPEAKER: I place the member for Newtown on two calls to order. The member for Newtown will resume her seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I acknowledge—as would the police commissioner—that this is always a work in progress. There are 17,000 police officers throughout New South Wales. There will be 1,500 extra police officers over the next while. Each and every one of them undertakes the most robust training to ensure not just that they are physically equipped to do the jobs they need to do, but also that they are sensitive to the issues respective to their local communities and in the broader community.

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I will hear the point of order by the member for Newtown, but I want to know what it is. I do not want a repeat of what she just did.

Ms Jenny Leong: It is important to recognise—

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

Ms Jenny Leong: My point of order relates to relevance.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled, and I continue to rule, that the Premier is being relevant to the question.

Ms Jenny Leong: I asked the Premier what she was going to do to address systemic racism—

The SPEAKER: The member for Newtown will resume her seat. The Premier is being relevant to the question.

Ms Jenny Leong: —and I ask the Premier not to tell us about the programs that are already in place that have not actually solved these problems. I am asking the Premier to show leadership and take action to address the problems that we all know are real.

The SPEAKER: The member for Newtown will resume her seat.

Ms Jenny Leong: They are real, and the existing programs are not working.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Newtown to order for the third time. The only reason I do not throw her out is that I think she wants me to throw her out.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: At the risk of causing the member for Newtown to take further points of order, I say this: No police force on the planet is perfect, but ours works damn hard to make sure that every citizen is treated equally and that the rule of law is enforced. I would appreciate it if members of the member's own party respected the rule of law.

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I will not hear the point of order. The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are legislators in this place. It is not for us to choose which laws we ignore and which laws we enforce. The colleague of the member for Newtown in the other place thinks it is acceptable for his staff member to break the law.

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

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I will not hear the point of order if it relates to relevance.

Ms Jenny Leong: It does not relate to relevance.

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

Ms Jenny Leong: If the Premier wishes to raise concerns—

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

Ms Jenny Leong: I do not have the number on me because I have not brought my papers.

The SPEAKER: Tell me what it is, then, please.

Ms Jenny Leong: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Premier wishes to raise concerns about a member of the other place, I ask her to also respect the fact that there is a right to innocence. The idea of implying that someone has done something when they have only been charged for it is hugely problematic.

The SPEAKER: I will listen further, but I ask the Premier to be careful in what she says.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I appreciate that.

Ms Jenny Leong: I ask the Premier to withdraw her implication about that staff member.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will not withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: I cannot force the Premier to do so. The Premier has indicated that she appreciates the importance of speaking carefully.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Please know that I encourage members of The Greens, including the member for Newtown, to meet with the commissioner and with members of the NSW Police Force to discuss these important issues. Every time I am worried about something I speak to them about it and I am always convinced—

Ms Jenny Leong: Would you speak to someone who called your family—

The SPEAKER: The member for Newtown will let the Premier complete her answer. The Premier's time has expired.

Members

MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (14:44:37): I seek leave to table the comments of the member for Upper Hunter for the benefit of the Premier, who seems not to have read any of the media that has been in the public domain.

Leave not granted.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Why would you hide it? It's on the public record.

Mr John Barilaro: It's on Twitter. It's on the interweb.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I have to say that a lot of people on your own side are angry about it too, and they have been contacting me to tell you.

Mr John Barilaro: Name them!

Mr DAVID HARRIS: No. I protect people's privacy.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wyong and the member for Monaro will remain silent.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: There are a lot of people on your own side who are very unhappy.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Wyong to order for the first time. The House will proceed with the censure motion forthwith. The procedure for the censure motion is set out in Standing Order 114. Speeches will be limited to a maximum of 15 minutes for the mover of the motion and 15 minutes for the member named, who is the Leader of the Opposition. Four other members will have five minutes each to speak. There will be a response of up to 10 minutes by the member named, and finally a response of up to 10 minutes from the mover in reply.

Motions

MEMBER FOR STRATHFIELD, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Censure

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections)
(14:46:52): I move:

That this House censures the Leader of the Opposition for her three-month failure to address publicly or to act on serious allegations of systemic falsifying of records of New South Wales citizens in New South Wales Labor Party branch-stacking operations, including:

- (1) Her failure to explain when she was made aware of the report's findings, which were handed down to NSW Labor in March, and what actions she has taken.
- (2) Her failure to stand down from her frontbench the member for Granville (named in internal NSW Labor report as being involved in these operations).
- (3) Her failure to refer these serious allegations to the Independent Commission Against Corruption and New South Wales police.
- (4) Her failure to take strong action like the Victorian Labor Premier who, dealing with similar allegations, removed three Ministers and referred matters to the police and the Victorian corruption watchdog.

We were all shocked on Sunday by the revelations uncovered by *60 Minutes* and *The Age*. The investigation revealed that Victorian Labor Minister Adem Somyurek had been involved in a massive scheme to amass fake branch members to further his political influence within the Labor Party. Shocking footage showed Mr Somyurek withdrawing \$2,000 in cash from an ATM before handing it, along with dozens of party membership forms, to a political adviser working for a fellow Minister. The adviser then allegedly delivered the forms and the money to Labor head office. Not only did the secret recording show sexist and homophobic slurs, but also it proved a culture of taxpayer-funded staff being utilised for allegedly fraudulent party membership work.

Victorian Labor leader Daniel Andrews took swift and decisive action in terminating one Minister, with the resignation of two more in the following days. The Victorian Labor leader has referred the matters to the Federal party, with a major intervention in the Victorian branch now taking place. What have we seen from the New South Wales Opposition leader since revelations of such conduct in her own party have been outed in the media? Nothing. Has the Leader of the Opposition moved to refer the matter or, indeed, publicly stated that she opposes such behaviour? No. Has the Leader of the Opposition addressed her caucus, calling out the behaviour? No. Has the Leader of the Opposition fronted up to Parliament and explained why Her Majesty's Opposition of the New South Wales Parliament is being accused of such acts? No. The standover tactics—once labelled the New South Wales disease—have spread across the State border to Victoria and, despite claims from the New South Wales branch of the Labor Party that it has stamped out corruption, all we see is improper conduct and malfeasance from Sussex Street.

Since 2011 New South Wales residents have three times rejected the New South Wales Labor Party from office. That is because they see the Labor Party operating in the same civic vacuum they governed in for 16 years—that dark period. Despite claims of cleaning up Sussex Street, what have we seen from the New South Wales Labor Party since Ms McKay became the Leader of the Opposition? First, we had the Aldi bag affair, where \$100,000 in the form of an illegal cash donation was casually accepted by Labor head office despite illegally funding election campaigns and shaping public policy for foreign interests. These allegations are twofold: first, that certain members of the parliamentary team in the New South Wales Labor Party have intentionally falsified

records; and, secondly, that the Leader of the Opposition—upon receiving a report outlining potential illegal conduct within her party and her own shadow Cabinet—did nothing to address the matters. She did not make the report public and effectively participated in a cover-up.

Let us compare the pair. The Victorian Labor leader has referred the matter to the Federal Labor Party whereas the NSW Labor leader is silent. By doing so, she stands by the conduct. The Victorian Labor leader has asked for administrators to run the Victorian branch. In New South Wales the Labor leader is silent and, by doing so, stands by the conduct. The Victorian Labor leader has removed three Ministers, whereas in New South Wales the Labor leader is silent and, by doing so, stands by the conduct. But most of all, upon finding out about such conduct, the Victorian Labor leader took decisive action on the very same day. The Labor leader in New South Wales has had this report for over three months and is silent and, by doing so, stands by the conduct. The Leader of the Opposition has earned this censure motion through her silence and her complicity in the conduct of her party and NSW Labor.

In March this year a 37-page report was handed to NSW Labor following a three-month investigation by former Queensland Labor boss Evan Moorhead. As reported in today's edition of *The Daily Telegraph* by Anna Caldwell, the findings include falsification of meeting attendance in several branches and a culture of secrecy around the practice. There is evidence of party officials paying for the membership of other people and an admission that it is impossible to determine the extent of the problem due to insufficient receipts or records. The report highlights a perception among branches that they must engage in conduct against the rules because other branches engage in this conduct. It further found that members regularly use false addresses on their memberships and deficient branch records, resulting in significant incentive for members to falsify records. Last but not least, members have little faith or expectation that head office will ever act on allegations of impropriety.

It is hard to disagree with members of the New South Wales Labor Party who have little faith that any action will be taken when their own leader—the Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales—has not acknowledged that she received the report three months ago and has taken no action since. One source told *The Daily Telegraph* that no action had been taken to date, citing the pandemic. Why not? The pandemic did not stop the report being delivered to Sussex Street. The pandemic does not stop the Leader of the Opposition picking up the phone and acknowledging publicly that she had received it. Further, the pandemic does not stop the Leader of the Opposition referring the matter to the NSW Police Force. The pandemic does not stop the Leader of the Opposition standing down from her frontbench the member for Granville while the police investigation occurs. The pandemic should not have stopped the Leader of the Opposition from announcing to Labor Party members across New South Wales that she would take a hard stance—as Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews did—against anyone found guilty of falsifying records or branch stacking.

It is clear that this report should have dived deeper into the allegations of branch stacking. The report notes that unfortunately only two branch officials interviewed were forthcoming in identifying how records came to be falsified. Some branch officials refused to be interviewed. The Leader of the Opposition should stand down immediately anyone who did not cooperate and push harder to find out what is going on in New South Wales branches of the Labor Party. The silence of the Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales is replicated at a Federal level. When the allegations were first reported in November last year, the Federal Labor Opposition leader Anthony Albanese said through a spokesperson that he had been made broadly aware of the allegations, saying they were concerning and should be investigated by the New South Wales branch of the Labor Party. But yesterday when asked for comment there was nothing but silence.

Last year the Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales said that she took the allegations seriously and had asked the party office to examine the claims as a matter of urgency. I can inform the House that the claims were investigated with a matter of urgency but the Leader of the Opposition's response has lacked urgency for three months. This begs the question as to how seriously the Leader of the New South Wales Labor Party takes this issue. They are no longer allegations. The Leader of the New South Wales Labor Party has a report stating that branch stacking, falsifying records, providing false addresses, falsely paying for memberships, leaving blank spaces for signatures and cooking the books by driving around asking people not present at meetings to sign the attendance book occurred in her branches.

The member for Granville was identified as breaching the rules and facilitating branch stacking. Last year the member for Granville roundly rejected those allegations and looked forward to the anonymous individual putting their name to the complaint. Does that mean she would have accepted the allegations if they had a name to them? There are now many names to the confirmed allegations, with a further 20 people putting their names to a letter to the New South Wales Labor secretary, accusing the party of protecting the member for Granville. The hypocrisy of what the Leader of the Opposition says when publicly exposed should not go unnoticed. The allegations were sent to the office of the Leader of the Opposition on 5 November last year but nothing was said

or done until *The Daily Telegraph* contacted her on 20 November with the allegations, when she said it was the first she had heard of them.

This is a serious test of the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition—a serious test that she has so far failed. The family tree of the Left faction that controls western Sydney Australian Labor Party [ALP] branches is her support base. She should have severed the family ties and cut down the family tree, ground the stump and poisoned its roots—a clear message that she takes these matters seriously and will reinstate proper democracy to Labor Party branches. Despite the shock and surprise of the Leader of the Opposition about these recent confirmed cases of branch stacking, this is not the first time that these allegations have been raised.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: In August 2017 the Strathfield Council preselections were subjected to a major review by the party relating to "widespread document irregularities". The votes of 20 Strathfield preselectors were not counted after an audit discovered that they did not live in the electorate or, in one case, were not even on the electoral role. *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that officials alleged there was evidence unearthed that meeting minutes at the South Strathfield branch had attendance details added after the meetings had concluded. It is groundhog day—"walking the books", they call it. The branch president of the ALP's South Strathfield branch said at the time:

Look, at every branch meeting of the Labor Party you will find more and more irregularities.

The lead candidate, who secured the number one spot on the ALP council ticket, resigned after questioning from *The Sydney Morning Herald*. At the preselection Mr Datta said:

No other candidate can inspire thousands of souls in Strathfield the way I can. Many thousands of Australians have joined the Labor Party inspired by my leadership across NSW over the last 16 years.

That begs the question: How many of those thousands of people knew that they were members of the Labor Party? It begs the question: How many of those thousands of people attended meetings or how many actually exist? A branch president was quoted in relation to branch stacking at South Strathfield as saying:

We are not the professional ones. We don't know the party protocol. Nobody told us. Someone told them how to stack. Someone told them how to walk the books. And someone certainly told them how to cook those books.

The New South Wales Leader of the Opposition can clearly tell them all what is and what is not acceptable by sacking all the members involved and removing from her parliamentary team anyone found guilty of breaching the rules, branch stacking or walking those books. The Leader of the Opposition has had three months to contemplate this matter. It is never too late. The Leader of the Opposition can action it today. How many more investigations, allegations and findings does the New South Wales Labor Party need to finally take action? The Federal and State Labor leaders need to act on the systemic and demographic branch stacking that is ravaging the branches of the New South Wales Labor Party. By not acting, the Labor Party leadership stands guilty of endorsement.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Port Stephens continues to interject, she will be removed from the Chamber. I place the member for Canterbury on three calls to order. I note that the member named is not speaking.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:00:50): We sort of felt sorry for Robbo after that performance because everyone knows that he has been left out in the cold. The Premier does not let him do dixer anymore. No-one gets to enjoy his humour. But when the Government wants to roll out a bit of dirt, poor Robbo has to do the heavy lifting. I know his heart was not in it. He did well, and the young Liberal kid on \$120,000 a year did well. They were passionate words. I do not know whether members in the House remember the man charged after the Liberal Party chicken shop brawl. It was interesting. The Treasurer probably does not remember, but I will come to branch stacking in his part of the world soon. I think the member for Holsworthy might have had something to do with it. She was not happy. There were a few people in a chicken shop, having a brawl about Liberal Party branch stacking. The member for Holsworthy was not happy about it.

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Canterbury for the last time.

Mr RYAN PARK: And what about the Hills area sham—religious freedom events. My good friend the Treasurer knows a lot about them. I refer to an incident reported in August 2019, which involved the very well-known and very learned Jean Claude Perrottet, the brother of the New South Wales Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet. He is also an employee of the Hon. Damien Tudehope; most of us still remember him. Jean Claude Perrottet was working to sign up members to Liberal Party branches in the Hills district in Sydney. The Treasurer has had six different electorates. The texts appear to show that Jean Claude Perrottet was working

to sign Liberal Party members up to branches between February and May, including photographs of the membership sheets. In one exchange he said, "We must be discreet."

What was the punishment for this? The Premier did not say anything, but she does not say anything about anything. She still has not read a tweet from her Parliamentary Secretary, but this afternoon she knew a lot about a Labor Party report. The State Liberal Party President, Philip Ruddock, whom we all know, said he did not have a problem with "branch development". It is not branch stacking over there. It is not "employees"; it is "consultants". Mr Ruddock said, "My view as the party president is if you're worried about being stacked then 'outstack'." This was said by the Liberal Party President. In my neck of the woods in the Illawarra, we do not know a lot about branch stacking but recently some complaints were drawn to my attention about my very good friend, the member for Kiama. A Federal member said in Parliament at the time, "The final straw came when this same State MP, after stacking my branches completely, rolled my supportive FEC committee at the AGM." That is a former Liberal Party Federal member talking about a Minister of the Crown.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: Yes, former.

Mr RYAN PARK: The Treasurer is right; he is a former member. But let us be clear: A Minister of the Crown is being referred to as a branch stacker by a former Liberal Party member of Parliament. To the credit of the member for Kiama, he outstacked. He followed Ruddock's rule. I assume Jean Claude Perrottet also followed Ruddock's rule about outstacking. Even if the Liberal's record of stacking is put to one side, it is unbelievable that a police Minister who sits in this Chamber impersonated himself as a police officer. Old Sergeant Schultzy had a go at a young man, went off his brain and then impersonated a police officer, but he is allowed to remain in this Chamber. The member for Drummoyne has been investigated by ICAC for longer than he was a Minister, and he gets to stay here. We will never be lectured to by any of them about integrity, branch stacking or the way we conduct ourselves as members of Parliament.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I gave Opposition members a little bit of leeway when they were interrupting their own speaker. A number of them are on three calls to order: the member for Canterbury; the member for Kogarah, who is no longer in the Chamber; and the member for Port Stephens. And the member for Newtown is on three calls to order. I remind them to be particularly mindful that they are on the verge of being removed from the Chamber.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:06:44): The media was right today to describe the New South Wales Australian Labor Party [ALP] as being rotten to its core. The recent allegations are not an isolated event. I suppose when the unofficial ALP motto is "whatever it takes", behaviour of this kind is to be expected. This motion is necessary because anybody who tries to hide conduct of this kind is an enabler of improper conduct. The Leader of the Opposition unfortunately falls into the category of being an enabler. She has to stop being in denial and admit that everything is not alright in the New South Wales branch of the ALP. She needs to say these words after me: Sussex Street we have a problem.

This motion today is more than a matter of political argy-bargy. It involves very important matters of public interest. The falsification of ALP records is not just a matter of internal party organisation. Anything which strikes at the integrity of our democratic system is a matter of public interest to all citizens of this State. I draw the attention of the Chamber to two other significant matters. I remind the Chamber and the general public that this matter involves the jurisdiction by the ICAC because in the past five years the ALP has applied for, and been granted, over \$5 million in taxpayer funds under the State's electoral laws as a consequence of the 2015 and 2019 State elections.

By accepting those funds, the ALP can be seen as a publicly funded body exposing itself to the jurisdiction of our corruption watchdog. The branch stacking and other misconduct must be assessed as to whether it is corrupt conduct. I remind the House that New South Wales Labor has a terrible record of corruption. Labor members of the New South Wales Parliament who have been found by the ICAC to be corrupt include: Eddie Obeid, Ian Macdonald, Tony Kelly, Joe Tripodi, Angela D'Amore and Karyn Paluzzano.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: No New South Wales Liberal member has ever been found corrupt in their work as a member of Parliament. In addition, prison sentences have been served by former New South Wales Labor members of Parliament: Obeid, Macdonald, Buckets—Rex Jackson—and Milton Orkopoulos. Just this week Milton Orkopoulos, the former State ALP member for Swansea, was charged with more historic child sex offences after being convicted of acts of paedophilia in this very Parliament. In the past 12 months the ICAC has heard evidence of \$100,000 in cash in illegal donations associated with the Communist Party of China being handed to the most senior official of the New South Wales ALP. Just as it is alleged here, the ALP knew about

the illegal donations for more than 18 months prior to the last election and concealed its corrupt conduct all the way up to the 2019 State election.

All ALP members of Parliament were complicit in that concealment. That is very strong evidence of a cover-up and a systemic cultural problem requiring action, not platitudes, by the Leader of the Opposition. I should also note that the allegations of branch stacking and falsification of documents involve potentially serious criminal offences. Under section 192G of the Crimes Act, an intention to defraud by false or misleading statements incurs a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment. Under section 253 of the Crimes Act, the making of false documents incurs a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment. Under section 254 of the Crimes Act, using a false document incurs a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment and, under section 307C of the Crimes Act, producing and using a false or misleading document incurs a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment.

If the member for Granville were to be found guilty of any one of these offences, she would be ineligible to sit in the Parliament. Allegations of widespread ALP branch stacking are a matter of historical record. One only needs to think of Peter Baldwin in 1981, Graham Richardson's boast about Paul Keating's preselection in the 1970s, and more recently Belinda Neal. There is a rich history in this State of ALP corruption, criminal activity and branch stacking. The ALP appears to make every other body in Australia accountable for its history except itself. The time has come for the Leader of the Opposition to act. [*Time expired.*]

The SPEAKER: I am being overly patient today, but I warn the member for Port Stephens and the member for Canterbury that if I hear any more interjections from either of them, they will be removed from the Chamber—not a single word.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:12:07): What an absolutely pathetic motion this is. What an absolutely childish, immature and wasteful motion we have before the House today. In the middle of a global pandemic, at the height of a health and economic crisis, the Government of New South Wales comes into the Chamber and wastes the time of the New South Wales Parliament with nonsense like this. Just yesterday the Treasurer claimed that this State was facing dire economic circumstances. That is true. Yet, instead of solutions, the Young Liberal President opposite wants to play mock Parliament and carry on with the kind of crap that we would normally expect to see in his student politics. As we all know, this issue is the subject of an independent inquiry. The independent investigation was called for by the Leader of the Opposition. Those opposite are trying to argue that the independent investigation's outcome is not the one they want. They have not accepted the umpire's decision.

The SPEAKER: The member for Ku-ring-gai has had his opportunity.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: The member for Granville has come out of the independent investigation with no recommendations against her. But if Government members want to come into the Chamber and play their silly games instead of governing then go right ahead, because let me tell them now that they have picked the wrong fight with the wrong people. The people they should be censuring are their own. The Opposition, the Labor Party, will not be lectured to by the likes of Gladys Berejikian and the corrupt Liberal-Nationals team. If they want to go down this path, we will use every tool at our disposal to drag out every spiv, every lurk merchant and every criminal who hides under the slimy rock that is their party room. We will come after every one of you. Let us not forget that it was this Opposition—the people on these benches, the Labor Party—that dragged those opposite—

The SPEAKER: The member for Ku-ring-gai will come to order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: —kicking and screaming into the light when Daryl Maguire was caught with his dodgy property deals while sitting in this Parliament as a member of the Government. It was only when this Opposition threatened to expel Daryl Maguire from the Parliament for his corruption that Gladys Berejikian was forced to sack him herself. That is because Gladys is a coward. She is hollow. She is an empty leader who lacks the courage of her convictions and who is a hostage to her factions. If the Premier were not a complete and utter coward, she would act on John Sidoti, who is being investigated by ICAC for corruption and for lining his pockets through crooked property deals. If the Premier were not a coward, she would act on Stuart Ayres. He has skulked off. Stuart Ayres has been caught up to his neck in crooked donations and sports rorts.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

Mr Mark Speakman: Imputations of improper motives and personal reflections on members of either House are disorderly other than by substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. Despite the heated nature of this debate, the member for Swansea is overstepping the mark with some of her comments.

Mr Mark Speakman: I ask the member for Swansea to withdraw.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: No. If the Premier were not a coward, she would do something about David Elliott, who is violent, abusive and a power-mad lunatic who has broken firearms laws.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: It is the same point of order.

The SPEAKER: Standing Order 73 states:

Imputations of improper motives and personal reflections on Members of either House are disorderly other than by substantive motion.

If the member for Swansea continues in the current vein, I will sit her down.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: They do not like to hear the truth. They bring it on and we will bring it right back—don't you worry about that. This motion is a waste of the Parliament's time and the Government is a disgrace.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (15:17:14): The Labor Party is certainly in the pressure cooker now. After listening to the contribution by the member for Swansea, accusing the Premier of being a coward and making all sorts of disgraceful accusations, I remind the House and those watching the proceedings that during question time the Leader of the Opposition called for the Premier to "show some leadership". It is about time the Leader of the Opposition heeded her own words and showed leadership. She is the Leader of the Opposition and yet she is trying as hard as she can to create all this distraction and throw up people who will accuse our Government of misbehaviour and the Premier of being a coward to divert people's attention from the facts.

The facts are that a report has revealed the disgraceful behaviour of NSW Labor, which has not changed in decades. This Government was formed in 2011 when the Labor Party was then so corrupt, was filled with so much cover-up and was dealing in such awful and disgusting behaviours that the people of New South Wales said they had had enough of the Labor Party that was full of corruption and they would bring in the Liberals and The Nationals to clean up the State.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will come to order. She has had her turn.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: The Labor Party has shown today that its leader—the person it has chosen to be the alternative Premier of the State—has no leadership, no integrity and no character to insist that standards are maintained within her own party. If she will allow the behaviour that we have seen in the papers today to continue, God help this State if ever she were to be elected Premier of the State. The Premier we have in Gladys Berejiklian fronts up to lead the State every day. Through the bushfires and coronavirus challenges, she has stood up and led this State with integrity and character. We have seen the exact opposite from the Leader of the Labor Party—the would-be alternative Premier. What a disgrace. That is clear when we look back at her history as a member of Parliament when she sat around the Cabinet table of the former New South Wales Labor Government.

Who joined her around the Cabinet table? Eddie Obeid, Joe Tripodi and Ian Macdonald. Today we have seen exactly where Jodi McKay has received her professional mentoring from—corrupt politicians like Eddie Obeid and Tony Kelly. They were her mentors. We have seen that on display today. Has the New South Wales Labor Party learned from its past mistakes? No! Has the New South Wales Labor Party turned over a new leaf? No! It is the same old corrupt cover-up.

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

[The member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 15:20 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

The abject failure of the Leader of the Opposition to show leadership and to insist on standards of behaviour from New South Wales members of the Labor Party is a nail in the coffin of her leadership. It provides an excellent opportunity for the member for Kogarah or perhaps the member for Keira—in fact, they may be coaching her so that she fails. Oh, hopefully not. Members on this side of the House are thrilled, elated and excited that the member for Strathfield is the Leader of the Opposition. A forthright and competent Opposition makes for a stronger government. Unfortunately for the people of New South Wales, such an Opposition does not exist in New South Wales. The New South Wales Labor Party has an opportunity to get its act together, to clean itself up for the sake of its grassroots members and its future. I am proud to support the Minister's motion. I condemn the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Jodi McKay, for her failure of leadership and her failure to insist on proper standards of behaviour, and I condemn her— *[Time expired.]*

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (15:22:59): In reply: The censure motion clearly shows the vacuum of leadership within the New South Wales Labor Party. In contrast to the Victorian Premier, the New South Wales Leader of the Opposition has neither

referred to police revelations of branch stacking within her party nor, indeed, has she publicly stated that she opposes such behaviour. Has the Leader of the Opposition addressed her caucus to call out the behaviour? No, she has not. Has the Leader of the Opposition fronted up to Parliament to explain why Her Majesty's Opposition in the New South Wales Parliament is being accused of such acts? No, she has not.

Despite claims by the New South Wales branch of the Labor Party that it has stamped out corruption, all we see is improper conduct and malfeasance from Sussex Street again. As I said earlier, anyone watching *60 Minutes* on Sunday night would have been horrified by the actions of Labor Ministers in Victoria. At least the Victorian Labor Premier took swift and decisive action. In fact, the first response from the Victorian Premier was that Mr Somyurek did not deserve the opportunity to resign. He was sacked. Again it gives me no pleasure to inform the House that the New South Wales Opposition leader has done nothing in response to a report that has been sitting on her desk for three months. As I said earlier, compare the pair.

The difference in the response within ALP branches to proven misconduct is outstanding. The Victorian Labor leader has referred the matter to the Federal Labor Party whereas the New South Wales Labor leader has been silent. I say again: By doing so, she stands by that corrupt conduct. The Victorian Labor leader has asked for administrators to run the Victorian branch of the Labor Party whereas in New South Wales the Labor leader has been silent. By doing so, she has stood by that conduct. The Victorian Labor leader has removed three Ministers whereas, once again, the New South Wales Labor leader has been silent. By doing so, she stands by corrupt conduct again. Most importantly, the Victorian Labor leader took decisive action on the same day that he found out about such conduct whereas the New South Wales Labor leader sat on a report for over three months and has been silent. By doing so, she has stood by that conduct.

The findings in New South Wales are clear: falsification of meeting attendances in several branches and a culture of secrecy around that corrupt practice, evidence of party officials paying for other people's membership, and an admission that it is impossible to determine the extent of the problem due to insufficient receipts or records. According to the report branches perceive that they must engage in that corrupt conduct contrary to the rules because other branches also engage and participate in that corrupt conduct. The damning report further outlines that branches and branch members regularly use false addresses on membership documents; that deficient branch records have resulted in significant incentive for members to corruptly falsify records; and, last but not least, that members have little faith or expectation that head office would ever act on allegations of impropriety.

The New South Wales Labor Party leadership has been sitting on a report that outlines systemic branch stacking, falsification and corrupt falsification of records, provision of false addresses, falsification of membership payments, usage of blank signature spaces and the cooking of books by having people who were not present at meetings corruptly sign the attendance books for meetings that occur every week in many branches. The leader of the New South Wales Labor Party has had three months to consider the corruption outlined in that damning report. Today the party leadership has the chance to action that. How many more investigations, how many more allegations of corruption and findings of corrupt conduct does the New South Wales Labor Party need to take action? Both the Federal and State Labor leaders must act on the systemic and undemocratic branch stacking that is ravaging the branches of the New South Wales Labor Party and potentially depriving party members of their democratic right to represent the party in Parliament. By failing to act to address corruption, the Leader of the Opposition and the New South Wales Labor Party stand guilty of endorsing it.

The SPEAKER: I amend my earlier ruling relating to Standing Order 249 to allow the member for Canterbury to address the House briefly.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I apologise to the House for my constant interjections. The reason I am speaking is that I have a condolence that I want to give during private members' statements.

The SPEAKER: Because of the special circumstances and the fact that the member for Canterbury has apologised sincerely to the House, I replace my earlier ruling under Standing Order 249 and make a new ruling under Sessional Order 249A, but this is not to be seen as a precedent. I direct the member for Canterbury to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of one hour under Sessional Order 249A.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 15:32.]

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

The House divided.

Ayes	45
Noes	36
Majority.....	9

AYES

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

NOES

Aitchison, J	Atalla, E	Bali, S
Barr, C	Car, P	Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A	Crakanthorp, T	Daley, M
Dib, J	Doyle, T	Finn, J
Greenwich, A	Harris, D	Harrison, J
Haylen, J	Hoenig, R	Hornery, S
Kamper, S	Lynch, P	McDermott, H
McGirr, J	McKay, J	Mehan, D (teller)
Mihailuk, T	Minns, C	O'Neill, M
Park, R	Piper, G	Scully, P
Tesch, L	Voltz, L	Warren, G
Washington, K	Watson, A (teller)	Zangari, G

PAIRS

Hazzard, B	Lalich, N
Williams, R	Saffin, J

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***PERSONAL INJURY COMMISSION BILL 2020****Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (15:41:58): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Canterbury, East Hills, Holsworthy, Charlestown and Balmain for their contribution to the debate on the Personal Injury Commission [PIC] Bill 2020. In responding to the comments made by members the Government is committed to studying the feasibility of any expansion of the Workers Compensation Independent Review Office [WIRO] and Independent Legal Assistance and Review Service [ILARS] in the workers compensation scheme to the CTP scheme, including options to improve customer service while ensuring the affordability of green slip premiums. I will be happy to provide a briefing to members on this matter.

In relation to the rules committee, establishing a rules committee for the commission represents the best approach in a consolidated commission framework for rule-making and reflects the approach in the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The PIC rules committee was not designed to be a vehicle to raise stakeholder issues; rather, the rules made by the rules committee will be statutory rules, and will provide for the practice and procedure to be followed in commission proceedings and in proceedings before medical assessors, mediators and merit reviewers.

However, the committee does include a nominee from the Council of the NSW Bar Association and the NSW Law Society to ensure that the bodies that regulate the legal profession are involved in the rule-making process. This reflects the approach taken towards composition of the Uniform Civil Procedure Rule Committee. The State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA]—the regulator of both schemes—can nominate two members to the committee, ensuring regulatory expertise and input under both the workers compensation and CTP schemes. The bill also allows the president to appoint two other persons—whether or not members—from time to time. This may allow industry or different professional representation if appropriate.

The PIC will also establish stakeholder engagement forums to ensure that all stakeholders have an avenue to make representations and provide comment on the scheme as a regular occurrence. In relation to those comments by members regarding consultation, I thank stakeholders for their contributions in developing an appropriate model for the Personal Injury Commission and I welcome their further input now that the bill has been made available, and is for consideration by the House. As members have heard, this bill will establish a Personal Injury Commission that consolidates dispute resolution performed in the Workers Compensation Commission and the State Insurance Regulatory Authority's dedicated motor accident dispute resolution services into a single, independent commission.

The purpose of the commission is to deal with proceedings justly, quickly, cost efficiently and with as little formality as possible. The commission will provide its services in a consolidated and streamlined way, including by using a common registry. A single Personal Injury Commission will bring several benefits. It will offer customers a one-stop shop for workers compensation and CTP dispute resolution with a single digital registry. The commission will have one website and one phone number for its customers. Those who have a dispute in both the workers compensation and CTP systems at the same time and require access to the commission's services will go to the same place for those services. No longer will an injured person need to determine which dispute resolution service is appropriate. Whether one injures oneself at work or on the road, all injured parties will have an equally simple and seamless customer experience.

The commission will be customer focused, with consistent customer service standards. There will be enhanced public confidence in independent decision-making in the motor accident scheme by moving it out of the regulator—the State Insurance Regulatory Authority—to an independent commission headed by a president who is a judge of a court of record. Decisions will be published across all schemes—in accordance with the commission rules—guiding and assisting parties to a dispute, promoting public confidence and transparency in commission decision-making and reducing disputation in them.

There will be great opportunities for operational harmonisation and customer service improvements that will make it easier for people to navigate the system. There will be efficiencies in allocating resources and workload across different jurisdictions while retaining specialisation and expertise in the schemes. This will deliver benefits to the community and stakeholders by way of value for money and a more consistent user experience. The reforms do not change the compensation, benefits and entitlements in the underlying workers compensation and CTP schemes. We have listened to stakeholders and developed a commission that sets a solid foundation for a multi-scheme Personal Injury Commission with the potential for greater alignment of processes over time if appropriate and the potential to grow and respond to future demands. I thank members for their contribution to the bill and I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL 2020

Second Reading Speech

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (15:47:46): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

On 3 December 2019 the Assistant Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC], Mr Bruce McClintock, SC, provided a special report to each of the Presiding Officers of Parliament. This report was tabled

in this House on 25 February and in the other place on 6 February. In that report the assistant inspector recommends that consideration be given to widening the definition of persons eligible for appointment as chief commissioner of the LECC. This bill will amend the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016 consistent with that recommendation. Section 18 (3) of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016 [LECC Act] currently provides that a person is not eligible to be appointed as chief commissioner or to act in that office unless the person is a current or former judge or other judicial officer of a superior court of record of New South Wales or of any other State or Territory of Australia.

In his report, the assistant inspector expressed the view that there are very few people who would fall within this category and that many for various reasons would be unsuitable or unwilling to accept an appointment as chief commissioner of the LECC and that this provision undesirably narrows the pool of persons available for appointment. This bill responds to these concerns and widens the definition of persons eligible for appointment as chief commissioner of the LECC in a measured and reasonable fashion. In particular, the proposed amendments provide that a person will not be eligible to be appointed as chief commissioner of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, or to act in that office, unless the person has special legal qualifications.

A person who has special legal qualifications is a person who is, or is qualified to be appointed as, a judge or other judicial officer of a superior court of record of New South Wales or of any other State or Territory of Australia, or is a former judge or judicial officer of such a court. This means that a person would currently need at least five years' standing as an Australian lawyer to meet the special legal qualifications threshold. This is currently the minimum qualification required to be eligible to be appointed as a Justice of the High Court of Australia.

This amendment will bring the eligibility criteria for chief commissioners of the LECC into line with the corresponding eligibility criteria for commissioners of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, or ICAC for short. The ICAC may exercise royal commission-type powers similar to those that may be exercised by the LECC, including the power to hold public inquiries, summon witnesses and compel the production of evidence. The proposed amendments to the LECC Act would be consistent with the eligibility requirements that currently apply to ICAC commissioners.

On 15 January 2020 the Governor, on the advice of the Executive Council, removed Mr Patrick Saidi from the office of Commissioner for Oversight of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission pursuant to section 77 of the Government Sector Employment Act, or GSE Act for short. Mr Saidi's removal from office followed the assistant inspector's special report to Parliament, which considered if Mr Saidi was guilty of officer maladministration or misconduct, with the assistant inspector ultimately deciding against such a finding. I am advised that Mr Saidi was given the opportunity to make submissions, but that he did not raise any objection to the proposal that he be removed from office.

Clause 7 of schedule 1 to the LECC Act sets out when the office of a member of the commission, assistant commissioner or alternate commissioner becomes vacant, including circumstances like the death or resignation of a person. The bill will insert a transitional clause in schedule 3 to the LECC Act providing that the removal from office of a member of the commission, or an assistant commissioner, or an alternate commissioner, under part 6 of the GSE Act before the commencement of this bill is taken to have created a vacancy in that office. This transitional provision will clarify that the office of the Commissioner for Oversight is vacant for the purposes of clause 7 of schedule 1, following Mr Saidi's removal from office.

Schedule 2 to the bill, if passed, will make amendments to the GSE Act. I was recently allocated joint responsibility, with the Premier, for the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016. It came to my attention that LECC members could be removed under part 6 of the GSE Act, which relates to the removal of statutory officers by the Governor. I noted that a number of statutory office holders, including any officer of the ICAC, are excluded from the application of part 6 of the GSE Act, and queried why LECC members were not also excluded. I intended to have the Government consider later this year further reform to exclude LECC members from the application of part 6 of the GSE Act.

However, some members, in particular Mr David Shoebridge, MLC, in the other place, raised concerns about this matter in the meantime and the Government determined to deal with it now by way of Government amendment to the bill in the other place. Schedule 2 to the bill will amend section 76 of the GSE Act so that part 6 of the Act does not apply to a member of the LECC, an assistant commissioner of the LECC or an alternate commissioner of the LECC. I note that the Governor will continue to have the power to remove a member of the commission, assistant commissioner or alternate commissioner from office for incapacity, incompetence or misbehaviour under clause 7 (2) of schedule 1 to the LECC Act. These amendments will ensure that there is an appropriate pool of persons eligible to be appointed as chief commissioner and that LECC commissioners have appropriate security of tenure. I commend the bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:53:47): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment Bill 2020. With reluctance, the Opposition does not oppose the bill. The primary object of the bill is to lower the eligibility requirements for a person to be appointed as Chief Commissioner of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC] or as alternate chief commissioner. The proposed requirement is that they have special legal qualifications as defined under the Act, those qualifications being the same as those for a commissioner presently, as opposed to those for a chief commissioner. The bill also has a retrospective amendment, described as a drafting error dealing with the situation when an office becomes vacant.

The Government has been somewhat disingenuous in the way it has presented the case for this legislation. It seems to place the need for the change all upon the shoulders of then LECC Assistant Inspector McClintock. The current eligibility requirement is set out in section 18 (3) of the current Act. That subsection provides that a person is not eligible to be appointed as chief commissioner unless the person is or was a judge or other judicial officer of a superior court of record of the State or of any other State or Territory of Australia. This was not an accidental or unintentional provision. It was very explicitly a recommendation of the Tink report, which gave rise to the establishment of the LECC. Tink's report dated 31 August 2015 was entitled *Review of Police Oversight. Recommendation 7* of that review read as follows:

To recognise the status of the new commission as a body exercising royal commission type powers, the new commissioner should be a serving or retired superior court judge, appointed by the Governor for a term not exceeding five years.

That recommendation was adopted with some flourish by the Government and included in the bill. Granted the reliance placed upon Tink and his report by Government members, it is at best curious that they have abandoned this requirement so easily. Of course, they blame McClintock. That argument is pretty dodgy. Let us go to what McClintock said. He was appointed assistant LECC commissioner to hear a complaint by Commissioner Saidi, Commissioner for Oversight, against Chief Commissioner Adams, the existing LECC inspector being unable to deal with the complaint. The assistant inspector furnished a report dated December 2019. It was tabled in Parliament and then replaced with an expurgated copy. The report consisted of 35 pages and 84 paragraphs, plus numerous annexures. In paragraph 84—the last paragraph of the report—the assistant inspector raised the issue of the qualifications of the chief commissioner largely as an afterthought. On my reading of the report, it had not previously been raised and certainly was not the subject of submissions. What the assistant inspector actually says about section 18 (3) is quite interesting. It is:

There are very few people who fall within the category described and many of them would, for various reasons, be either unsuitable or unwilling to accept such an appointment. In my opinion, the provision undesirably narrows the pool of persons available for appointment. For example, the reference to Superior Court of Record excludes judges and former judges of the New South Wales District Court, many of whom to my knowledge would have experience and abilities making them highly suitable for appointment as chief commissioner.

Assistant Inspector McClintock also said another alternative was to leave the requirement as it is, but appoint whoever was a suitable candidate as chief commissioner to the Supreme Court. The one thing he did not say was that they should have special legal qualifications as defined under the legislation. All of this is a long way short of changing the eligibility to be an Australian lawyer of five years' standing. So the reliance upon McClintock to justify this bill is at best questionable. That leads obviously to the question of what is going on. The informed speculation is that the Government cannot find anyone to take the job of chief commissioner: there were no takers. The only option then was to lower the bar and that is what this bill proceeds to do.

Proof that this is what is going on is seen in the LECC today. The LECC currently has an acting chief commissioner whose term I think has just been extended as an acting commissioner. He took that role when the term of Chief Commissioner Adams expired in January. Chief Commissioner Adams had a three-year term, so the Government had three years in which to find a new chief commissioner. It did not find one. Either it is guilty of monumental incompetence—always a possibility—or it could not find anyone who was eligible in all the circumstances. One would probably suspect on this occasion that it is the latter of those options.

The question that then naturally arises is why is that so? Why can the Government not find suitably qualified nominees for the position of chief commissioner of the LECC? The answer to that question I think lies in the Government's behaviour. The Government is now reaping the consequences of the manner in which it has dealt previously with statutory office holders, especially those who were or had been judges of superior courts. When the ICAC investigated the Liberal Party, the Government's response was to restructure the anti-corruption agency and constructively terminate the ICAC commissioner. After the defenestration of Megan Latham, it is hardly surprising past or present judges of the Supreme Court are not rushing to take up such positions.

Then there is the way that Minister Grant dealt with Chief Commissioner Adams, treating him as though he was just a lackey of the Government. Then when the strip search inquiry embarrassed the Government, it took

great pleasure in refusing to temporarily extend the chief commissioner's tenure to allow him to continue work on that inquiry. Letting him continue would have been sensible and professional but that was a path the Government would not contemplate. Is it any wonder Supreme Court judges are reluctant to accept such positions? The Government will no doubt argue that the eligibility requirements for the chief commissioner of LECC are the same as for the ICAC chief commissioner. That is a bit beside the point granted Tink's recommendation and what McClintock actually said about eligibility.

The problem, of course, for the Opposition is that it is stuck with the mess the Government has created. If this bill does not pass there will presumably be acting chief commissioners for the foreseeable future, with all the adverse consequences that flow from the lack of permanent leadership for an organisation, as we have seen all too regrettably in the Crime Commission. Reluctantly, because of that, Labor will not oppose the bill.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:59:27): I make a contribution to debate on the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment Bill 2020. I endorse the remarks made by the member for Liverpool. When former Justice Adams' term as Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Chief Commissioner expired, the Government was within its rights to not extend or renew his appointment. However, the problem is that the chief commissioner was in the middle of a strip search inquiry into the conduct of certain police officers while stripsearching some people whom they had detained. There was some controversy at the time. Nobody would accept that it was a genuine and impartial Government decision to not extend the term of the chief commissioner until an inquiry of that nature had finished.

I am a believer in statutory independence. When I was young I was critical when the then government did not renew the appointment of magistrates and decided to use the local courts legislation to sack five of them. I joined the then Opposition in criticising the then Government when it legislated to reform the Independent Commission Against Corruption, which resulted in the termination of the appointment of Justice Latham, although I understood why the then Government made the decision. I am extremely critical of the approach taken on the issue of former Justice Adams. When a government creates independence, whether it is independence of the judiciary or whether it makes statutory appointments that are part of the Executive branch, it comes with discomfort to the Government of the day. That is the purpose of the creation of those independent, statutory appointments. When that discomfort is caused to the Government of the day or even to the Parliament, instead of looking to the officeholders, the government—not just this Government—and Parliament do not look at the source of the problem, which is invariably the legislation that they enacted.

When the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Bill was enacted I warned the House about its wording providing too great a control and obligation upon police officers and too great a discretion upon those who would oversee police officers. My views, which can be read in *Hansard*, were dismissed and laughed at. Now the Government does not renew the chief commissioner's appointment in the middle of an inquiry. It has to get an acting chief commissioner. When it cannot find a replacement in accordance with the Act and wants to open it up to an Australian barrister, consistent with the ICAC Act, it says that it is doing some sort of genuine reform.

Instead of seeing what former Justice Adams was doing, which may well have been the consequence of the legislation that I warned the Government about, and instead of relying on common law that had been in place for a considerable period, when the Parliament codified police powers of arrest, search and detention and created by statute certain obligations upon police officers that not even lawyers know or understand, it was always going to fall foul of statutory provisions because of that sort of complexity. The government of the day or the Parliament never look in the mirror and at the root cause of the problem.

I have known former Justice Michael Adams, QC, who is a former public defender for New South Wales, for many decades. I know that at times he can be difficult and quarrelsome, just like many judges of the Supreme Court. I am sure the Attorney General has struck many of them in his career at the bar. However, just because say, for example, a judicial officer is difficult or quarrelsome—although we could never say Justice Adams was unfair if we could get him to listen to us—does not mean that we would seek to replace them. Appointing somebody of his stature, knowledge and experience of the criminal law as Chief Commissioner of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission is normally to the advantage of the Attorney General of the day, who is generally required to make appointments of that nature. But as I say, with independence comes discomfort at times.

It is the right of the government of the day to not renew the appointment of a position like the chief commissioner's. It is extraordinary that his time was not extended for a short period to enable the completion of the strip search inquiry. There is no reason it could not have occurred. Statutory appointments' terms are extended all the time. For example, when I was prosecuting my last trial as an acting Crown Prosecutor, the trial and sentence proceedings were not completed before my appointment expired. The Attorney General of the day, who I think might have been the Hon. Greg Smith, was required to extend my appointment two, three or four weeks to enable me to complete the prosecution and sentence proceedings of that matter. There is nothing unusual about extending the term.

When the term of a statutory appointment is not extended in the middle of an inquiry, it is a reasonable inference to draw for any informed person, even someone such as the Attorney General, that other motives were at play when the decision was made. There was considerable criticism of what was unfolding in the inquiry by the Commissioner of Police, those representing him and the police Minister. The public evidence of the inquiry caused considerable criticism of police officers—some of it unfair, but most of it genuine—because it was about the detention and searching of young people, and police acting beyond their powers. There was genuine public concern about this matter that was part heard before the chief commissioner. The Government chose to not do what it would normally do under any other circumstance. It did not renew former Justice Adams' appointment.

It is not to say that the appointment of the acting commissioner was wrong. But doing it in the middle of an inquiry creates quite a reasonable inference, probably the only rational inference, if I could apply the criminal test, in which one could be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that that was the motive of the Government. I say to the Attorney General that if that was the motive of the Government that decision was improper and should not have been made. If I am wrong in my inference—and mind you, I will accept whatever the Attorney General says—I will be interested to see whether he gives the House an assurance that that was not the reason that the chief commissioner's term was not extended to enable him to complete the inquiry. If the Attorney General, as the most senior member of the bar and as a silk, gives that assurance, I will accept it. I am waiting for him. He learnt well, at least in crime—he read with a really good public defender. I will wait with bated breath to see whether he gives the House the assurance that I believe he is required to give.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:09:27): On behalf of The Greens I contribute to debate on the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment Bill 2020. The Greens support the bill. I acknowledge that discussions are taking place about potential amendments to the bill that would affect the security of tenure enjoyed by the deputy and chief commissioners. The bill amends the eligibility requirements for appointment of the chief commissioner and alternate chief commissioner of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC]. The change means that a person can be appointed as chief commissioner of the LECC if they are qualified to be appointed as a superior court judge or if they are a current or former judge.

The bill also provides that termination of a commissioner under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 would amount to dismissal as a commissioner under the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016 [LECC Act]. The Greens are concerned about that change. My colleague in the other place Mr David Shoebridge has been in communication with the Attorney General to ensure that the LECC retains its independence as an oversight body. We are concerned to ensure the stability and continuity of the LECC because of its important oversight function. The LECC has been a positive change in New South Wales. The investigations undertaken to date by the agency have identified serious issues for reform and policy change. That is exactly what an oversight body should be doing. It is disappointing that the bill does not canvas expanding the LECC or increasing its funding to ensure that community concerns and complaints about police behaviour are addressed and that a decision not to investigate a matter is made on its merits, unaffected by funding constraints.

When the former Police Integrity Commission [PIC] transitioned to the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission concerns existed as to whether sufficient resources had been provided to enable the LECC to investigate matters. At the time of the transition I was involved in a complaint to the PIC. The available resources had been significantly reduced during the transition. The power of an oversight body is lessened if it must make decisions based on the available resources rather than on the merits of a matter. We must be clear about that, whether in relation to ICAC or, indeed, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. We must ensure that those bodies can exercise proper oversight of systems and processes within the NSW Police Force and within our democracy generally to ensure that sufficient resources are provided to address all issues that should be addressed.

It has been highlighted of late that we must do more to ensure that organisations like the LECC are able to identify broader issues such as systemic racism, whether it be in the NSW Police Force or in other areas, and to suggest improvements when clearly issues are raised that need to be addressed. The addition of specific protocols for First Nations complainants seems an obvious start, as does consideration of an assistant commissioner specifically drawn from an Aboriginal community.

Events around the world and events occurring on Gadigal land in the middle of Sydney demonstrate the need for members to do everything possible to ensure adequate oversight of police in this State. The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission is a welcome part of that oversight. It is crucial that the LECC is resourced appropriately to provide that oversight and to make decisions based on merit about which matters to pursue. The scope of the LECC's investigations and recommendations must not be limited by what the Government of the day considers palatable. Instead, we must ensure that the LECC works to serve the citizens of New South Wales.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (16:14:11): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Liverpool, Heffron and Newtown for their contributions to debate on the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment Bill

2020. The member for Liverpool suggested that there was some disingenuity in the Government's approach to the bill. He referred to a drafting error. The drafting error is not the eligibility criteria for the chief commissioner, which were deliberately chosen after the Tink report in 2016 but, rather, the intersection of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016 [LECC Act] with the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 [GSE Act] and what happens when someone is removed lawfully under the GSE Act when the LECC Act does not expressly create a vacancy in those circumstances.

To some extent that is now of academic interest because if the bill is passed, removal under the GSE Act in future will not be possible and transitional provisions will deal with that ambiguity of the intersection of the GSE Act and the LECC Act. The Government does not blame Mr McClintock or somehow subcontract its decision-making to Mr McClintock in that respect. It is a bit like Justice Kirby said of the persuasiveness of British precedent—it is persuasive on its own arguments rather than being binding in some way. Of course, the Government is not bound by the findings or recommendations of the inspector's report but where those reasons are cogent we will adopt them, of course. They are observations that Mr McClintock made prior to—not after or in the context of, but prior to—the expiration of Mr Adam's term as chief commissioner. So they were valid reasons then and they are valid reasons now. It is important to note what Mr McClintock said and it is the reasoning that we adopt. He states:

... s 18 (3) of the LECC Act contains too narrow a definition of the persons eligible for appointment as Chief Commissioner.

He then sets out subsection 18 (3) and continues:

There are very few people who would fall within the category described and many of them would, for various reasons, be either unsuitable or unwilling to accept such an appointment. In my opinion, the provision undesirably narrows the pool of persons available for appointment. For example, the reference to *superior* court of record excludes judges and former judges of the New South Wales District Court, many of whom to my knowledge would have experience and abilities making them highly suitable for appointment as Chief Commissioner. I am aware that s 18 (3) was enacted as a result of a recommendation made in the Tink Report, but I recommend that consideration be given to widening the definition of persons eligible for appointment. An alternative would be for the Executive to appoint a suitable candidate to the Supreme Court to enable such a person to take up the role of Chief Commissioner but that itself may give rise to other issues.

Consistent with the eligibility criteria in the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, the Government has adopted common eligibility criteria because the current criteria are too narrow. We adopt Mr McClintock's reasons. We do not blame him. We thank him for his cogent arguments and we adopt them. A recurring theme in the contributions made by the member for Liverpool and the member for Heffron was the question of security of tenure. The Act improves the security of tenure of the LECC commissioners by ensuring that they cannot be removed under the GSE Act without cause but are subject to the more stringent requirements to show cause under the LECC Act. The bill enhances that security of tenure and does not jeopardise it in any way.

On occasion the member for Heffron made excellent choices as to which junior counsel would assist him in criminal matters, but I regret to say that on this occasion he has gone off on a bit of a tangent. He posed to me the challenge: On my oath as Senior Counsel, as the first law officer of the State, will I guarantee that the removal of Mr Adams had nothing to do with some nefarious motive of undermining the strip search inquiry? A preliminary report has been provided. The strip search inquiry is continuing and the Government will consider final recommendations when it receives them. I was not the Minister responsible for the LECC Act at the time of any decision not to reappoint Mr Adams, therefore I was not inside the mind of the decision-maker at the time. But nothing has come to my attention that would suggest that the ongoing strip search inquiry had anything to do with the non-renewal of Mr Adams' tenure.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Did you make inquiries?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Listen to this—this will interest the member for Heffron. The Hon. Don Harwin, then the Special Minister of State, stated during budget estimates that he had read the report of the assistant inspector of the LECC. The then Minister formed the view that he had lost confidence in the ability of the chief commissioner to lead the LECC. It is about a view that there was a lack of confidence in the chief commissioner's ability to continue to lead the LECC that led to the non-renewal of his tenure. Nothing has come to my attention that suggests it has anything to do with a strip search inquiry, which continues.

Mr Ron Hoenig: He probably did that while he was up in Terrigal.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: We don't have a Terrigal faction. I thought that was your party.

Mr Ron Hoenig: I thought that changed this year. You don't have a Cronulla faction, do you?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: No. That is a faction of one. The member for Newtown raised questions about the funding of the LECC. I note that the LECC was established in 2017 by this Government as a successor to the Police Integrity Commission, to ensure the effective oversight of law enforcement in New South Wales. The

LECC oversees the NSW Police Force and the NSW Crime Commission, specifically focusing on dealing with serious misconduct and serious maladministration. It is important to note, as the LECC has done in previous annual reports, that not all complaints made to the LECC necessarily require a full investigation to be carried out in order to be resolved. Before any investigation is commenced complaints that are made to the commission are assessed to determine whether they relate to matters that the commission may investigate. I am advised that when the commission considers it appropriate to refer a matter to the NSW Police Force for investigation to be carried out by the Police Integrity Commission, it will make a subsequent assessment to ensure that the police investigation is appropriate.

The Government is committed to ensuring effective oversight of law enforcement in New South Wales. In the 2019-20 budget it provided almost \$32 million to fund the LECC—namely \$24.7 million in recurrent funding and \$7.3 million in capital expenditure. The Government has asked the Auditor-General to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the financial arrangements and management practices of independent agencies, including the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. The Government awaits the Auditor-General's report. I note that the Public Accountability Committee of the Legislative Council is also conducting an inquiry into the budget process for independent oversight bodies and the Parliament, including the LECC. The committee delivered an interim report in March and has foreshadowed a final report once the Auditor-General's audit is completed. The Government will carefully consider the report of the Auditor-General when considering these issues. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): 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.

STRATA SCHEMES MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (SUSTAINABILITY INFRASTRUCTURE) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Kevin Anderson, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (16:24:16):
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Strata Schemes Management Amendment (Sustainability Infrastructure) Bill 2020. This bill amends the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 to reduce the voting threshold for strata owners corporations to approve the installation of sustainability infrastructure in their strata scheme. With this bill we also take the opportunity to make several other practical amendments to the Act, to improve its operation and correct some unintended consequences of the major reforms to strata laws introduced in 2015. In February 2019 the Premier made an election commitment to over one million people living in residential strata schemes in New South Wales. The commitment was that the Government would reduce barriers to the uptake of sustainability infrastructure in apartment buildings. The bill delivers on a key part of the Premier's commitment, which was to reduce the voting threshold for approval of sustainability infrastructure installations from 75 per cent to a simple majority of 50 per cent of votes.

A separate part of the election commitment was that the New South Wales Government would undertake a review to identify any other regulatory barriers that may be limiting the uptake of sustainability infrastructure in residential apartment buildings. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is leading that work and I look forward to the outcomes of that review. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to making this State more sustainable and resilient in a changing climate; all households potentially have a part to play in achieving those goals. The Government has already implemented various programs and initiatives to help home owners both reduce their impact on the environment and keep money in their pockets. We believe in getting the balance right.

This includes programs providing solar energy systems for low-income households, assisting home owners in the Hunter region to access interest-free loans to install solar battery systems, subsidising the replacement of old lights with new energy-efficient LED lights and offering discounts on new energy-efficient fridges and televisions to eligible buyers. Those practical steps have seen a significant uptake in the installation of sustainability infrastructure in freestanding homes and, as a result, around 18 per cent of all homes in the State now have solar units installed. However, while the uptake of residential solar infrastructure continues to grow rapidly, the boom has not occurred in strata schemes. It is estimated that less than 0.5 per cent of residential strata schemes across Australia have installed solar.

That number is even more significant at a time when the strata community is going through a rapid expansion. The way New South Wales lives and works is changing, especially in Greater Sydney, where it is forecast that within 20 years from now 50 per cent of the population will be living in strata buildings. There are now over 81,200 strata schemes registered in New South Wales. Those schemes include residential apartment towers, mixed-use developments, traditional blocks of flats with just a few units, and many townhouses. Those strata schemes house around 1.1 million people and provide direct employment to over 3,500 people. If steps are not taken to address the gap in the uptake of sustainability infrastructure by strata schemes, we risk strata residents being left behind, unable to reap the full environmental and financial benefits of installing sustainability infrastructure and renewable energy.

I now turn to the specific sustainability infrastructure provisions of the bill. Currently, if a strata owners corporation is considering making changes to common property, the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 requires a special resolution to be passed, which requires that no more than 25 per cent of votes are opposed—in other words, a minimum of 75 per cent of the votes cast are in favour. To encourage greater uptake of sustainability measures in strata schemes, the bill introduces a new kind of resolution specifically for this purpose with a lower threshold, together with some factors that owners corporations must consider. A sustainability infrastructure resolution will require a simple majority vote—less than 50 per cent of votes opposed—which is the threshold the Act sets for most decisions an owners corporation can make.

Lowering the voting threshold in this way will ensure that the Act does not stand in the way of the genuine desire of the majority of lot owners in strata to unlock the potential of sustainable energy and other improvements that reduce the environmental impact of the scheme. Solar panels were the obvious example put forward by the Government of what the reform means for strata buildings. However, sustainability infrastructure potentially includes a broad range of initiatives, so the bill has been drafted to ensure the benefit of the reduced voting threshold is available for any type of installation so long as its purpose is improved sustainability.

Accordingly, the bill defines "sustainability infrastructure" to mean changes to common property for any of the following purposes: to reduce or increase the efficiency of energy or water consumption; to reduce or prevent pollution; to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill; to increase the recovery or recycling of materials; to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and to facilitate the use of sustainable forms of transport, for example, by installing electric vehicle chargers. Changes to common property are intended to be interpreted broadly and include installing, removing, modifying or replacing any part of the common property. That ensures that the benefit of the reduced voting threshold of the Act is not only available to installation of brand new infrastructure—say, solar panels on the roof—but also includes upgrades to existing infrastructure, such as replacing exhaust fans for a garage with a more energy-efficient system.

The drafting of the bill before the House ensures that all aspects of the way infrastructure is governed by the Act receive the benefit of the lower voting threshold when sustainability is involved. Accordingly, a sustainability infrastructure resolution and its simple majority vote applies to: the financing of sustainability infrastructure; adding to, altering or erecting a new structure on the common property for the purpose of installing sustainability infrastructure; and changing the by-laws for the purpose of installing and/or using sustainability infrastructure. With a reduced majority vote required to approve expenditure of lot owners' money comes an increased responsibility to ensure that proposals are genuine.

The bill, therefore, requires owners corporations to have considered a minimum set of factors before approving a sustainability infrastructure resolution. These are the costs relating to the infrastructure installation, including any running and maintenance costs; the ownership of and responsibility for installing and maintaining the infrastructure; whether the use of the infrastructure will be available to all or only some of the lots in the strata scheme; and any matter prescribed by the regulations. Those three factors have been developed in consultation with expert stakeholders from the strata community and deliberately designed in a light touch fashion. In other words, the new law has been drafted to allow owners corporations to decide for themselves how to pursue sustainability in their scheme while making sure that the most important issues that could lead to disputes or disenfranchisement of the minority are adequately disclosed and actively considered. I commend the sustainability

infrastructure reform in the bill as a balanced, fair and flexible contribution to encouraging strata schemes to make their buildings more sustainable into the future.

I will now turn to the six other practical amendments that the Government has included in the bill as an opportunity to immediately improve the functioning of the strata laws. It was this Government that delivered once-in-a-generation reforms to the laws governing strata schemes with the passage of the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 and its twin, the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015. Those new laws commenced in 2016 after a five-year journey—the largest policy project ever undertaken by NSW Fair Trading. As can be expected with any major rewrite of laws, some practical difficulties and unintended consequences have been identified that are timely to address in the amendment bill. These other amendments have been identified with the assistance of external stakeholders, including Strata Community Association NSW, whom I thank for their valuable input and collaboration with the Government on both the sustainability reform and these other important amendments. The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal has also contributed valuably to the amendments in the bill, which will assist with the efficient resolution of strata disputes and the administration of justice.

The major reforms of 2015 made secret ballots available to owners corporations for the first time so that they could vote on motions and in strata committee elections in accordance with their own wishes without feeling intimidated by others when voting in open meetings. However, the strata community has since found the law to be ambiguous about whether records of those secret ballots could be revealed when a strata scheme's records are produced for inspection, for example, when a strata report is being compiled for a prospective purchaser. The bill removes the ambiguity and protects the secrecy of votes cast in secret ballots. The bill amends section 182 of the Act to insert an exclusion clause preventing any records that could identify how an owner voted from being handed over unless the owners corporation is ordered to do so by the tribunal or a court.

The bill also resolves an inconsistency between the strata laws and the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 with respect to a prospective tenant's right to be provided with a copy of the scheme's by-laws. On the one hand the 2015 strata reforms introduced an obligation on lot owners to provide a copy of the by-laws or strata management statement to a tenant within 14 days of the tenant becoming entitled to possession of the lot. On the other hand the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 requires landlords in strata schemes to provide a copy of the scheme's by-laws to prospective tenants prior to or at the time of entering into a residential tenancy agreement. The bill, therefore, provides that where a lot owner has already fulfilled their obligation under tenancy laws to provide by-laws to a tenant, they are not also required to do so under strata laws.

The bill also improves the Act in relation to the notification of tribunal applications made under the Act to interested parties. At present, section 228 of the Act requires the tribunal registrar to give a copy of an application for an order to the named parties to the application and any other person who, in the registrar's opinion, would be affected. That section needs improvement for two reasons. First, the law leaves it up to the subjective discretion of the registrar to decide who might be affected by an application and where the owners corporation is not a named party to the application the law does not strictly require notification of the owners corporation. The tribunal advises that owners corporations are named in 88 per cent of applications, leaving 12 per cent of owners corporations potentially unaware that there is a dispute in the tribunal concerning their scheme. The bill instead makes the notification requirements clear and objective by requiring the registrar to notify owners corporations in all cases and the owners corporation to notify all lot owners in the scheme of the tribunal application. The amendment also relieves a significant administrative burden on the tribunal in providing notice to potentially hundreds of lot owners in a scheme, in addition to the parties to the application.

The bill also addresses a difficulty facing lot owners and owners corporations in enforcing an order of the tribunal where breaches continue to occur. Proposed section 247A in the bill re-introduces a provision that is similar to section 202 in the former Strata Schemes Management Act 1996, which was repealed under the 2015 reforms. That section enabled original applicants for tribunal orders to apply to the tribunal for an order for a monetary penalty to be paid by a person who has contravened a tribunal order. However, section 202 of the former Act was not carried across to the 2015 Act. That meant that if the tribunal order does not involve breach of a by-law, proceedings for the offence of non-compliance with a tribunal order can be commenced only by the Attorney General, or a person or body authorised by the Attorney General, and results from all tribunal processes being standardised under the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013.

The bill before the House today corrects this historical anomaly and provides for better access to enforcement of tribunal orders. Section 247A will allow the applicant for the original tribunal order, the owners corporation or another interested party, to apply to the tribunal for an order requiring payment of a pecuniary penalty of up to \$5,500 if there is a contravention of the original order. Importantly, the bill provides a double jeopardy protection by making it clear that a person cannot be punished twice if their act or omission also constitutes a contravention under a civil penalty provision of the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act, or contempt of the tribunal.

The bill also corrects two unintended consequences that have arisen in the drafting of the 2015 reforms to the Act. The first relates to restrictions on the practice of proxy farming, which had bedevilled strata schemes for years, whereby a person voting on a motion or in elections can hold proxies only for a maximum of 5 per cent of the lots in schemes with more than 20 lots. For schemes with 20 or fewer lots, a person can hold only one proxy. An unintended consequence of this provision has been to adversely impact those persons who own multiple lots in schemes with fewer than 20 lots. The bill amends the Act to clarify that despite the restrictions, a person who owns multiple lots in a scheme can validly appoint a single proxy to represent all the lots they own. The second clarification with respect to proxies in the bill makes the Act clear that a duly appointed proxy remains valid at a later meeting if an earlier meeting for which it is appointed is adjourned.

These practical amendments do not dilute the important protections introduced under the 2015 reforms, but rather ensure that they can operate without unnecessary hindrance and as intended. I commend them to the House. The Strata Schemes Management Amendment (Sustainability Infrastructure) Bill 2020 shows the willingness of this Government to take practical steps to help New South Wales strata residents and other occupants to create a more sustainable future for themselves and the natural environment. The bill empowers strata owners corporations and individual lot owners to more easily make meaningful improvements to their homes to reduce their environmental impact and reap the financial benefits and other rewards. The other amendments in the bill deliver timely improvements to the Act to ensure it operates effectively and as intended. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

CASINO CONTROL AMENDMENT (INQUIRIES) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Victor Dominello, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (16:44:28): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Casino Control Amendment (Inquiries) Bill 2020 is designed to ensure that the current Bergin casino inquiry, and any future casino inquiries, have sufficient powers to ensure that the highest level of oversight is possible. These amendments follow legal proceedings arising from the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority's inquiry into matters relating to various Crown casino entities and Melco Resorts and Entertainment Limited by the Hon. Patricia Bergin, SC, under section 143 of the Casino Control Act 1992. The inquiry had been operating on the basis that section 143A of the Casino Control Act 1992 picked up certain provisions of the Royal Commissions Act 1923, including the power to require the disclosure of privileged information.

Shortly after it commenced, the inquiry issued summonses to the parties requiring the production of several thousands of documents. Melco Resorts and Entertainment Limited, a Hong Kong based casino operator, resisted production of certain material that is subject to a claim of legal professional privilege. It challenged the summonses on the basis that an inquiry constituted under section 143 of the Casino Control Act 1992 is not a royal commission and that relevant provisions of the Royal Commissions Act 1923, which provide for the abrogation of privilege, were not effectively picked up by the Casino Control Act 1992. The Court of Appeal recently overturned this decision and the High Court has refused special leave to appeal that decision. However, clarifying the law through legislative change will provide certainty to the Bergin casino inquiry and its witnesses, and will avoid the time and expense of further court actions.

One of the main reasons the amendments in this bill are still required is that the Court of Appeal decision did not address all of the Royal Commissions Act provisions that section 143A of the Casino Control Act tries to pick up. Melco's court action was a narrow challenge that focused on the powers and authorities of the commissioner under section 17 (1) of the Royal Commissions Act to require the disclosure of privileged or secret information. However, section 143A of the Casino Control Act also picks up sections 17 (1A), (2) and (3) of the Royal Commissions Act. These are vitally important provisions which ensure that the power to compel privileged or secret information prevails over any inconsistent provisions of any other legislation, and renders evidence collected by an inquiry inadmissible in civil or criminal proceedings, subject to exceptions outlined in section 17 (3).

Importantly, these provisions do not relate to powers or responsibilities of the commissioner, unlike the power to abrogate privilege, but are principles of statutory interpretation and immunities granted to witnesses compelled to answer questions or produce documents that include privileged or secret information. Given the Melco decision considered only section 17 (1) of the Royal Commissions Act, it is an open question whether the

Court of Appeal decision applies to the other provisions that relate to statutory interpretation and immunities granted to witnesses. People and entities who produce privileged or secret information to inquiries rely on the protections and immunities granted by legislation to ensure that their privileged or secret information is not used in court proceedings where it would not normally be admissible.

As with all inquiries, the Bergin inquiry has summoned many individuals and entities to produce documents or answer questions. Much of the information that is required to be produced is privileged or secret. Therefore, given the Court of Appeal's narrow decision, there remains a prospect that individuals and entities will challenge where the Royal Commissions Act is effectively picked up by the Casino Control Act. The risk of further court action is concerning to anyone who wants the most effective regulation of casinos possible. Fresh court actions would further delay the Bergin inquiry, which has already been substantially delayed due to both the Melco court action and the COVID-19 shutdown. That means that any necessary reforms arising from the Bergin inquiry recommendations are also delayed. With the commencement of operations at Crown Sydney drawing closer, it is vitally important that the Bergin inquiry can proceed with its work without further delays.

Finally, it is also important to clarify the provisions now, given that they relate directly to the admissibility of evidence in civil or criminal proceedings. The Government does not want to be in a position in the future where civil or criminal proceedings could be delayed or abandoned because the relevant provisions of the Royal Commissions Act were not effectively picked up by the Casino Control Act. It is the Government's view that it was always intended that inquiries conducted under the Casino Control Act 1992 would have some of the same powers and protections as royal commissions, specifically the power to compel the disclosure of privileged information along with the complementary protections in civil and criminal proceedings for those forced to disclose privileged information.

It is the Government's view that that was the intention of Parliament when section 143A was inserted into the Casino Control Act in 2001. It is vital that any inquiry into the casino industry has the power to compel the disclosure of privileged information. The casino industry is both highly regulated and vulnerable to unique operational risks. As a result, casino operators are often heavily reliant on legal advice. It is also the case that persons seeking to become close associates of a casino licensee will require searching probity assessment, yet may have no connection to the jurisdiction other than through their legal representatives. An inquiry into casino operations that cannot examine privileged information will never have a full picture of either a casino's operations or the casino industry as a whole. The amendments are, therefore, crucial to ensuring that the primary objects of the Casino Control Act 1992 are upheld, including the requirement to ensure that the management and operation of casinos in New South Wales remain free from criminal influence or exploitation.

For that reason, the Government wants to make it abundantly clear that Parliament intends to abrogate the rights of witnesses before inquiries conducted under the Casino Control Act 1992 where that inquiry is presided over by a Supreme Court judge or a lawyer of seven years' experience and that the relevant protections in the Royal Commissions Act are also extended to witnesses who provide privileged or secret material to an inquiry. To do that, the bill inserts a new subsection 1A to section 143A of the Casino Control Act 1992, which explicitly states that section 17 (1) to section 17 (3) of the Royal Commissions Act 1923 apply to inquiries under the Casino Control Act 1992 conducted by a judge of the Supreme Court or a lawyer of seven years' experience.

Specifically, the provisions of the Royal Commissions Act 1923 that are captured by the new provision do the following: require witnesses to answer questions or produce documents even if they may be subject to claims of privilege, including privilege against self-incrimination and legal professional privilege, or on the ground of a duty of secrecy or other restriction on disclosure; prohibit the use of privileged information produced to an inquiry in civil or criminal proceedings; and clarify the application of the provision to the admissibility of evidence in civil or criminal proceedings. The bill also makes minor drafting changes to section 143A (2) to give effect to the changes.

Finally, a new section 143A (3) is inserted, which explicitly states that the amendments apply to inquiries under the Casino Control Act 1992 that had begun but had not been completed at the date of commencement. That ensures that the sections will apply to the Bergin casino inquiry. Inquiries conducted under the Casino Control Act 1992 are crucial to ensure not only that casinos are meeting our strict probity and compliance requirements but also that our policy framework is evidence based and appropriately tailored to the fast-moving casino industry. The amendments ensure that the important work undertaken by those inquiries, including the Bergin casino inquiry, can continue their work effectively and comprehensively. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

*Public Interest Debate***RURAL AND REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES**

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (16:55:58): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the average life expectancy of a person living in rural and regional New South Wales is less than that of someone living in Sydney.
- (2) Notes that the rate of suicide in rural and regional New South Wales is higher than in Sydney.
- (3) Notes this Government is overly biased toward metropolitan projects at the expense of the bush.
- (4) Calls on the Government to ensure an equal distribution of essential services for regional New South Wales.

Little did the early explorers know that when they discovered and named the geological feature that separates our temperate and now populated coastal hinterlands and big cities from the vast west that we call rural and regional New South Wales, the rock curtain would end up being more than a physical divide. Of course, I refer to the Great Dividing Range, which was prophetically named. I stand here to talk about the great economic and social divide that that feature now delineates in financial distribution; the sides of it dictate the scales of prosperity that are determined when funds are inequitably meted out on either side by the Government. The divide, in essence, is what divides the big cities from the bush and serves as an invisible blockade to the Government in the flow of equitable funding for services out in the bush.

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted the Government to respond to the economic impact swiftly, placing the importance of recovery on job creation and infrastructure projects. It is a pity that the economic impact of the pandemic that affected metropolitan Sydney has caused the Government to respond, but the very same Government failed to address for the most part successive years of financially crippling drought in rural and regional New South Wales. In fact, rural and regional New South Wales were already in a drought-induced recession well before COVID-19 existed. In spite of the bush recession, the Government has not even met its legislated obligation to deliver a minimum of 30 per cent of all Restart NSW funding for regional infrastructure projects, which is more proof of its dismissiveness of the good people who live in country New South Wales.

In my electorate there has been a notable decline in some essential services. Last year's closure of maternity services at the Lachlan Health Service is a good example of the issue I am raising today. Parkes and the areas that the hospital services continue to grow. However, the decision to degrade and cease maternity services there is to a large extent the result of inadequate funding, with the health district being asked to do more with less. More and more babies are being delivered roadside as parents race off to Orange or Dubbo hospitals. Health and education are areas where budgets and bottom lines are inappropriately applied to the detriment of all elements of society. But out in country New South Wales they fail to take into consideration the challenges faced by those who live there, such as distances required to be travelled, unreliable communication and lack of access to services and opportunities.

Centralisation of services such as health is brought about to do one thing: save the Government money so that it can keep it for its big city projects such as the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum. The people of the bush are fair minded and reasonable, but they would tell you that that project is lunacy and a complete waste of taxpayers' money. Centralisation has created cost shifting, which is worsening an already inequitable situation. Where services are centralised in the country, the cost is borne by the poor people who have to pay for transport to access those services. In many cases, those living in remote areas also have to pay for accommodation and meet other travel-related costs.

The failure by this and other governments to appropriately fund vital services in the bush is most notably demonstrated through the difference in life expectancy of those who live in the country as opposed to those who live in the city. My colleague the member for Murray has pointed out that there are no longer any orthopaedic services in any hospital in her electorate, an area of 107,000 square kilometres. People have to travel two to four hours to have fractures repaired. In the 1980s Griffith hospital had those services. There is no mental health unit in any hospital in the Murray electorate. Deniliquin Hospital is no longer able to treat children, meaning that kids in need of medical care have to be driven several hours to Wagga for treatment.

Recently Griffith's only two high schools were merged to save the cost of a principal's salary. A chronic teacher shortage plagues the schools, with students missing more than 1,000 classes. Yanco Agricultural High School's female students have been waiting 27 years for the Government to provide them with proper dormitory accommodation. Twenty-two years ago regional New South Wales residents lived longer than Sydney residents. According to NSW Health data, on average now rural people die five years earlier. Even in Africa life expectancy is going up but it is going down in parts of the Barwon electorate. In 1996 in the Far West Local Health District of New South Wales, which includes Broken Hill and surrounds, people lived to 80 on average. That was two

years longer than the life expectancy in Sydney. By 2016 the average life expectancy in the Far West Local Health District had dropped to the age of 79, while life expectancy in Sydney rose to 85 years. For the first time in human history life expectancy is actually going backwards.

Suicide is an undeniable reflection of poor mental health. Statistics reveal that the rate of suicide in Sydney is 7.8 per 100,000. At 15.5 per 100,000, the rate of suicide for rural and regional NSW is double that. Of all our State's local health districts, Murrumbidgee LHD leads the way with the highest reported deaths by suicide. The latest statistics are 21.5 per 100,000. Sadly, that comes as no surprise because a plain and simple correlation exists between the lack of services and funding for services in the bush. In the Barwon electorate my colleague is witnessing much the same. The health system there is broken. There is no blood storage in Barwon. In the past year at least one patient at Cobar came close to bleeding out. There are no maternity services in any Barwon hospitals. Expectant mums have a three-hour minimum drive for hospital deliveries. Due to the distance, babies sometimes require emergency assistance when delivered on the roadside.

The Government has failed to consider the cultural implications of Aboriginal women being forced to give birth off country. Community transport has vanished and elderly patients have no way of getting to specialist appointments in Bourke and Dubbo. The town of Lake Cargelligo, highly populated by aged residents, needs aged care beds and dementia services. I do not have sufficient time to mention all the medical issues in the regions. Education is underfunded also. Education outcomes are poor for rural towns. Many families have no bus pick-up services because the cost is too high for the education department. Families are forced to drive hundreds of kilometres to drop off and pick up their school children.

TAFE has experienced cut-backs also. Hands-on courses like mechanical or carpentry courses are not offered in Barwon, yet the Government wants people in jobs and trades. Students have to travel away from home to complete apprenticeship courses, which is beyond the financial ability of many. In 2019 a cut of \$10 million to legal aid funding impacted on community legal centres, including Western NSW Community Legal Centre. Western Women's Legal Support had its funding reduced also. The list goes on. It amounts to a bias against the bush. I look forward to listening to the Government's explanation for its neglect of the bush. Regional areas produce the food on our dinner plates but the Government takes them for granted. I commend this public interest debate to the House.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:03:10): I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this public interest debate. When I first saw the topic of this debate—bias against the bush—my mind automatically turned to the classic scene in *Monty Python's Life of Brian*: What have they ever given us in return? I grant you that the aqueduct and the sanitation are the two things that the Romans have done, and the roads. The roads go without saying, don't they? Apart from the sanitation, the aqueduct and the roads—alright, fresh water and public health—what have the Romans ever done for us? I could close my eyes and picture the member for Orange as one of those commandos, hiding behind the wooden spoon as they went looking for him. However, I appreciate the opportunity this public interest debate provides to raise greater awareness and encourage more joint action by all of us to confront the meaning and the pain of the loss caused by suicide in our nation, particularly suicide in our regional areas.

I begin by extending my sympathies to all families, individuals and workplaces that have been affected by suicide. Each suicide is a person and a loved one. To Australians, suicide cannot be reduced to an us-versus-them framework. It is complex and its reach runs deeper than money, budgets, buildings and roads. I commend to the House a position paper from the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health. The member for Orange will know the paper well because the centre is based in Orange and is a major rural initiative of the University of Newcastle and NSW Health. In every State and Territory across the nation suicide is greater in regional areas than in capital cities. The centre's paper states:

The prevention of rural suicide is not the sole responsibility of health services or of mental health services. There are important roles for governments, private sector, health and welfare institutions, rural and remote communities, and individuals.

Not "us", not "them". Everyone can play a valuable role. The paper touches on facts and data but my eye was drawn to this summary of the Rural Suicide Prevention Forum's key messages. The first is: Create hope and focus on wellness. The paper states:

- Use language that welcomes people, not alienates. Messaging should be about wellbeing, rather than always using 'mental' and 'suicide'.
- We have the assets, we have the resources, we have the goodwill—getting all of these on the same page with a common agenda will deliver better quality, more focused and better resourced solutions.
- The 'ripple effect' in rural communities may deepen the impact of suicide, but can be used also to strengthen prevention.
- Go upstream—build strength, resilience and hope in communities.

The second key message is: Develop community capacity and capability. The paper states:

- Establish a mentoring program to develop community leaders for rural suicide prevention
- Build on and use the strength and knowledge in the local community ...
- Invest in training ...

The centre's third message is to educate our next generation. The fourth is to recognise the diversity of rural communities. That includes going the extra mile with communities experiencing intergenerational trauma. The foreword by the former Governor of New South Wales, General the Hon. David Hurley, states:

I encourage you to ... work collaboratively to make a difference in rural communities. In previous generations, deaths by suicide were often hidden due to stigma and shame. ... there has been some improvement.

He commends the document. It is not only about government in that sense. It is something that touches the entire nation. On Sunday night the Winter Solstice will be held in Albury. That is why I welcome the opportunity to contribute to today's public interest debate. Started in 2013 by the founders of Survivors of Suicide and Friends, particularly Annette and Stuart Baker who lost their daughter to suicide, they say, "Help us shine a light on the darkest night. Gather in the warm embrace of community for one night to support those affected by suicide. Be inspired and uplifted by the stories and styles of guest speakers and performers." I am happy to share the details of that with the members of the House. As I said, it is not a single person's responsibility. Not us, not them; everyone plays a valuable role.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:08:30): I make a contribution to the public interest debate. I thank the member for Orange for raising this issue. I start with a story of one of my constituents, who wrote to me about her experiences at Tumut Hospital last year. She arrived at the hospital after six o'clock in the evening with severe pain. The patient said, "I was told that I would be transferred to Wagga Base Hospital," which is about 1.5 hours away, "as there were no doctors available. I was one of four people to be transferred at that time. I said I was happy to share an ambulance with someone else to save resources." She was prepared to share the ambulance. There is nothing like rural people, is there? They are always looking out for others and putting up with reduced resources.

The patient went on to say, "I was told that I had to lay down and I would have to be in my own ambulance. The Tumut ambulances had already done two trips to Wagga. One from Wagga was called to attend Tumut and I was taken to Wagga in an ambulance from Gundagai. On arriving at Wagga there were other ambulances from Leeton and Young." There were ambulances coming and going from everywhere. It was an Uber approach to health. The patient remained on a chair in the emergency department for nearly 16 hours before finally being admitted to a bed. In fact, she knew she had to lie down—remember, that is the reason she had to get the ambulance—so she lay down across three seats in the emergency department for much of that time. She told me that next time she will lie on the floor.

Of course the Wagga Wagga hospital was busy. It often is, and staff work hard. I am not criticising the care there. But it is worse, and the workload is worse, because patients come from outlying regions where there are hospitals that do not have doctors. One of my constituents has referred to the "taxi service" of ambulances from Tumut to Wagga Wagga. I am pleased to say that this constituent has recovered after a long battle with illness made all the more difficult because of where they live and the remoteness of their location. I tell this story because it illustrates what so many in our rural communities must face to get urgent health care. It simply would not be accepted by those living in our cities. I am not critical of health care workers, doctors, nurses, allied health, and our managers who work in difficult circumstances and who have to make their funds go further in rural locations; I am critical of the bias and the attitude that this system reveals.

I am critical of the attitude that accepts that in rural and regional areas the solution to getting health care is to leave your community and go to the city, or to have health care beamed in—so-called "call centre health". There is a place for technology, but it should not replace high quality with a lower quality. It should not be a stopgap. I am critical of the attitude that says that to take part in a clinical trial for cancer one has to go to the city and does not get supported for that. I am critical of the attitude that says that rural and regional services can be provided, but without the same level of educational and research resources as there are in the city. Hospitals get enough budget for clinical services; they do not often get budgets for education and research. I am critical of the attitude that says you have to train in the city to be a topnotch professional. I am critical of the attitude that says that services are better run from the city. I am critical of the attitude that says that clinical governance in rural areas can be run the same as clinical governance in the city. I am critical of the attitude that says when a child takes their life, it is acceptable for the body to be taken away to the city for autopsy.

We must recognise these attitudes for what they are. They are biases that are a blight on our health system and on our society. The situation has improved in Tumut. There is a doctor available for emergency and urgent

cases and in other situations the nursing staff have access to a doctor by video, for advice and to manage treatment. I have been told this is an improvement, and I acknowledge the efforts of the health service and the Government. I acknowledge the efforts that the Government has made to address issues with hospital infrastructure in this State and congratulate it on the work at the Tumut hospital. At the same time I remind the Government of the work to be done on the Tumut ambulance station.

I thank the health Minister for his work to tackle issues with rural and regional health, in particular the convening of the first bilateral health roundtable in Wagga Wagga at the end of last year, which involved Federal and New South Wales State Ministers and senior officials. This is the right attitude. As a result we have seen some movement on the program to train doctors and to recruit doctors, but there is much more to be done. I praise the health Minister because his attitude is the right attitude that we need to beat this bias in our health system.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:13:32): I argue that the Government does indeed have a bias when it comes to regional New South Wales. It has a blatant bias in favour of regional jobs, regional infrastructure and regional investment. That is not to say that the people of regional and rural New South Wales have not done it tough in recent years, whether because of the drought, bushfires, floods or most recently the economic fallout from COVID-19. But the Government can proudly say that it does put the needs of the people of rural and regional New South Wales front and centre.

I will speak about the rate of suicide in rural and regional New South Wales. It is an important issue that we need to talk about and continue to talk about. The member for Orange is right: Sadly we know that people in regional and remote areas are at a higher risk of suicide, and that the suicide rate is higher in those areas when compared with Greater Sydney. Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy and every one is one too many. I was pleased that in the township of Cootamundra we held one of the forums that contributed to the development of the suicide prevention framework for New South Wales. That framework is now investing \$87 million over the next three years to help deliver against the Premier's priority to reduce suicide by 20 per cent by 2023. We know all too well the impact that a life lost to suicide has in the bush and on our small communities in particular.

But the Government continues to deliver infrastructure and services right across the board. No-one has been left behind under the Regional Growth Fund, for example—\$1.7 billion for 2,100 projects and counting. The Government funded the Orange Health and Innovation Precinct with \$950,000 under the Drought Stimulus Package. It funded the Orange airport, where I joined the member for Orange to announce \$1.5 million to secure upgrades for resources and programs. There is the \$4.2 billion Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund, which is an incredible and transformative investment in rural and regional New South Wales. The number of projects under that fund is absolutely extraordinary. For example, the Government is investing \$650 million to raise the wall at Wyangala, which is an extraordinary project in the north of my electorate that I follow very closely and am very passionate about.

The question for the people of rural and regional New South Wales is this: Who do they trust to deliver for them in the areas that will improve their lives and livelihoods? I believe the choice is stark. There is a Liberal-Nationals Coalition with a proven track record of delivery for the bush—I have outlined just a few of them today—or we have a Shooters, Fishers and Farmers, The Greens and Labor alliance. The people of the bush know that the Labor Party has long abandoned the bush. In 1995 there was not a bias against the bush; there was a wholesale abandonment. The bush had 16 years of nothing except projects being cancelled, schools being closed, services being cut and opportunities gone. Now we have the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, which also has turned its back on the people of the bush. Last week in this place it led a bill regarding coal seam gas. It was a bill designed solely to tank the Narrabri Gas Project—

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Philip Donato: My point of order relates to relevance. This has nothing to do with the motion that is before the House.

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

Mr Philip Donato: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129 or Standing Order 73. Talking about what happened last week has nothing to do with relevance to the motion that is before the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Cootamundra is being relevant. She is talking broadly about regional and rural New South Wales. It is about the bush. The member for Orange will resume his seat. The member for Cootamundra will be heard in silence.

Ms STEPH COOKE: The project, if approved, will bring 1,300 jobs during construction, 200 ongoing jobs and \$120 million to the community of Narrabri over the duration of its lifetime. Members of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party voted against it. They led that bill and they should be ashamed.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (17:19:15): I acknowledge the fantastic public interest debate raised by the member for Orange. I will explain its importance in a moment. I know that the member for Wallsend—someone who has worked in rural and regional New South Wales—will also contribute to this debate. On 10 September 2019 I wrote to the health Minister, Brad Hazzard, calling for a full independent inquiry, at arm's length from Government, into rural and regional hospitals. It came on the back of the horrific scenes we all watched coming out of the *Four Corners* program outlining the crisis that exists in accessing quality health services outside our major metropolitan centres. I requested it be done in a spirit of bipartisanship a long way out from the next election to give us an opportunity to find out what is really happening on the ground in rural and regional hospitals. The *Four Corners* program outlined the horrendous, awful and tragic case of Alex Braes, a young man who died because he lived in remote western New South Wales and did not get the care and treatment he deserved. Had Alex Braes lived in one of our large regional centres, he likely would have lived and be with us here today.

In addition, there have been issues at Tumut hospital, Bega hospital and other parts of rural and regional New South Wales. In my correspondence with the Minister I put forward three specific terms of reference for this inquiry: firstly, funding gaps within the provision of health care and within rural and regional hospitals across New South Wales. People like the member for Murray, the member for Orange and others know better than I do about the challenges in these hospitals. The second term of reference was around staffing and recruitment challenges across rural and regional New South Wales, particularly around specialist clinicians. The member for Wagga Wagga has raised that in the past. Finally, the third term of reference was the performance culture in hospitals across rural and regional New South Wales, which seems to discourage health professionals from speaking up to management about areas requiring improvement and attention.

Commissioner Peter Garling, SC, led a high-profile Special Commission of Inquiry into Acute Care Services in NSW Public Hospitals. In 2005 an Australian teenager named Vanessa Anderson died at the Royal North Shore Hospital following a golfing accident. The coroner determined that Vanessa died from respiratory arrest due to the depressant effect of opiate medication. She was treated inappropriately for a fractured skull and two days later suffered a seizure and died. That report resulted in changes to the public health system in New South Wales. It is now imperative and I will support any member in this place—Government, crossbench, Labor—who advocates for a full and independent inquiry and examination of rural and regional hospitals. Three years out from the next election and long before the argy-bargy of political campaigns, it is time for rural and regional New South Wales and its residents to get the attention they deserve.

If that were happening in large metropolitan cities there would be a special commission of inquiry. If that were happening even in cities like mine—Wollongong, Newcastle or Sydney—there would be action. The reality is that people in rural and regional New South Wales are disadvantaged when it comes to accessing health care. We have an opportunity to shine a light on this disadvantage. We have an opportunity to put down our political weapons and allow a full independent examination of what is happening so that we can provide the resources and infrastructure, improve the practices and management of those hospitals and ensure that health care is delivered in the best possible way for rural and regional communities. The men and women in these communities deserve that. I thank the member for Orange for raising this important issue. I know the member for Murray is also passionate about this issue, as are many other people in this place. It is critical we use this opportunity to shine a light on rural and regional health care and, more importantly, to look at ways to deliver improvements.

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (17:24:20): I thank the member for Orange for raising this public interest debate. I requested the opportunity to speak in this debate because of my experiences in the bush in my young and formative years. I was thinking about the conversations we have had today, particularly about suicide. Those who have never lived in a town like Walgett will never understand a lot of things. As a young person in my early 20s I did not understand the problem of isolation, how far you are from everything else. It was all right for me, aged 20, to live in Walgett, get in a car and drive home to West Wallsend. It took me 7½ hours with my dog in the back. I could do that. I would hate the thought of being my age now and having to live that life. When I needed to go to the dentist, the closest dentist was in Moree along a black soil road. It was nothing to spend two hours driving across to Moree just to go to the dentist. There was no doctor at the hospital for some time, so if you got sick you had to drive down to Dubbo. That was the sort of thing that happened.

As a schoolteacher from a pretty poor working class family, I was astounded at the poverty of the Gingie Mission and the Namoi Reserve and the fact that there was one little supermarket, called Peerless. My friend Loretta Boney, who grew up on Gingie Mission, told me that last year the one and only supermarket burnt down. The member for Dubbo would know all about it. So my friend, who lives in Newcastle, arranged to have food, nappies, water, all of the essential services, taken up to Walgett because the only place people could buy food in

Walgett last year was at the petrol station. We talk about good health and preventing disease. We talk about the people who are unhealthy and isolated and do not have a job. What the member for Orange said about centralisation is so true. There are no jobs. There is no national bank in Walgett, like there was in the 1980s when I taught at the school there. There are no services for people in Walgett. Then I moved to Kempsey, and it is not much better now.

I understand from living in those towns for so long that when you are isolated and so far from everywhere else and you get sick, you are not healthy enough to drive seven hours to access services. The TAFE facilities have closed down, which means that TAFE facilities are too far away for our young people who live in Walgett and want training. There was a saying in Walgett, and it is still the same: The kids who have ambition and want to get ahead in life have to go to Sydney. But it never worked, or mostly never worked, because they would fret for their families and family units they knew and understood, and they would fret for Walgett where they knew everyone and had friends. They came to Sydney and knew nobody and were isolated in that way.

I agree with and relate to this issue because I understand how it feels not to have a doctor nearby. I understand what it is like to have to go to a dentist two hours away on a terrible road. I understand what it is like for people who have lived on isolated farms in Walgett. Combine that with drought and then floods—and I certainly saw flooding when I was in Walgett—the desperation of not having any work and being isolated. We know what happens to those people who are isolated because they do not have the hope that the member for Albury talked about. They are poor, they cannot grow their crops, they cannot feed their animals and they are by themselves, living a long distance from anyone else. I challenge anybody who grew up in the city and still lives near the city to be able to understand what it feels like to live in that type of isolation and to travel so many miles to access any kind of services. Our governments have failed in terms of decentralisation. They should look carefully at how they can create work in the bush.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (17:29:29): In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Albury, Wagga Wagga, Cootamundra, Keira and Wallsend for their contributions to the debate. I will touch on some of the issues that were raised, noting the short time available. The member for Albury raised some very good points. Of course it is a holistic approach—mentoring programs, providing education and training, working collaboratively, and talking about and addressing suicide. But it has to be led by government and ultimately government must play that role. The member for Wagga Wagga, himself a general practitioner, knows better than anyone in this Chamber the impacts on our health services, especially in the Wagga Wagga area, and he raised an important issue. I know the member for Cootamundra is aware of it also. It is a sad reality that for autopsies to be conducted often the bodies must be transported from Orange to Newcastle. There are often delays of several weeks before the family can hold a funeral and get some closure.

If the member for Cootamundra believes levels of service are satisfactory for her community then her services are clearly distant from and different to mine and those of most other reasonable people. It is just one example of where services in the bush are lacking. The member for Wallsend and the member for Keira also touched on their experiences. The member for Cootamundra said that she believed the Government has a blatant bias for regional New South Wales, and posed the question "Who do they trust?" It is a proven track record. In relation to Restart NSW, an independent auditor confirmed that the Government is short-changing regional New South Wales. Thirty per cent of the Restart NSW fund is supposed to go to regional New South Wales. But I think the average is about 18.5 per cent since 2011—which is nowhere near 30 per cent.

I am not talking about a few token million dollars. I am talking about billions of dollars that should have gone to regional New South Wales for infrastructure projects that has gone to the city. I like and respect the member for Cootamundra but if she believes is fair and reasonable for the people of regional New South Wales, she is wrong. It demonstrates the city-centric attitude of this Government. Constituents of the member for Cootamundra probably send their children to Yanco college, which has been waiting for a female dormitory for 27 years. That is also not acceptable. I commend the motion to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes40
 Noes44
 Majority.....4

AYES

Aitchison, J
 Barr, C
 Chanthivong, A

Atalla, E
 Butler, R
 Cotsis, S

Bali, S
 Catley, Y
 Crakanthorp, T

AYES

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

NOES

Anderson, K	Ayres, S	Barilaro, J
Bromhead, S	Clancy, J	Conolly, K
Constance, A	Cooke, S (teller)	Coure, M
Crouch, A (teller)	Davies, T	Dominello, V
Elliott, D	Evans, L	Gibbons, M
Griffin, J	Gulaptis, C	Hancock, S
Henskens, A	Johnsen, M	Kean, M
Lee, G	Lindsay, W	Marshall, A
O'Dea, J	Pavey, M	Perrottet, D
Petinos, E	Preston, R	Provest, G
Roberts, A	Saunders, D	Sidgreaves, P
Sidoti, J	Singh, G	Smith, N
Speakman, M	Stokes, R	Taylor, M
Toole, P	Tuckerman, W	Upton, G
Ward, G	Wilson, F	

PAIRS

Car, P	Berejiklian, G
Lalich, N	Williams, R
Saffin, J	Hazzard, B

Motion negatived.

Private Members' Statements

MARINE RESCUE NSW HUNGRY POINT TRAINING ACADEMY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (17:43:59): At the far southern tip of the South Cronulla peninsula lies the idyllic spot of Hungry Point. For thousands of years Hungry Point was home to the Gweagal people of the Dharawal Nation, and then had a distinguished history as a scientific research centre, a defence establishment and a migrant hostel. In many ways it represents a microcosm of Australian history. I am delighted that the Hungry Point Reserve Land Manager has accepted an expression of interest from Marine Rescue NSW in relation to the establishment of Australia's first dedicated marine rescue training centre as part of a \$12 million investment by the New South Wales Government in marine safety training.

I thank chairman John Rayner and all the members of the Hungry Point Reserve Land Manager for their voluntary work and the hundreds of thousands of hours they put in processing expressions of interest, which began last year. I also thank the manager's members for their active interest in opening up the northern part of the reserve to the community last year, which now gives local residents and visitors a marvellous path with extraordinary water views. That public access will be enhanced with an investment by the New South Wales Government into the scenic clifftop walk around Hungry Point Reserve, which will connect green space between Salmon Haul Reserve and Darook Park via the cliffs at Hungry Point, Cronulla. That means one will be able to walk from Kurnell through Kamay Botany Bay National Park, through Boat Harbour, along the Cronulla beaches, along the Esplanade, down to Salmon Hall Reserve, around the point, back up to Darook Park and, when it is not high tide, back to Cronulla station. It is a magnificent walk.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services recently made that announcement. He was joined by the Chair of Marine Rescue NSW, James Glissan, QC; Commissioner Stacey Tannos; members of the Hungry Point Reserve Land Manager; and me. Since 2013 the Marine Rescue NSW State headquarters and the Marine Rescue Botany Port Hacking unit have been major tenants at Hungry Point Reserve, occupying a number of the existing buildings. The training academy will be developed as an integrated extension of the Marine Rescue's existing operations and will be established within the reserve's existing built footprint. In 2014 the Government gave a commitment that the green space at Hungry Point Reserve would be opened to the community and any future tenants would reflect the site's former use with a maritime-related function.

I am delighted that Marine Rescue will be there. It is a leading non-government organisation, which relies heavily on selfless volunteers, and is compatible with the maritime and marine history of the site. Each year Marine Rescue NSW launches around 3,000 rescue missions, including more than 700 responses to life-threatening emergencies. The state-of-the-art facility will provide professional training to over 3,000 marine rescue volunteers in New South Wales. Volunteers are required to undertake a combination of theoretical classroom learning, e-learning and practical training to obtain the competencies required to allow them to respond to emergency situations. The facility will be a one-stop shop for the volunteers to get those relevant qualifications. It is contemplated that the training facility will include a large lecture room or meeting room, smaller classrooms equipped with marine simulators and other technological learning tools, practical outdoor training areas and pool, accommodation and meal facilities.

It will be a great use of the heritage pool. Up to 100 trainees a week will be able to attend. The academy will also be available to other emergency services whose personnel use vessels as part of their emergency response operations, including the NSW Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service and Surf Life Saving NSW. It will be the first training centre for Marine Rescue volunteers anywhere in Australia and Marine Rescue will share its expertise and facilities with interstate colleagues for the benefit of their agencies. The Government is a proud supporter of Marine Rescue volunteers. In addition to the training academy, the Government is investing \$37.6 million for new vehicles, improved operating facilities and enhancements to the marine radio network for Marine Rescue NSW. I am delighted at the confluence of history, heritage and volunteer safety in the future.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:49:12): I congratulate the member for Cronulla on bringing this all together. The member has been passionate about this site for a long time. I know he would be pleased to see it being used for the community's benefit. Not only is it important that the community will have some ownership over the site but also that people across Australia will benefit, and particularly people in New South Wales. Some of our marine rescue units are located in isolated parts of the State. It is important to have a residential training academy where participants can get the greatest benefit altogether. Not long ago Stacey Tannos came to me with the idea. I was excited to hear about it then. Last weekend the member for Cronulla and I were present at the emergency service Minister's announcement. It was nice to see the project come to fruition for all of us to enjoy. It will be compatible with the important history of the site.

WALLSEND ELECTORATE FLOOD WORKS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (17:50:19): It has been a difficult 12 months. Drought has sapped regional and rural economies across the State. Catastrophic bushfires caused billions of dollars in damage. Recently low consumer spending has been made worse by COVID-19 lockdowns. Capping all this off, the State is in recession for the first time in nearly 30 years. History shows that recessions only get worse in the absence of significant government intervention. When people lose work they have less money to spend and businesses fail. When businesses fail more people lose work and the cycle repeats and worsens.

Stimulus packages put the brakes on that cycle. That is why the Reserve Bank of Australia said that governments must invest in infrastructure projects to stimulate local economies. Infrastructure projects in Sydney have been fast-tracked in the past month. I want to ensure that the Hunter gets its fair share. The Hunter is the economic engine room in New South Wales, generating 28 per cent of the State's regional economic output. An additional \$3 billion in infrastructure funding to stimulate regional economies has been announced. Now is the perfect time to invest in local projects and address inadequate infrastructure in the Wallsend electorate. I will not present a wish list now. I have a lot of those wishes on the record and I would be happy to chat with Ministers at any time about them. Instead, I will make the case for one very important piece of work that the Government has delayed for far too long, and that is the subject of the motion of which I gave notice this morning.

When I was first elected 13 years ago in 2007, a storm inundated Wallsend. In the years since, particularly in 2015, floods have threatened damage on a similar scale. We finally have a chance now to complete much-needed flood mitigation works in Wallsend. The City of Newcastle finished replacing the Tyrell Street Bridge earlier this year. Now we need the Hunter Water Corporation to hold up its end of the bargain and finally widen Ironbark Creek, which will provide a welcome boost to the Wallsend electorate's economy and will drive

jobs, providing the economic stimulus to support recovery from COVID-19 and cushion the impact of the recession on local workers, jobs and businesses.

It would also reassure residents and business owners in the Wallsend area that their investment in the local area will not be threatened by the next time an east coast low causes large-scale damage. It will happen again in Wallsend because we are built on wetlands. I note the Hunter Water Corporation's justification for refusing Wallsend flood works in a loaded survey of its customer base. I would be interested to know what other proposed infrastructure was put to a popular vote, or was it only Wallsend? Will the Minister step in and direct Hunter Water Corporation to deliver the important infrastructure upgrade for the Wallsend electorate? Will the Minister answer my argument maintained by Hunter Water Corporation that it cannot afford the project? We will see. Last year the Government required Hunter Water Corporation to pay a \$100 million dividend, funded by Treasury Corporation bonds. Now that interest rates are at a record low and spending is needed more than ever, the Minister should direct Hunter Water Corporation to spend the money, widen the canals, ensure the safety of Wallsend residents and businesses, and stimulate the Wallsend economy. It is an obvious remedy for some of the many problems currently facing the Wallsend electorate.

TWEED ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:55:24): It is with a great deal of pride and pleasure that I start my private member's statement with two important announcements about the Tweed electorate. As members know, I am 100 per cent committed to the Tweed. The first announcement is that the upgrades of Tweed and Kingscliff public schools are set to begin. The Tweed community is one step closer to upgrades commencing at four schools, with Evolve Constructions being awarded the early works construction contract. The \$120 million of upgrades represents a significant milestone that will deliver permanent classrooms and refurbishments to facilities at each of the four schools. Those upgrades will be completed by the end of 2021. They will include 32 new permanent classrooms at Kingscliff Public School, as well as a library, play spaces, outdoor amphitheatre, and a new school entry and teacher facilities.

Kingscliff High School students will benefit from visual learning spaces in the library, a visual and performing arts building, a new senior learning environment and refurbishment of hospitality teaching facilities. The upgrades at Tweed Heads South Public School will deliver 11 new permanent classrooms, a new library, a new out-of-school-hours care facility, a new school entrance and improved playground space. Tweed River High School's community will benefit from a new library, a new senior learning environment, three new science labs, two new classrooms and an extension of the technology and applied studies building, as well as a refurbishment of the hospitality teaching area. These are significant upgrades.

I compliment the education Minister, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, who is on record as saying, "These major upgrades at Tweed and Kingscliff demonstrate the New South Wales Government's commitment to regional students and teachers." She said that she "is proud that the major upgrades will benefit the North Coast community for many years to come" and that "these upgrades will showcase to the region our commitment to building educational infrastructure where design, engineering and technology intersect with the delivery of innovative learning outcomes for these communities." The early works will be completed by the end of June.

The second important announcement is that Tweed Valley Hospital has received final planning approval. The \$673.2 million project has been given the green light today by the New South Wales Government, paving the way for the main building works to begin. The hospital will transform our community. Each year over 5,000 people will no longer have to travel outside the Tweed region to receive life-saving treatments. The major construction work can begin on this fantastic new hospital, which will open to patients in 2023. Once completed, the Tweed Valley Hospital will provide significantly improved and expanded services for our local community, including more beds, an expanded emergency department, and enhanced medical, surgical and mental health facilities. It will also have expanded our patients with two more clinics, a new intervention cardiology service and a new radiation service as part of integrated cancer care. I compliment the health Minister, Brad Hazzard, on his ongoing support. The Minister has been legendary in his advice and in pushing for it on many occasions. At times I have felt honoured to stand in his shadow with a shovel.

The new Tweed hospital will provide a significant increase in beds and treatment spaces for the community and will support the broader New South Wales region as a referral hospital for both Byron Bay and Murwillumbah. That is very important. It is fantastic to see progress on the new Tweed Valley Hospital site, with the recent addition of funding announcements of a further \$91.2 million and the acceleration of the planning approval in the main works, which will begin shortly. Recently I had the honour of visiting the site and I saw well over 100 or 200 construction workers, trucks, machinery, boring machines and so on. It was pleasing to note that Lendlease, the head contractor, has managed to secure the services of a large number of local trades. Part of the NSW Health agreement was to have up to 5 per cent Indigenous employees on the site—that has been well and truly exceeded. In conjunction with Kingscliff TAFE, a new training facility is to be built with a dummy ward and a dummy

operating theatre that will allow for training of clinicians and medical staff in future. Once again, I am 100 per cent for the Tweed.

VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE PARKLANDS STATE HERITAGE LISTING

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (18:00:30): The community in my electorate loves its green, open spaces. From Bondi Beach to South Head to our inner city harbour, we are so lucky to have a beautiful and historical natural environment around us. Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park in Darling Point are just two of the spaces that we are so fortunate to have close to the centre of our busy city. They are culturally and historically significant, and loved by residents and visitors alike. They are two harbour parks that continue to be used for both passive and active recreation. We want to—and must—protect these green, open spaces and celebrate their significance.

Both parks were established in 1878 as part of the second wave of Sydney municipal park creation, which was a response to strong community advocacy for public recreational land. The structure and layout of the parks has retained a historic character. Rushcutters Bay Park was designed by engineer Frederick Augustus Franklin, who also designed the National and State heritage-listed Centennial Park. Both parks reflect the influence of James Jones—overseer for The Domain, as he was called—who laid out Victoria Park and Wentworth Park. Both parks are edged by distinctive late nineteenth century sandstone seawalls and decorated with rows of Moreton Bay fig trees.

Both Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park have played central roles in leisure and sport activity over the past 150 years. Since 1945 they have hosted the iconic Sydney to Hobart yacht race, run by the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia [CYCA]. Each year we share the parks with thousands of local and international visitors and sailors who come to see the famous race. The CYCA was established in 1944—just before the race—and is often called upon for other international sailing events. I acknowledge the leadership of the club, including Commodore Paul Billingham, Vice Commodore Noel Cornish, Rear Commodore Janey Treleaven and Dr Sam Haynes, and Treasurer Arthur Lane. On the western side of the stormwater canal in Rushcutters Bay Park is Reg Bartley Oval and its historical grandstand, which together have functioned as an important recreational facility since 1984.

Yarranabbe Park has a strong naval history. It is adjacent to the local heritage-listed Sir David Martin Reserve drill hall, formerly known as HMAS *Rushcutter*. The drill hall holds much history itself and was the original headquarters of the NSW Naval Brigade and Naval Artillery from 1901. In September 2018, as the then New South Wales heritage Minister, I was pleased to award \$100,000 to Woollahra Council for the external restoration and conservation of the drill hall. The grounds are also home to the Royal Australian Navy Sailing Association clubhouse and RANSA itself, a wonderful local sailing organisation that was first established in 1947. In 1966 it launched as RANSA, as it is still known, to encourage sailing within the navy. Although membership was originally for service personnel, it has opened its arms to the general community. Under the leadership of Commodore Dave Giddings it embraces anyone with a passion for sailing.

Over time there have been strong calls to acknowledge and protect the beauty, history and value of Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park. In recognition of this, on 25 January 2019 the Office of Environment and Heritage placed an interim heritage order on both parks so that an assessment could be made as to whether they should be State heritage listed. On 4 December 2019 the Heritage Council of NSW resolved to recommend that both parks be listed on the New South Wales State Heritage Register. I was delighted to announce last week that Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park have been formally approved for listing on the State Heritage Register. I acknowledge the 84 submissions that were made in support of the State heritage listing, including those from the land managers, Woollahra Municipal Council and City of Sydney Council.

Securing the State heritage listing took a strong community effort. I thank and acknowledge the community for its support and tireless advocacy. In particular I thank the Darling Point Society, especially President Charlotte Feldman. Charlotte joined me on site last week to celebrate the good news, along with residents Colleen "Chickey" Bray and John Beville. I also thank the residents of Potts Point, Rushcutters Bay and Kings Cross who lent their support. Every day people of all ages appreciate the serenity, grassland and beautiful water views of Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park. There is no doubt that they are significant places in New South Wales and that is now finally acknowledged by the State heritage listing.

ROSEBERY RESIDENTIAL PRECINCT

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:05:25): On 1 July this year the New South Wales Government's Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code will come into force across three councils in my electorate: the City of Sydney Council, Inner West Council and Bayside Council. It is already in force in Randwick City Council. The code expands the State's exempt and complying development codes to allow for dual occupancies, manor houses and terraces of up to two storeys—the "missing middle"—to be carried out under a fast track complying

development approval scheme. The code is intended to increase both dwelling numbers and dwelling diversity. Instead of the planning status quo of either swathes of freestanding dwellings or intense high rise apartment blocks, more terraces and manor houses will spread the load throughout the suburbs.

I am calling on the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to exempt the Rosebery residential precinct from the existing exempt and complying development codes, as well as the new Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code, which will commence 14 days from now. The Rosebery residential precinct, generally bounded by Botany Road, Gardeners Road, Cressy Street, Dalmeny Avenue and Bannerman Crescent, is covered by covenants on land titles arising from their subdivision by Richard Stanton's Town Planning Company of Australia in 1914. Those covenants largely restrict residential development to a single-storey, double-fronted, brick, California bungalow-style cottage. For over a century residents of Rosebery have maintained—often at great difficulty and expense—that particular style in redeveloping their homes, to remain consistent with those covenants and the unique character that Mr Stanton envisioned when he planned Rosebery as a model garden suburb.

Unfortunately a lack of clarity about the legal effect of those covenants as they apply in regard to code-assessable development means that some residents have redeveloped their homes through the exempt and complying development codes and have built homes that in no way comply with the covenant. In 2018 I received confirmation from the member for Lane Cove, the then Minister for Planning, that because those covenants had been imposed by the original owners of the land they had not been suspended by the exempt and complying development codes and remained enforceable by the courts. It is not profound to observe that litigation is a costly and time-consuming process. Rosebery residents do not have the resources, and the City of Sydney Council cannot have the inclination to mount a legal challenge to each and every development inconsistent with the covenant.

For all intents and purposes the covenants have no legal force upon a developer, so long as they carry out their development by way of either the exempt and complying development codes or the new housing code. The problem is that the new Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code provides more avenues to carry out inconsistent residential redevelopments. In an independent review of the code prepared for the planning Minister, local government and urban planning experts Professor Roberta Ryan and Mr Neil Selmon recommended to the Minister that:

Areas identified as being of Special Local Character can be excluded from the Code.

Further, Professor Ryan and Mr Salmon acknowledged that:

... these recommendations mostly align with the positions of many councils, of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) and Local Government NSW (LGNSW), in that local variation to or exclusion from the Code to achieve local character outcomes should be permitted.

To my knowledge the New South Wales Government accepted the review's recommendations about a deferral of the code to 1 July 2020, but not the recommendation to implement exemptions for the Special Local Character designations. The solution is for the Minister to heed the recommendations, identify the Rosebery residential precinct as an area of special local character, and remove it from the exempt and complying development codes to the extent necessary to prove code-assessable development, which is inconsistent with the covenant. That would be consistent with the intent of the covenant, council's planning controls and the intent of the code itself. I have written to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and his predecessors on a number of occasions making this request, most recently in a letter dated 27 May 2020. It was hoped that the City of Sydney's Local Strategic Planning Statement might have identified this element of Rosebery's heritage, but the council has not done that to this point. If the Minister does not amend the code to exempt Rosebery then I urge the Lord Mayor to consider prohibiting dual occupancies, terraces and manor houses in the local residential precinct.

TRIBUTE TO DARYL PATCH

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (18:10:10): I speak tonight of an individual who has given so much to this country. While we in this House serve our communities, Mr Daryl Patch served his country. Daryl Patch sadly passed away on 22 May 2020. He made an extraordinary contribution to the country and community. Born in 1948, Daryl has been described by those who knew him as firm, friendly and fair. He was a loving husband to the late Maureen—and for those who are watching or read *Hansard*, I have spoken in this House before of Maureen's contribution to our nation. Mr Patch was the caring father of Elizabeth, Mathew and Mathew's wife, Janelle, as well as proud grandfather of William and Alice.

Daryl joined the army in January 1966. After four years he graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon into the Royal Regiment of the Australian Artillery. He served in Vietnam from December 1970 to October 1971. By 1973 Daryl had met and married his wife, Maureen, who had served as a nurse during the war. He retired from the army as a lieutenant colonel in October 1992. After joining the Queanbeyan RSL sub-branch

with Maureen in 1993, Daryl served the Queanbeyan RSL community wholeheartedly. Daryl was an enthusiastic and committed member who embodied what it means to be involved with the RSL. He was appointed the Queanbeyan RSL sub-branch trustee in 2001 and was elected to the position of honorary secretary in 2002. In recognition of Daryl's dedication to the RSL, he was awarded life membership of the RSL of Australia. Daryl was instrumental in establishing the rose garden in Queanbeyan's Moore Park to commemorate those who have served our country, and was appointed patron of the Queanbeyan RSL sub-branch in 2017. There have been many tributes recognising Daryl's commitment and dedication to the RSL as well as the broader community.

For those who did not know Daryl—and I had the privilege and pleasure of knowing him from the moment I was elected in 2011—he was someone who had a passion for Anzac Day. As representatives of the Government, he made sure that we always attended the gunfire breakfasts. Before the Anzac Day march he would stress the importance of getting everything in order in time for the day, but when march was done and we all ended up at Walsh's Pub, Daryl would let his hair down. Daryl did not mind a beer—or two or three—but he would take those opportunities to talk to us about his life experiences. Daryl is one of these guys whom you meet in life and probably will never meet someone like him again—very different, honest and strong, and someone who cared about his community. He gave lots of advice to many of members of Parliament, the local mayor and to our friends. He cared about his community and wanted to remind us of the sacrifice and service of many who have given us the freedoms we enjoy today.

As members of Parliament, we get to celebrate and commemorate Anzac Day, and recognise those who have spilled blood or lost their lives for the country that we know today; for the freedoms and democracy that we may take for granted. In the times of COVID and crises like bushfire and drought, with all that is ahead of and behind us, we know that we are still a lucky country. Daryl would remind us that this is because of those who have given their lives for us. It is very important to remind the next generation about the sacrifice of those before us that enable us to enjoy the country and the nation we have today. One of the hardest things we had to deal with was the cap on the number of people who could attend a funeral because of COVID. It was unfortunately a small funeral, but it was supported by the RSL sub-branch and community members who saw him as a champion who cared for his community. Daryl will be missed and his contribution to our community will be missed. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to and thank Daryl for his service to our community and our country.

GREAT BURRAGORANG VALLEY WALK

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (18:15:19): There are many great walks through the national parks and great landscapes in our State. The iconic coastal walks and walks through our national parks and State recreation areas are part of our great outdoor lifestyle. The popular six-foot track in The Blue Mountains is in regular use even today. I inform the House of a proposal presented to me recently by the Wollondilly Shire Council for the Great Burragorang Valley Walk. This is an unprecedented opportunity to connect three neighbouring councils of Blue Mountains, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee, and their communities, towns and villages. This council collaboration will highlight iconic areas of unique natural beauty including the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage areas, national parks and conservation areas. The potential for the Great Burragorang Valley Walk to become a leading attraction is enormous, enabling both local communities and visitors to enjoy and appreciate this immense natural landscape with its ambience and native Australian flora and fauna.

This proposed walk passes through a range of terrains, landscapes, environments and jurisdictions. It is therefore most important to engage with the local Indigenous community as some of the walk goes through culturally significant lands. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Wollondilly Shire recently met with Gundungurra Elders to discuss this project. There are now ongoing positive discussions regarding the potential of the walk, which will have a total of 316 kilometres of walking tracks linking Katoomba with Mittagong via either Yerranderie to the west or Warragamba to the east. The stages through the wonderful electorate of Wollondilly will go through Silverdale, Werombi, Oakdale, Couridjah, Balmoral, Hill Top and Colo Vale. Some of those towns and villages were severely impacted by the recent bushfires, during which the member for Prospect helped and assisted. This could add an additional dimension to the tourism potential of those areas. I assure members that the countryside only an hour out of Sydney is spectacular and accessible. Walkers accessing the eastern part of the route may even get to hear the "toot toot" of the steam train on the Picton–Mittagong Loop Line.

Through a partnership led by Wollondilly Shire Council, and in conjunction with Blue Mountains City Council and Wingecarribee Shire Council, the Great Burragorang Valley Walk initiative is an opportunity to connect our communities, attract visitors and tourism, and grow the local and regional economy. This will also ensure that our environment and heritage is valued and protected. The walk will offer a setting to attract small group-guided tours and self-guided tours across a series of designated stages to suit individual experience and ability. Walk and nature enthusiasts can choose from a selection of shorter day walks or overnight experiences with a variety of start and finish points in close proximity to Sydney, Wollongong and the Illawarra, the new Western Sydney International Airport and even Canberra. There will be easy access points from major roads

making the area accessible. Visitors can experience the Australian landscape in amazing settings of sandstone cliffs and unspoiled bushland nestled amongst the peace and tranquillity of nature. Investment in infrastructure of this type is a key enabler of economic growth. It supports the long-term sustainability of a region, boosts the health and wellbeing of communities and attracts visitation.

This is a great example of that, with the estimated cost of the project being just under \$4 million. In my electorate of Wollondilly visitors will be able to see the heritage-listed Warragamba Dam, which provides vital water to more than 3.7 million people living in Sydney and the lower Blue Mountains; Lake Burragorang; the Heritage Pump Station, which was once used to reload steam trains on the old Southern Railway after the long haul from Picton; the town of Thirlmere, the home of the NSW Rail Museum, which has Australia's largest collection of rail exhibits; the villages of the Burragorang Valley; and sections of the Nattai National Park. This project will be of considerable benefit to all and one that will stimulate the local and regional economies now and into the future. It will focus on sustainability and could be a model for future ecotourism developments. I commend the project to the House.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:20:21): A couple of weeks ago the Treasurer stood in the Wollongong mall for the first time since he became Treasurer. He had a lonesome press conference, announced nothing and probably would have been happy for his visit to go completely unnoticed. He stopped for an ice cream though. Wollongong's economy needs more stimulus than just buying a gelato. Wollongong needs real plans, real solutions and real support. Yesterday's economic update outlined the situation that New South Wales faces: An unemployment rate of nearly 8 per cent—just under 300,000 people unemployed—the economy will shrink by 10 per cent and revenue has collapsed by around \$20 billion.

Once again, the Treasurer's response is to spin the wage cuts, tax reform and privatisation wheel—those time-worn, conservative, one-size-fits-all policy solutions that are used on every occasion. I look forward to seeing the details, because we need to address the structural budget deficit in New South Wales as our population grows and ages. Right now we need more than tax reform or a GST increase, or asset sales to get Wollongong and New South Wales working again. Abolishing stamp duty, cutting payroll tax or putting a for-sale sign on public assets will not happen overnight and will not create jobs. Now that the rivers of stamp duty and payroll tax have dried up the Treasurer's job is much tougher. I thought I would give the Treasurer five policy areas he should consider. First, we should buy local and support local jobs.

Mr Geoff Provest: That is nice of you.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The member for Tweed should listen; he will benefit from it. New South Wales, in my electorate at Port Kembla, produces high-quality and more sustainable steel than other parts of the world. The New South Wales Government should require its use in its projects and the projects it funds. Its steel is good enough to build navy ships to defend the nation, yet in New South Wales it is not used in wind turbines that generate electricity or in the distribution network that gets electricity to homes and businesses. We also produce high-quality, sustainable timber, manufactured products and services. The Government should be encouraging their use. Services from and products made in New South Wales should be used to help build New South Wales. This Government could also support local economies if it adopted the Work from Wollongong or Work from Ingleburn satellite office idea that the member for Macquarie Fields and I have suggested, keeping workers closer to home, taking pressure off the transport network and reducing escape spending from suburbs and regional centres.

Secondly, we should embrace energy efficiency, which is the poor cousin of carbon reduction projects but it should be front and centre. Around half the buildings that will be here in 2050 have already been built and most of them could be made much more efficient. Industrial processes can be improved. It is estimated that \$1 million spent on energy efficiency generates nearly eight full-time jobs. It helps the environment, reduces carbon emissions and is good for household and business budgets. Thirdly, infrastructure is more than toll roads. Investing in education and training infrastructure helps support jobs now and helps address structural unemployment in the medium term. Investing in health facilities—such as a new hospital in Wollongong's southern suburbs to replace the ailing Port Kembla Hospital or upgrading the "ghost ward" at Wollongong Hospital—creates jobs today and expands capacity and jobs in the medium and long term. Investing in regeneration of bushland and pest eradication creates jobs today and supports ecological resilience. Bringing forward transport access upgrades generates smaller, local infrastructure projects that have a jobs and social dividend, as does supporting councils to undertake footpath and cycleway projects.

Fourthly, we should bridge the digital divide. The COVID-19 restrictions highlighted what many of us already knew—not everyone has the same access to information and communications technology devices or the internet. Ignoring the digital divide leaves groups in our society behind. That has lifelong consequences for

students but it can be addressed now with additional learning support in schools and assisting with device and internet access. The limited support for small businesses announced yesterday is a small start but falls well short of financing true transformation. Further, it is critical that competition among larger platform providers is driven to reduce the ongoing cost and disadvantages faced by smaller businesses trying to compete online.

Fifthly, we must build economic resilience. The pandemic exposed supply chain vulnerabilities. Political institutions, government leadership and support for structural change in product markets will reduce exposure to future external shocks. Around 1,800 businesses throughout New South Wales, including 21 in Wollongong, offered to help out with personal protective equipment [PPE]. But this led to very few supply contracts because the New South Wales Government bought its PPE supply from overseas—again. We have been lucky this time but the response so far has not addressed the legacy of supply chain vulnerabilities. Wollongong needs a jobs plan, not a discussion paper or a sales strategy. The Treasurer's spoonful of gelato may have helped his lightning-fast visit to Wollongong go down a little easier, but if this State is to get better, become more resilient and create jobs in the short, medium and long term the New South Wales economy needs more than the single dose of economic smelling salts he is trying to sell as the fix to all our economic ailments.

LAKE MACQUARIE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (18:25:26): It has been pleasing that much of the discussion and debate in the House this week has shifted from our response to the COVID pandemic to the recovery phase. Three months ago I do not think any of us believed we would be moving into these phases of recovery as early as we are. As I mentioned in the House only yesterday, that is a great credit to the people of New South Wales, to the Premier and her Government and to the State's health agencies that have so far guided us to this point. Yesterday the Treasurer updated the House on initiatives being taken to steer that recovery, including the fast-tracking of infrastructure projects that not only create much-needed jobs but also grow our economy. It is vital that regional and rural areas are at the forefront of that recovery and investment. I note the Treasurer's comments yesterday when he said the State's economy is expected to contract by around 10 per cent in the immediate term. No doubt there will be much greater contraction in some regional areas.

In Lake Macquarie, where unemployment—in particular youth unemployment—was higher than the State average pre-COVID, and where contractions in the tourism, retail and hospitality areas will be strongly felt, it is absolutely imperative that government investment is provided to stimulate local economies as well as that of the State. Many vital infrastructure projects in Lake Macquarie are greatly needed to help drive the State's economic recovery over the coming years. Among them is the construction of commuter parking stations at Morisset, Cardiff and Fassifern rail stations. I have raised this matter in the House before and I have spoken with the appropriate Ministers. Most people who catch the train to Newcastle or Sydney drive to the station, park and then board the train.

This is putting great strain on existing parking spaces not only at Morisset, Cardiff and Fassifern but also at smaller stations such as Dora Creek, where parking space was recently reduced. Existing at-grade parking areas at Morisset are generally full by 8.00 a.m. on weekdays, while commuters who board at Cardiff are already overflowing into residential streets up to 500 metres from the station. They each require multi-level parking stations. With a bit of innovative thinking, those stations could accommodate business opportunities with ground-level retail or office space. Those types of projects will create jobs in the construction sector. They can move quickly through the planning process and provide an immediate benefit to the community and the Government.

Another major project that could be fast-tracked and provide an immediate impact for the State is the Fassifern to Hexham freight rail link. This project has been in the works for many years and I believe planning is now well advanced. This bypass would take all freight off the main Sydney-Newcastle passenger line, which is interrupted regularly by breakdowns or issues with freight trains. Major road projects in Lake Macquarie could also be fast-tracked, including the long-awaited upgrade of Hillsborough Road and two dangerous intersections at Crockett Street and Chadwick Street. The upgrade of Hillsborough Road has been the subject of a master plan, which is also in the final stage of planning. The release of the master plan is now more than a year overdue.

At Cooranbong in my electorate a bridge on the main road in and out of town has been reduced to one lane of traffic because of structural problems uncovered during a routine inspection five months ago. The problem could be fixed with fast-tracked funding. Another major project that would stimulate the local economy is construction of stage one and stage two of the Hunter Sports Centre expansion project at Glendale. This project sits just across the border from my electorate and would significantly expand the existing sports centre. Both stages have development application approval and construction could start in the 2020-21 financial year. They have the capacity to create large numbers of jobs in the construction and operational phases.

I also note the Treasurer's commitment to schools and hospitals. While the Government recently invested in significant upgrades in Speers Point and Wangi Wangi public schools in my electorate—and I am very grateful for that investment—there are other schools in urgent need of significant upgrades. Among them is Lake Macquarie High School at Boorigal, and Morisset and Toronto high schools. I agree absolutely with the Treasurer and applaud the Government on its willingness to move swiftly into the COVID recovery phase and for the economic stimulus committed so far. Lake Macquarie and the Hunter must be supported to play their part and once again do the heavy lifting for this State.

UPSTREAM FESTIVAL

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:30:03): Upstream is a festival presented by the twin cities of Albury and Wodonga. It is a place where you can immerse yourself in culture. The festival was held from 6 to 9 March 2020 and shines a spotlight brightly on Albury Wodonga's local talent. It brings the community together to celebrate arts and culture. We were particularly fortunate to be able to stage the festival a week before such events were no longer possible due to the arrival of COVID-19. A wonderful feature of this event is the large number of free events that are open to the public. This has helped make the arts more accessible to our local community.

Albury City reports that the festival contributed over \$1.5 million to the local economy. This is the power of the arts in action. Through celebration, collaboration and connection, Albury Wodonga has shown that it is a place where the arts thrive. One thing that stands out for me is how the council areas of Albury City and the City of Wodonga are working together for the benefit of all who live in the region working under the banner of "Two Cities One Community". This is an apt way to describe the reality of our situation on the border between New South Wales and Victoria. It is fair to say that Albury Wodonga's arts fraternity, business owners and the community at large supported the event. In excess of 17,000 people attended over the weekend, with 3,000 of those visitors taking the opportunity to travel into our beautiful region from other parts of Australia.

The signature event for Upstream was a laser light show beaming across the Murray River. The show operator needed to install the expensive and sensitive projection equipment on the river bank, which required negotiating paddocks and gates and gullies and lumps and bumps. No problem—except 110 millimetres of rain was falling. Not to be beaten, the local team rallied with a few four-wheel drives, some smart navigation and guidance, and the gear was safely installed. It is very pleasing to see the level of cooperation that exists between the two cities and, with the ongoing support of both councils, I am sure that we will see many shared projects over the coming years.

What is particularly notable about the Upstream Festival is that much of it took place in public spaces. This helps to ensure that people are able to view art in unique natural locations, such as the beautiful surrounds of Noreuil Park, which is smack-bang in the centre of Albury. Noreuil Park is one of the jewels in the crown of destinations in regional New South Wales. It has playgrounds, sports grounds, parkland, excellent dining and of course, access to the mighty Murray River. The park hosted campers from 1929 until the early 1980s, when the caravan park was removed largely due to the dangers posed by flooding and falling branches. Removing the caravan park meant that locals now enjoy much greater access to the foreshore of the Murray River.

It is fair to say that Albury City has done a remarkable job transforming the park, but certainly the funding from the Government has been welcome and played a major part in improving this precinct. It was named to commemorate the bravery of the 13th Battalion Australian Field Artillery known to the citizens of Albury as the "Albury Battery", which occurred at Noreuil, France. Locals and visitors alike were able to make maximum use of Albury's vibrant CBD and riverside precincts as they dined out in the beautiful surrounds of our city. I take a moment to give a shout-out to the River Deck Cafe, where Alex Smit and crew—like many good restaurants in Albury—have been hit hard by the COVID crisis.

Hosting much of the Upstream Festival in Noreuil Park makes perfect sense, given the beautiful surrounds and easy access. Tourism has been particularly badly affected during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we were very lucky to stage the festival just in the nick of time. We are looking forward to 2021. I had the privilege of meeting with local artists a few weeks ago and it has certainly been a challenging time for the arts community. We look forward to a time when Upstream is back bigger and better than ever, as we help the community to continue its recovery from the crisis through the healing power of the arts. Having communities on both sides of the border showing how well we can cooperate together is a powerful side benefit of this unique festival. I commend Albury City and the City of Wodonga for Upstream and wish them all the best for future iterations of what I hope will become an iconic event for the region.

TAMIL GENOCIDE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:34:31): I have addressed this Parliament a number of times about victims of crime and how important I believe the criminal justice system is in protecting victims of crime.

That is what it should be focused on. I did not think the most heinous crime of the twenty-first century would affect me, my family and my community of Prospect. I am talking about the genocide committed against the Tamil population by the Sri Lankan government. On 18 May I made a short video for Facebook to commemorate the 2009 Mullivaikkal massacre, remembering the victims and survivors of the Tamil genocide. After posting the message on Facebook, my page was attacked with a wave of racist, aggressive and hateful comments threatening me, my wife and my family with physical and sexual violence unless I withdrew my comments.

Further, my electorate office staff received abusive and threatening emails and phone calls. These attacks numbered in the many hundreds. Any person who posted comments in support of my video was also attacked in a similar manner. I was shocked at the absolute pleasure the perpetrators found in posting photos of murdered Tamils and singing the praises of those who committed crimes against humanity. A change.org petition was also set up condemning me. It gained 10,000 signatures, mostly from trolls in Melbourne and Sri Lanka. What is most shocking is that it appears that this racist, hate-fuelled campaign against me and the Tamil community was instigated and coordinated by a specialist unit within Sri Lanka's government established by the Rajapaksa regime via its network of extremists.

Other parliamentarians have been attacked in a similar fashion. Here are the facts. The open and calculated discrimination and persecution of the Tamil people, which led to genocide, commenced immediately following Sri Lanka's independence in the 1940s. The government acted to marginalise and alienate the Tamil population, physically, politically and economically. The government enacted a series of anti-Tamil legislation as a basis to implement its plan. Furthermore, the Sri Lankan government and security forces condoned and orchestrated anti-Tamil pogroms and violently suppressed peaceful Tamil demonstrations throughout the 1950, 1960s and 1970s, culminating in the 1983 "Black July" riots.

Black July was a week of violent riots and horrific destruction that followed decades of unrest and rising tensions in the country. It led to a conflict that lasted 26 years. During the civil war the Sri Lankan army systematically used rape, torture, kidnappings, indiscriminate firing, shelling and bombing against innocent Tamil men, women, and children, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 Tamil civilians. At least 70,000 people were killed between 28 March and 18 May 2009 when the Sri Lankan military offered 300,000 Tamil civilians safe refuge in internationally recognised no-fire zones and then proceeded to shell the zones with heavy artillery, aircraft and other heavy weaponry.

In March 2011 the United Nations stated that there were credible allegations that war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed. Further resolutions were put forward to establish a judicial mechanism to investigate and prosecute these violations. However, the Sri Lankan government has failed to implement its commitments and no judicial mechanism has been established. Today, Sri Lankan Tamils continue to suffer prejudice, discrimination and violation of their human rights. I thank and recognise the response and support of the Tamil community in Australia and internationally, and my fellow parliamentarians and community leaders for my comments regarding the Tamil genocide and the concerted attacks on me and my family by the supporters of the Rajapaksa regime.

I have been absolutely humbled by the support from the Tamil community. I have received a deluge of messages asking for continued support for the recognition of the Tamil genocide. So far, a change.org petition created by the Tamil community to rival the petition attacking me has received over 137,000 signatures of support. The Tamil community has become an important part of our multicultural Australia, while retaining links to their homeland. I stand with the Tamil community in its call for recognition of the genocide. I thank Australian Tamils for their continued support and advocacy. I say to the perpetrators of the Tamil genocide: Justice is coming; you will be held responsible for your crimes.

BAULKHAM HILLS ELECTORATE PROJECTS

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (18:39:42): I am excited to bring to the House some developments in the Baulkham Hills electorate, particularly the securing of investment of up to nearly \$300,000 for a total of 12 projects under the latest round of the Community Building Partnership program. This grassroots funding will directly assist highly committed community groups, ranging from local sporting organisations to disability services to local school P&Cs, to create a more vibrant and inclusive local community with positive social, environmental and recreational outcomes. I commend the following organisations in the area that were successful in their application, including the Hills Shire Council, which was given \$20,000 to construct a new shelter with table and picnic facilities in the dog off-leash area at Rutherford Avenue Reserve. The Hills Community Aid and Information Service Inc was awarded \$35,000 for an office renovation, upgrading access to accommodate mobility needs, converting the back office space to a confidential interview room and improving the general condition of the building interior.

The Crestwood Public School P&C Association was given \$25,000 for an adventure playground with two zones to cater for active exploration needs for students from kindergarten to year 6. The Murray Farm Public School P&C and subsidiary committee was given \$8,820 for 10-foot essential ceiling fans to cool the school hall during warm weather and large gatherings. The Anglican Church Property Trust Diocese of Sydney was given \$30,000 to construct an entry plaza with retaining walls, paving and guttering, as well as improving circulation, accessibility and egress to the building. A personal favourite of mine—and the member for Seven Hills, I am sure—the Friends of Bella Vista Farm, was given \$20,000 to restore the oldest building in Bella Vista Farm, which housed the Pearce family carriages, for which they are well known in the area. UnitingCare St Matthews Preschool was given \$30,000 for a new equipment and storage area, as well as new staff and meeting facilities, including a renovated and extended bathroom, new kitchen for student craft activities and a library area.

The Baulkham Hills North Public School P&C Association was awarded \$46,000 for a sustainably designed and multipurpose built garden and outdoor learning space that will enable students to connect, collaborate and play within a multi-sensory environment. West Pennant Hills Community Church was given \$4,701 to purchase solar panels and audio equipment for community groups using the large hall. Hills District Little Athletics Centre was given \$25,000 for purpose-built discus cages and state-of-the-art frames, which protect children and comply with World Athletics specifications. The member for Mount Druitt is not in the Chamber, but he would be happy to hear that we gave the Coptic Orthodox Church of St Mary, St Cosman and St Demian \$50,000 for a concrete carpark and drainage plumbing. Hills Rugby Union-Seniors, a group that has been trying to scout me out for many years, was given \$5,000 for a built-in barbecue area.

The Community Building Partnership program has funded more than 13,800 community projects since its launch in 2009. I look forward to seeing how those projects will make a difference for community groups in the area. In addition to this, it would be remiss of me if I did not share the successful projects of the sporting organisations in Baulkham Hills, which shared \$4.6 million under the Local Sports Grant Program this year to assist with the purchase of equipment, improve facilities and increase participation opportunities.

Of the 955 projects awarded across State, I congratulate the following on their success: Hills Football Inc, \$5,000 for uniforms and equipment; Rouse Hill Rugby Club, \$5,000 to purchase uniforms and registration; Baulkham Hills Australian Football Club Inc, \$5,000 to purchase uniforms and equipment for youth girls teams; Swimming Metro North West Association, \$2,000 to purchase communication software for swimming carnivals; St Bernadette's Football Club, \$5,000 to purchase uniforms and equipment; Hills Spirit Football Club Inc, \$5,000 to purchase new portable aluminium goals for the under-6s to under-9s; Sydney Coolong Football Club, \$5,000 for sporting field hiring; again, the Hills Rugby Union-Seniors, \$2,000 for a replacement fridge—which is very important for a rugby club—and Rouse Hill Rugby Club, \$2,000 to provide Rugby Australia coaching courses for club volunteers.

Sport and active recreation contribute millions to the economy every year, and provide significant employment and tourism opportunities. They also contribute considerably to the health and social wellbeing of our cities and communities. I look forward to seeing junior and senior community sporting competitions and training for contact activities resuming on 1 July. These grassroots funding boosts in Baulkham Hills will make a huge difference to help community organisations be ready to resume as restrictions continue to ease, while we navigate our way through social and economic disruption.

WARNERVALE TOWN CENTRE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:44:32): After years of planning and promises, the Warnervale town centre is finally starting to take shape. Construction of new homes on the first 140 new residential lots is already providing much-needed employment and economic relief to this area of the Central Coast during this difficult time. Development of the central commercial hub has now commenced, with civil works scheduled to be completed by the end of 2020 to enable commencement of construction of the new commercial centre. The town centre developer, Landcorp NSW, anticipates commencing subdivision work on the adjoining site, which was purchased from council in 2017, by early to mid-2021.

The development of that site alone will generate some \$70 million in local construction work; \$8 million to \$9 million in section 7.11 contributions to the Central Coast Council; an additional approximately \$160,000 per annum in council rates; and, critically, over 1,000 jobs over the next 12 months for the next two years or so in the Warnervale area, directly related to the construction and developments works on this next stage of the overall precinct. Additionally, the completion of the new park lands at the heart of the town centre will include a dedicated area honouring the history of local Indigenous communities, open-air sports facilities, bike tracks, jogging tracks and other community amenities within the park lands, which the developer contemplates will be completed by early 2022. A long day care centre, child play centre, retail shops, family tavern, medical facilities and possible arts and theatre facilities are currently proposed for the new Warnervale town centre, together with the proposed Woolworths neighbourhood centre.

These commercial facilities alone will generate another 500 much-needed jobs, including giving young people the opportunity to obtain employment. Landcorp NSW has also focused on Central Coast Council's stated objective of creating much-needed employment as quickly as possible, as well as providing affordable housing and new first class amenities, which have been long promised and long awaited by the residents of the Wyong Shire. I strongly encourage the mayor, the councillors and the council to work in tandem with the developer to make this a reality as quickly as possible, particularly as we emerge from COVID-19. I had a very productive meeting with the planning Minister, Minister Stokes, and his staff, where I strongly put the case for fast-tracking this development. The Minister gave the favourable response that it could be considered with the support of Central Coast Council, although the current plans for the site will need some revising. Recently I met with the mayor and general manager to put the case for making the necessary changes.

This is critical to the success of the project. We have the will and the finance of the proponents, we have broad community support for retail to be provided for that growth corridor and now we need the planners to provide the necessary flexibility to deliver a much-needed boost to the local area. I want to help facilitate the delivery of jobs and investment to my electorate, particularly with the current economic conditions. Landcorp NSW's development of the Warnervale town centre and surrounding residential area will quickly generate significant employment and economic growth within the next 12 months for the benefit of all residents, while also providing affordable housing to the Central Coast and leading the way in its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. It will bring the long-awaited master precinct to the area, which residents of the Central Coast have long been promised and deserve.

The Assistant Speaker probably knows for how long the Warnervale town centre has been proposed. It is exciting to see earthworks currently under construction, but we need the will and determination from the Central Coast Council to get behind the project to make sure it is delivered. I was pleased that in my discussions with the planning Minister he saw the need to look at some of the zonings in the area to make sure that we can actually deliver what is needed. The original plans were done more than 10 years ago, and the retail and commercial world has changed significantly since that time. We must change the plans to fit the new environment. People do not go to the main street to shop now as much as they did; they go to big centres—we have Westfield and Lake Haven. Our smaller, traditional town centres are stagnating and in trouble, with lots of empty shops. We do not need to build more of what we already have. We need to deliver a new retail offering to residents. I moved to the area in 1991 and the town centre was promised then. Residents tell me every single day that they cannot wait for this to happen. Council has to get on board and we have to get this done.

BATHURST ELECTORATE PROJECTS

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (18:49:41): It gives me pleasure to speak about a number of projects occurring in my electorate, which has been through drought and bushfires, floods that did a lot of damage, and now the pandemic that is being felt in communities across the State and the nation. There is no doubt that this has had an economic impact on communities. The Government is very mindful to make sure it is providing jobs and construction in local communities to provide economic activity. This morning in a report on *Sunrise*, CommSec was speaking about unemployment in the State being around 7 per cent. But it said that in the Central West it is a little bit lower. It called out areas like Bathurst and Lithgow, and said that our unemployment level is around about 4.7 per cent. This will only last if we continue to make strong investment into the regions. The Government is providing that employment for our local builders and contractors. It is ensuring that people stay within the area because work is being provided there.

I will go through a number of projects we are developing and building across the electorate over this period. Water security is still a big issue in Bathurst. The Winburndale dam wall is being strengthened, which is a \$10 million project in partnership with the Bathurst Regional Council. Our town's water supply is quite low and therefore a pipeline is being constructed and stormwater harvesting adapted into the local area. There is another \$10 million from the New South Wales Government to ensure both of those projects, which are critical for our community and our town water supply. A couple of weeks ago I announced that the Bathurst Regional Airport will receive \$2.8 million from the New South Wales Government to provide upgrades needed at the airport. Whether it be the Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000, with the V8 supercars coming in, or other events that are held throughout the year—at the start of the year we had Elton John—the upgrades are for some of our events, but also so that when we have major events we can cater for those visitors and provide more planes. There is a \$3.2 million investment into a rehoming centre.

The New South Wales Government is partnering with the local council to provide an adoption facility for cats and dogs handed in to the pound so that they may end up as part of a family unit. There is a project to turn the old quarry, which was used for creating bricks for various structures around town, into a wetland for the local community. Over time we will see paths in the area, which is very close to the Bathurst CBD. When the project is completed it will be home to over 80 species of birds. The Oberon recreational ground will receive \$316,000

from the State Government to turn the empty ground into a space to be used by the wider community. Half a million dollars is going into an Oberon fitness centre for people to enjoy the gym and Pilates and yoga classes. The project will include an administration block and half a basketball court for children to use. It is an important investment. Lithgow PCYC has announced \$143,000 to create a youth hub. It is critical to ensure that the youth have a place to go after school that offers activities, a place to do homework, or a place to use technology and games. It also offers job-ready courses to get them ready for future employment. Shade sails will be installed over the playground. It is all pretty exciting. The Government will continue to invest in the electorate because it creates jobs and drives the local economy.

ROBERTSON VILLAGE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:54:54): As we continue to ease restrictions around New South Wales and begin travelling more and more, I bring Robertson village in the Southern Highlands to the attention of the House. Only 35 kilometres from the South Coast and less than a two-hour drive to Sydney, Robertson has so much to offer whether you are travelling for a weekend, passing through on a journey, or even looking for something more permanent. With a population of just under 2,000 at the last census, Robertson is home to the famous pie shop owned by local Will Bleeker, host to many locally made dairy products, potato farms and much more. Under round three of the New South Wales Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund, I was pleased to announce two major projects within the Robertson township.

The first announcement is for a major building refurbishment for the 16-year-old Community Technology Centre [CTC] with a funding injection of over \$62,000. This building is used by multiple community groups and is ideally situated in the centre of town. The first time I visited the CTC building over one year ago I met the lovely Jenny Kena and her lovely volunteers. I was so humbled to witness their commitment to the community, making do with the resources they had available to them. Thanks to the New South Wales Government, the centre will undergo refurbishments to ensure that it continues to be enjoyed as a comfortable, safe, attractive and serviceable community hub. Among general painting and lighting upgrades, there will be a significant infrastructure change with a new kitchen and storage area to cater for the centre's growing and diverse activities.

The second major funding announcement from round three of the Stronger Country Communities Fund will see \$291,000 for the Robertson Men's and Women's Shed—yes, men's and women's shed. These two organisations will share the Crown land currently occupied by the Community Technology Centre and will build their new facility from the ground up. Once it is completed, both groups will use the shared facility, maintaining their independence and purpose. The new home for the men's and women's shed will help these groups continue their mission as important social initiatives and share their practical skills with the community. Local John Kennis was the man behind this application. I am truly in awe of his determination to bring this project to fruition. I am a big supporter of men's and women's sheds because they give so much back to the communities they operate in. In Robertson for example, the men's shed recently undertook some much-needed repairs on the local township sign at the entrance to the village—community pride at its finest.

Recently I was made aware of an initiative by the friendly grocer, which is the Robinson supermarket, where old potato sacks are sold to raise money for community projects. These are the types of stories I love to hear as the local member: communities helping each other, taking pride in their community, and working together to make their community a wonderful place to live, work and play. Robertson is particularly renowned for its colder temperatures around this time of year so I encourage visitors to get a good dose of hearty local tucker whilst staying or passing through. There are many options for a feed and most have adapted in recent times, including the pub, Moonacres, Lucinda's, the Urban Food Tribe and the Cheese Factory. It is now more important than ever that we get out and about to support local businesses in regional communities, some of which have been hard hit by drought, bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. I am so proud to be part of a government that recognises the importance of our regional townships and invests in them so heavily.

TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR SUMMONS AND NOEL KELLY, OAM

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (18:59:03): Over the past month rugby league has lost two legends of the game. On 16 May dual international and former Australian Rugby League captain Arthur Summons passed away, and sadly a month later his Magpies teammate Noel Kelly, OAM, passed away on 14 June. A Homebush Boys High School student, Arthur Summons first enjoyed a successful rugby union career, both with his suburban club, Gordon, and as Wallaby fly half for 10 tests from 1956 to 1959. He turned professional, switching to rugby league in 1960, but played only 60 games across five seasons of first grade in the New South Wales Rugby League [NSWRL] competition for the mighty Western Suburbs Magpies. In those five seasons of rugby league he also played seven matches for New South Wales and became the twenty-sixth dual internationalist, with nine tests for Australia, including five tests as captain. He was chosen as the captain-coach of the Kangaroos team to contest the Ashes in England in 1963, masterminding Australia's first Ashes victory in the United Kingdom, with a team

that included future immortals Reg Gasnier, Graeme Langlands and John Raper, his mate Noel Kelly, and former member for Coogee and Wran Government Minister Michael Cleary.

From a different mould was Noel "Ned" Kelly. Born in Queensland, Kelly moved to Sydney in 1961 to play for the Magpies, having already represented both Queensland and Australia. He played 111 first grade games for Wests between 1961 and 1969 and was captain-coach from 1966. He added six games for New South Wales to his representative tally, which ended with 25 tests for Australia and the distinction of the first front rower to make three Kangaroos tours. Ned was one of rugby league's true tough men, with a known "retaliate first" mantra in football—just as we like them out west. He was sent off 17 times in his career, including just 90 seconds into the second test against New Zealand in 1967.

For both men, and we long-suffering Wests fans, the 1963 grand final rekindles heartbreaking memories—a third straight grand final defeat at the hands of St George and a controversial, match-deciding try to Dragons winger Johnny King. But for rugby league fans of today, it is the everlasting photo from John O'Gready of St George captain-coach Norm Provan and Wests captain Arthur Summons embracing after the game for which this grand final will be known. "The Gladiators", as this photo has been known as, showed a fleeting embrace by the towering Provan and the diminutive Summons. Summons later revealed the embrace was actually a short complaint to Provan about the performance of referee Darcy Lawler. Regardless, the photo has been immortalised in rugby league folklore as a visual representation of what makes the game great.

Since 1982, the photo has provided the sculpture for the NSWRL, Australian Rugby League and National Rugby League premierships trophy. While many consider Summons half of the Provan-Summons trophy, the man himself once acknowledged that he was only actually one-third of the statue, given the slight difference in stature between him and Provan. Both Summons and Kelly made continuing contributions to the game in retirement as well. In 1965 Summons retired from top grade football and moved to captain-coach the Wagga Magpies and work as secretary of Wagga Wagga Leagues Club. Wagga Wagga became home for the rest of his life, but the Magpies remained a vital part of his life. Former Wests Magpies coach Roy Masters even credited Summons as the man who recommended future club captain Tommy Raudonikis to the club when he was a young Royal Australian Air Force apprentice in the country town. Both men have made considerable contributions to the game beyond their playing years.

Kelly retired from the NSWRL in 1969 and, following a season in Wollongong, returned to coach North Sydney for four seasons. He is known to a generation of football fans as a panellist on *Controversy Corner* with Rex Mossop, but was also a founding board member and long-time ambassador for the Men of League Foundation, a charity that helps members of the rugby league community going through tough times. Both men are members of the National Rugby League Hall of Fame and Wests Magpies Hall of Fame and were named in the top 100 players from the National Rugby League's Centenary Celebrations. Ned was also named at hooker in the Wests Magpies and National Rugby League teams of the century. In 2018 he was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for his services to rugby league and has the Wests Tigers Player of the Year award named in his honour, alongside Balmain Tigers legend Keith Barnes. They are two legends of our sporting field. Vale, Arthur Summons and Noel "Ned" Kelly.

GREAT WESTERN HIGHWAY

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:03:54): The number one move in the New South Wales Government's playbook when it comes to rolling out projects opposed by communities is the "divide and conquer" move. That is exactly what is currently unfolding in my electorate of the Blue Mountains with the Great Western Highway supposed duplication project. The Liberal Government is running an absolute sham of a consultation process, which is more about guiding people toward its preferred option and shutting out opposition than it is about genuine community consultation and problem solving. Not that long ago secret meetings were happening in the upper mountains, where the Transport for NSW team met with a school and told that community they would be fine and would not have to worry because there was already a preferred option selected. Then there are other groups who cannot get a say or play a role, no matter how hard they try. I guess the outlook is not as optimistic for them.

Now we have another instalment of the not-actually-consulting consultation process. The Blackheath Co-Design Committee has been formed as part of the consultation process in the Blue Mountains. It is soon set to be walked through the four terrible route options for the proposed Great Western Highway development. The committee informed Transport for NSW that it wanted local elected representatives to also be invited to attend—the ward councillors, me as the State member and my colleague Susan Templeman, the Federal member. The response it got was a threat to completely abandon the consultation should anyone other than the members of the committee attend. Transport for NSW threatened to cancel community consultation with a specific community group if the elected representatives of that exact community were to attend. Let that sink in for a minute—Transport for NSW would rather shut down consultation altogether than actually consult. I would welcome a

briefing on what is happening now. I would welcome the opportunity to be included and I would welcome the opportunity to—dare I say it—be consulted. And so would my community.

This entire process is infuriating and disappointing but, unfortunately, unsurprising. Orders from above have stymied the project team on the ground and their message is even harder to sell. A project is decided on and then, just step by step, it happens—no matter who wants what or what is best for the locals. The people who are "consulted" are "carefully" chosen and the elected representatives who dare to ask questions or raise opposition to any or all of the project are cut out. If Transport for NSW were serious about developing a plan that will work it would be working with the community and with elected representatives who know their community, and it would be looking at numerous reports that have been completed by different flavours of government over the past couple of decades on this very issue—like the Central West Transport Needs Study 2009. It is clear to me that Transport for NSW is not working the way it should. This sort of process is not created by a department that is solution focused; it is the process of a department that is hamstrung by the higher-ups.

For the benefit of the House, I have a petition in circulation that is gathering signatures by the thousands. It will be brought to this place. It expresses alarm at the potential impact on local amenity in historical villages and the environmental impacts of any widening works along the road corridor that might affect or diminish our unique bushland setting within a World Heritage listed national park. It expresses alarm at the potential creation of a private toll road—because that is what that lot opposite do best—through the mountains and the loss of residents' homes to compulsory acquisition and demolition. It expresses alarm at the Coalition Government allowing longer and larger trucks—something a handful of years back The Nationals leader promised the Government would not do; I have that promise in writing.

The petition also expresses alarm at the refusal of the Government to invest in freight rail so that towns and villages might be safer, cleaner and quieter. It asks for the Government to release its business case for the proposed motorway/tunnel. No-one knows what a community needs or does not need better than that community. But they are the only people that Transport for NSW is not interested in hearing from. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals have got a plan: They know what they want to happen with this project and in the long run not much else matters to them. But, unfortunately for the Government, I have the backing of my community and we will not go quietly.

RECREATIONAL SPORT

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (19:08:47): The coronavirus pandemic has disrupted our daily lives and made it easier to neglect exercise. However, it is important to resume as much exercise as possible and undertake recreational sport as restrictions are lifted and we move back towards normality. On 1 July adults' and children's community sport will resume in New South Wales. School sport will also resume at the beginning of term 3, on 20 July. While social or physical distancing will still need to be maintained, reopening indoor and outdoor competitive and community sport will help boost exercise as well as social interaction for kids and adults. In New South Wales we are fortunate to have a government that sees sport and active recreation as very important. It is a means of contributing significantly to the health, social wellbeing and economy of our communities.

Indeed, the New South Wales Local Sport Grant Program aims to increase regular and ongoing participation opportunities in sport and active recreation, by enabling sport and facility development, improved access and relevant community events. The annual program helps deliver infrastructure enhancements and greater opportunities, as it has this year across 10 different projects for my local community in the Davidson electorate. My electorate's largest single grant of \$7,500 has been allocated towards an upgrade of the change rooms and pitching practice area at William Cowen Oval, St Ives.

Other recipients of the Local Sport Grant Program include St Ives Junior AFL Club, which received \$2,000 for the provision of skills coaching for players and coaches; St Ives Junior Rugby Club received \$2,000 for the provision of a 12-week coach the coach program; Roseville Junior Rugby Union received \$2,000 for the provision of specialist coaching for volunteers and players; Roseville Junior Rugby Union received \$5,000 towards the purchase of jerseys and training equipment; Sydney United Sports Club received \$5,000 for the purchase of uniforms for players; Forest Districts Australian Football Club received \$5,000 for the purchase of female Australian Football League uniforms to support the continued growth in participation of female junior AFL players; Gordon Junior Rugby Club received \$2,000 towards the professional skills and drills development camp for girls and boys; Sydney United Sports Club received \$2,000 for the provision of strategy and club administration governance workshop for volunteers; and Gordon Junior Rugby Club received \$5,000 to purchase jerseys and training gear for junior girls.

I know that my colleagues share my delight that the Government is providing so much money for grassroots local sport and this program is complementary to the Community Building Partnership scheme, which provides further assistance to local communities and is welcomed by members across this Chamber. On behalf of members,

and in particular my community, I thank the sport Minister and the Government and look forward to the continuing success of the Local Sport Grant Program in the future. One of the features of this year's program is that it targets opportunities for women and girls, as well as enhancing the quality of life of all people in New South Wales. I look forward to the completion of the projects funded in this current year and to my community benefitting from this wonderful ongoing program in future years just as it has in past years.

RURAL AND REGIONAL SUICIDES

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:13:28): A silent epidemic is sweeping across rural New South Wales, including my electorate of Orange. I am speaking about suicide, which is the tragic demise to a precious human life that, in many instances, could have been saved through timely intervention and appropriate support. In Australia suicide is the leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 45. Earlier I spoke in this place about the failures of government to direct appropriate funding and services toward mental health in regional New South Wales and the dedicated health care of men, who represent three out of every four suicide deaths. This week is Men's Health Week, and importantly men's health needs to be discussed and considered much more than it is. Suicide is an undeniable reflection of mental health and men are very good at bottling-up their anxiety and concealing their feelings from people, even those closest to them.

Health, generally, is an important consideration in addressing suicide. Where suicide has been listed as the primary cause of death it has been noted in death certificates by the Coroner that a comorbidity—the presence of one or more diseases or disorders—was experienced by the deceased. In 2019 rates of suicide deaths having mental health, drug- and/or alcohol-related factors were as follows: 43.9 per cent for a mood disorder, including depression; 29.4 per cent for drug and alcohol use disorders; 17.6 per cent for anxiety and stress-related disorders; and 21.5 per cent of suicides involved the presence of alcohol and other drugs in the blood. Any suicide is devastating wherever it happens, but there are glaring differences in the rates of suicide occurring in the bush as opposed to Sydney.

Statistics reveal that the rate of suicide in Sydney was 7.8 per 100,000 population. The rate of suicide for rural and regional New South Wales was almost double, at 15.5 per 100,000 population. Murrumbidgee Local Health District has the highest reported suicide deaths of all local health districts. The latest obtainable statistics reveal that it has 21.5 suicide deaths per 100,000. Sadly, this comes as no surprise and there is a direct correlation with the lack of services and funding for services in the bush—plain and simple. The rate of suicide among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is even higher, at 23.7 per 100,000. The psychological, social and economic impacts of drought, government centralisation of health services and isolation experienced by people in remote country communities all contribute to a decline of mental health and ultimately to premature deaths.

Some great people and organisations are doing fantastic work in our communities, working towards addressing mental health, such as the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, but they need ongoing funding to continue their great work. Headspace is a great initiative; however, it is overrun with presentations and referrals and there are now unacceptable delays in young people getting the help they need; often time is of the essence in self-harm and suicide intervention. Some people in our community are responding out of the goodness of their hearts. One such person is Bruno Efoti, who in an attempt to address mental health and wellbeing of tradies started not-for-profit Tradies inSight. Bruno realised a need to address mental health issues experienced by young tradies in the construction industry.

Bruno unofficially informed me of the suicide deaths of 17 young people, aged from 17 to 24 years from the Dubbo district, during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the actual mental health impacts of COVID-19 are not yet known, information provided by the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health indicates projected data for the pandemic will show 25 per cent more suicides if unemployment rates reach 10 per cent and up to 50 per cent more suicides if unemployment rates reach 15 per cent. This equates to between 750 and 1,500 additional suicides per year. The modelling suggests that young people will be among the worst affected, with up to 30 per cent of the additional suicides occurring among those aged 15 to 25 years. It is also suggested that those living in rural and regional areas will be most affected.

Presently there is a one- to two-year lag in statistical data on suicide due to the findings of coronial inquests that are required to establish that a death involved suicide. Queensland has a register, which incorporates data collated by police, health and the Coroner, which helps to provide more current suicide data. A suicide register has merit and utility for a more timely and targeted response to suicide. I encourage the Government to adopt such a system and incorporate a suicide register to improve our State's responses to and intervention in suicide. Sadly, almost no-one is untouched by suicide. I am sure we all know someone—a friend or relative—or a relative or friend of someone we know who has suicided or is contemplating it. As recently as this morning I received a call from a constituent whose friend had just committed suicide and it is a call nobody ever wants to receive.

PARRAMATTA RIVER

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (19:18:22): I take this opportunity to speak about the importance of preserving the environment. My electorate is bordered by the Parramatta River, with some 35 kilometres of foreshore along the northern boundary. As a result, the health of the Parramatta River is a critical matter for me and my community. Whilst there have been many improvements and initiatives to address environmental issues such as programs like Making Parramatta River Swimmable Again By 2025, there is still a lot of work to be done. In 2018 a report released by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils [WSROC] found that approximately 144,000 tonnes of waste was accumulated in the Parramatta River over a year. This included things such as litter build-up in the river—bottles, cigarette butts, straws, plastic bags, takeaway containers—as well as oils and sediments and micro pollutants that had ended up in the waterway through stormwater outlets.

Thus litter is absolutely a problem that needs to be addressed through continuous data monitoring as well as through encouraging innovative solutions and strategies that prevent litter and pollutants from entering the river in the first place. I join many constituents from my community on a regular, often weekly, basis to clean up and pick up rubbish during low tides. It is during these low tides that the gravity of the litter problem in the Parramatta River is really illustrated. There is no easy fix to the situation and that is why a multifaceted approach is the most useful approach. It is necessary to acknowledge that the largest litter reduction initiative, introduced by the New South Wales Government, is the Return and Earn program. In over two years the program has seen over three billion containers collected, ensuring that they are recycled and hence diverting drink bottles and cans from our waterways.

We have found that even without analysing the data, the success of this program is visible with a simple observation of the Parramatta River foreshore at low tide. The number of plastic bottles is hugely reduced. In my electorate I am proud to see so many in my community showing civic leadership by taking it upon themselves to clean up the shoreline. However, I believe prevention is the most effective way of ensuring the ecological health of the Parramatta River. There is absolutely a role for efficient technologies to play in managing the impacts of stormwater pollution to prevent litter entering the waterway. A specific example is to erect catchment nets on stormwater outlets. These types of filtration systems, almost like Gross Pollutant Traps, can assist in capturing and removing litter and other contaminants in the river. Councils that have invested in these catchment nets are able to record data effectively, and can alter their education and litter prevention strategies accordingly.

It is also important for councils to continue their street sweeping programs to keep roads clean and stormwater drainage free of pollution. Another program that proved effective in addressing and removing litter from the waterways in the past was a program that involved low-risk offenders serving correction orders that allowed them to clean the rubbish along the foreshore. It was an effective program that assisted councils and the community with the task of cleaning up the river. The condition of the Parramatta River has improved exponentially each year. With continuous environmental interventions, we can all continue to enjoy the benefits of a healthy and thriving river system.

EVANS HIGH SCHOOL

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:22:37): I inform the House of the remarkable work done by the wonderful students and teachers at Evans High School in the Blacktown electorate, ably led by Principal Nerina Pretlove. During the COVID-19 isolation period the music faculty posted a music video to the tune of Crowded House's *Better Be Home Soon* to welcome students back to school. The video went viral with great acclaim, with over 100,000 hits across the school Facebook page and the Department of Education's social media channels. I particularly highlight the hard work of head teacher Dr Thomas Fienberg, teachers Luke Chapman, Mary Kavanagh and Bahar Aldogan, and voice coach Hepisipa Liku for collaborating on the project with the students. All this wonderful work was done remotely—arranging music, singing practices and learning instruments all done from family homes.

Evans High School demonstrated the complexities of working from home with young students and helped them focus on their musical passions as well as harness the available technology of video editing to give a quality, professional presentation. Apart from the wonderful voices, I was impressed by the range of musical instruments, which included guitars, drums, piano, cellos and saxophone. The only instruments missing from my school days were the triangle and the recorder—both of which I am willing to volunteer my services for if Principal Pretlove wishes, but Dr Fienberg may think otherwise. The Evans High School Facebook page had wonderful comments from many people describing the performances as "just awesome", "extraordinary" and "talented musos nailing the technology". A particularly heartfelt comment came from Jane Nicolas, who said, "crying beautiful".

I also pay tribute to Evans High School's Solid Ground Artist in Residence program in partnership with Solid Ground, Blacktown Arts Centre—Blacktown City Council—and Carriageworks. The program was initiated

four years ago and has become an integral part of the cultural fabric of Evans High School. It provides an opportunity for Aboriginal and non-Indigenous students to work alongside artists including Nicole Monks, Thelma Plum and Emma Donovan. This year the students were mentored by singer/songwriter Evie J Willie, dancer/choreographer Neville Boney and program leader Debbie Higgison. Prior to COVID-19 schooling changes, students had been working on a performance of Dr Yunupingu's *Bapa* for Harmony Day. Whilst face-to-face teaching was suspended, the students and program artists remained connected.

The end result can be seen on the Evans High School Facebook page. The video features footage of Harmony Day rehearsals; a Soundtrap recording featuring Evie J Willie and students Chloe, Jemma and Natania on vocals and staff performing the music, with Mr Chapman on cello and Dr Fienberg on guitar, showcasing the wonderful talents of many student dancers. The emotional video presentation was posted on Facebook during National Reconciliation Week and has been enjoyed by many thousands. Some of the Facebook comments included "making us proud", "absolutely beautiful" and "just amazing". I single out Debbie Bradley's comment, which stated, "Tears pouring out. Such pride."

I am proud of the music program at Evans High School, where the school leadership team, teachers and students come together with industry partners to learn and understand Aboriginal culture through music, dance and language. Evans High School has demonstrated not by platitudes or vision statements, but through its love of learning and applying its learning through language, music and performance. Only through language, music and dance does anyone truly begin to understand culture. Evans High School is just one of many wonderful schools in the City of Blacktown, which boasts over 188 birthplaces across this world and celebrates 182 languages.

Evans High School brings this rich cultural diversity and builds a common love and enjoyment for our Aboriginal heritage. I highly recommend that all members watch the magnificent performances on the Evans High School Facebook page. I congratulate Principal Pretlove and the Evans High School staff and students on their fabulous work. I look forward to hearing and seeing the performances in person.

ANDREW MOLLOY—EAST HILLS ELECTORATE HISTORY

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (19:27:33): The East Hills area is fortunate to have the services of Andrew Molloy, who has diligently researched and documented the history of our area over many years. Recently he published a new book, *A Pictorial History of East Hills: From One Tree Point to the Vale of Ah*. Andrew has published a number of books focusing on areas within the East Hills electorate, including *The History of Padstow*, *The History of Revesby*, *The History of Panania*, *Picnic Point and East Hills*, *The History of Milperra* and *Padstow: A Brief History in Photos*. *A Pictorial History of East Hills: From One Tree Point to the Vale of Ah* is the culmination of all these books and is the definitive version of my local area's history. It showcases the best photos from his previous books and features new photos, including 80 that have never before been published.

The 210-page book has over 270 photos. I attended the launch of the book with the Federal Liberal member for Banks, David Coleman. The launch was held on the banks of the Georges River National Park at Revesby, with Mickeys Point in the background—my husband's favourite fishing spot as a child. Andrew was first captivated by local history in primary school. He notes in the book's introduction that he felt the built form in Padstow was of a substantial age and had always been in place. Padstow Park Public School, where my daughters attended and I was P&C president for several years, had its ninetieth birthday three years ago. Andrew was there selling his books and relaying some of the wonderful historical information in his books to the locals who attended the event that day.

The age of some of the buildings like Padstow Park Public School is what inspired him to learn about what was in the area beforehand. As a boy he would visit a cave near Little Salt Pan Creek with a group of other boys his age. These boys referred to this cave as "candle cave" as they would sit together, light candles and tell stories. Whilst inside Andrew was curious as to whether the cave had any Indigenous history. Andrew further developed this interest in local Indigenous history in high school and was inspired by an archaeological dig within the school grounds. I note his history teacher at Picnic Point High School was later a member of this place representing the electorate of East Hills. I also had the same history teacher as Andrew, as he was a fellow Picnic Pointer, although a year older than I am. He was school captain and I followed in his footsteps a year later in the role of vice-captain.

The book contains a chronological history of Padstow, Revesby, Panania, Picnic Point, East Hills and Milperra from the Dreamtime through exploration and land grants, cattle grazing, land booms, market gardens and poultry farms, campaigns for a railway line and the impacts of its arrival, two world wars, the Great Depression and the post-war years into the twenty-first century. The book also contains a series of 20 feature chapters, including the native environment and landscape, early shops of the East Hills district, houses in the 1920s, recreation in the picnic age, houses on the waterfront, life and housing during the Great Depression, lost houses and estates, relics of the past which nearly made the year 2000.

It also includes stories of supernatural events such as were there UFOs in Panania, was a house in Revesby haunted, was there a Bunyip at Kelso Swamp? It also features locally made films, including *Jasmine Freckel's Love Affair*, which was a silent film in the 1920s with scenes from Salt Pan Creek. Another film titled *The FJ Holden* was filmed in 1976 and included scenes shot in Strettham Avenue, Panania, as well as Bankstown and Roberts Road when it was much narrower than today. It also featured scenes at what is now Sydney Olympic Park. Andrew also documents the 1999 film *Two Hands* that starred one of my favourite actors, Heath Ledger. The film featured scenes shot in Selems Parade, Revesby, following a bank robbery. The robbery was conducted in the building now occupied by the East Hills electorate office. The site was originally the Colonial State Bank and still to this day has the large walk-in safe and Colonial State Bank green carpet—there is no money in the safe though.

Andrew has given up his time to share this valuable knowledge with the community and is a great speaker. He loves to talk and has spoken at various groups including Rotary, Probus, Neighbourhood Watch, Ladies' Auxiliaries, retirement homes, seniors groups, church groups and local schools. Andrew has a genuine and abiding love of our area as well as the perseverance to explore its history and document it for future generations. He has left such a great legacy for our area. I encourage anyone with an interest in the history of East Hills to purchase the book. If members see him out and about next week, make sure to stop him to say hi and happy birthday, as he turns the big 50. I wish Andrew a happy birthday and wonder: How did we get from high school to 50 years old so fast?

TRIBUTE TO JENNY SOURIS

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (19:32:39): It is with a heavy heart that I pay tribute to Jenny Souris. It saddens me to inform the House that Jenny passed away on Tuesday 12 May 2020 after a long battle with illness. Jenny was one half of M & J Chickens, which began as a single shop in 1982. It is a simple story of the humble beginnings of Minas and Jenny Souris who worked incredibly hard, making sacrifices and building the business into the success it is today. Jenny Souris contributed to the community and had many achievements that I cannot do justice to them in five minutes, but I want Jenny's adorable family and friends and grandchildren to know how much she was loved.

Minas met Jenny Halioris whilst the Halioris family were holidaying in Kythira. After marrying in Kythira, Minas found himself migrating to Australia to be with his beloved Jenny. Minas realised there were better job opportunities on the island of Kythera so they began preparations to return home. However, destiny had other plans and they decided to stay in Australia after an opportunity to buy a delicatessen in Wiley Park and renovate it into a chicken shop. After a few years they became wholesalers and moved to bigger premises in Marrickville where they still are today. M & J Chickens is one of the leading chicken wholesalers throughout the nation. It is a multimillion-dollar business had humble beginnings in Wiley Park. It employs hundreds of people and many of those people live in my electorate. I am very grateful to M & J Chickens for what it has done for my constituents. The business does a lot of important charitable work in our community and that was because of Jenny.

Jenny was a long-time supporter of the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs and one of their longest-running fans. Others who support the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs will know their jerseys show that M & J Chickens is their biggest sponsor. Jenny was very proud of the M & J logo on the Bulldogs jersey and was always wearing the jersey herself. Jenny was a beloved friend, mother, grandmother, a wonderful contributor and beautiful person who loved spending time with her family and friends. She loved to support her husband, Minas, in their success and they have done extraordinary things. Theirs is the ultimate Australian story.

Jenny was hard working from the very beginning but was taken too young. I appreciate all that Jenny did to encourage and support women who, like me, have been through breast cancer. Her legacy and fight will always live on. Her funeral would have been attended by thousands of people had it not been for COVID-19. It has been very difficult for many families across our nation and the world who have not been able to mourn members of their family. May her memory live on. I extend my deepest sympathies to the Souris family during this period of mourning. Jenny is survived by her husband, Minas, and children Michalis, Maria and Theoharis. Vale, Jenny Souris.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for Canterbury. I am sure that the Souris family would be very pleased that she was able to make that tribute to Jenny.

ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:37:35): Today I acknowledge our Elders, Aboriginal sisters and brothers, mums and dads, aunts and uncles, emerging leaders and, in Darkinjung language, gudgagang—the kids. I also acknowledge the spirits of those who are around. It is a time of pain and it is also a very important time to recognise that words in this place do not count for lives lost, particularly the 432 Aboriginal people who

have died in custody. Together we have the responsibility to change structural and systemic racism. Today Brody Alonti, a Wiradjuri man, was in my office in the people's Parliament speaking of the importance of rising global awareness. He said, "It is a shame that it takes George's death, something so tragic in another country, for deaths in our country to be recognised." David Dungay's family are still seeking justice for his death in Long Bay Jail Hospital in 2015. We cannot deny that this racism is happening now right here in our backyard.

I remember Brody's brother Coen coming into my class and sharing stories of the racism he experienced growing up. He told of how a cousin was pulled out of a footy game and accused of a break and enter. He was taken by police, bashed up, returned black and blue, and never charged with a crime he had nothing to do with. What does it take to achieve change? This problem stems from the colonial history that we live with: the oppression, the removal of land, stolen wages, stolen generations and the destruction of culture that has come with invasion.

Today I acknowledge the voices of Aboriginal people that need to be heard by us in this place, in the people's Parliament, where we shut the door on the first evening of the Black Lives Matter rally. I was appalled. Thirty thousand people rising is a powerful voice that we as elected members of the New South Wales Parliament need to listen to. From today, we cannot ignore this truth in our policymaking. Where is the Premier, the Minister for Aboriginal affairs? While the virus is an excuse not to be amongst the people, Aboriginal people in New South Wales deserve to be heard and acknowledged face to face by our Premier now, not next week, next month or next year.

Where is the leadership of the Premier—herself a migrant—regarding racism when parliamentary colleagues refused to acknowledge Aboriginal history and slurred the Black Lives Matter rally with indignity on social media? I say to the Premier, the New South Wales Government needs to continue to expand investment to improve the lives of Aboriginal people in New South Wales. I table a copy of an email that the Premier received from the Inner Sydney Aboriginal Interagency Network seeking a commitment from the Government to targets to deliver Aboriginal affordable housing on all government-owned land in the Redfern-Waterloo area.

Brody's mum was one of seven kids. Her two older sisters, Aunty Deb and Aunty Gail, were stolen and not reunited with their family until later in life. Brody's mum, Angela, Aunty Tania, Aunty Jenny and Uncle Reed grew up on the Block. Redfern is an important place to Aboriginal people and many actions of self-determination took place around the area. The 1938 Day of Mourning, the 1965 Freedom Ride, the struggle for land rights, the founding of services such as the Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service, the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Aboriginal Housing Company, the Redfern All Blacks, the Black Theatre Arts and Cultural Centre have become models for the rest of Australia. Aboriginal people need to be able to continue to live in this very important area of our beautiful city. Our State's future is about members in the House listening to Aboriginal people's truth. I say to Audrey and Coen and all Aboriginal people in this country, black lives matter.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for Gosford for her contribution on such an important topic.

Community Recognition Statements

MR SCOTT GIBBONS, OAM

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (19:42:00): I recognise a very special resident of the Heathcote electorate, Mr Scott Gibbons, who has been recognised with an Order of Australia for his fundraising work for charitable organisations in the community. Mr Gibbons started out in the 1980s as a real estate agent, opening up the Menai area and selling land for new houses. He has worked tirelessly for charities, including as an ambassador, auctioneer and master of ceremonies for Variety, the Egtober Foundation, the Purple Tie Charity and DANNI Foundation's Jelly Bean Ball and Educational Cruise. He is also involved with Foster Care Angels, Caves to Waves Variety 4WD Adventure, Homicide Victims' Support Group and the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute. Above all he is the father of the member for Holsworthy, Melanie Gibbons. Congratulations Mr Scott Gibbons.

DAVID "RAND" LLEWELLYN

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (19:43:00): I recognise and acknowledge the contribution to industry development of leading Wollongong tattooist David "Rand" Llewellyn. David was recently awarded life membership of Australia's oldest professional tattooing association, the Professional Tattooing Association of Australia. David has led the reform, development and professionalisation of the industry, being one of the first tattooists to use sterilisation and separate needles and to wear gloves. He has been recognised for his contributions to the tattoo industry on many occasions, including being awarded Best Tattooist in NSW six times and Best Tattooist in Australia three times and, along with his family, winning the Best Specialised Business Award in the Illawarra and South Coast in 2017. His recognition has not been limited to Australia as he was also awarded from the National Tattoo Association of America the Bob Shaw Award, the association's most prestigious honour. He

continues to build his career and business and is one of three generations of his family who are part of the Rand Family Tattoo studios in Windang and Warilla. Congratulations David.

BINGARA BACK IN BUSINESS CAMPAIGN

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:44:03): I acknowledge and support Bingara Vision 2020's new Back in Business campaign, which will shortly be launching in the Gwydir shire. The new campaign comes on the back of travel restrictions being lifted throughout regional New South Wales following the COVID-19 pandemic and the severe drought that people in the Northern Tablelands have experienced over the past few years. Bingara's Back in Business campaign includes 101 things to do in Bingara. The community is being asked to add its ideas to enable the 101 best things to do in Bingara to be voted on and promoted widely. This comes in addition to a new #BeautifulBingara promotion. Everyone is encouraged to hashtag their favourite photos of Bingara when adding them to social media. This is a fantastic initiative for Bingara. I commend the Vision 2020 committee and announce that Bingara is officially back in business.

EMERGENCY SERVICES QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:44:59): I congratulate the eight members of the NSW Rural Fire Service and three members of Fire and Rescue NSW who have been recognised for their exemplary contributions to the community on the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours List. These recipients of the Australian Fire Service Medal have displayed outstanding dedication to serving and protecting the people of New South Wales in the decades that they have been involved in the RFS and Fire and Rescue NSW and in the various leadership roles they currently hold. I extend my deepest congratulations to the RFS recipients: Frank Austin from the Mundarlo brigade; Kenneth Eglington from the Cudgen brigade; John Foster from the Mulgoa brigade; Terrence Job from the West Parkes brigade; Peter Miranda from the Heathcote Headquarters brigade; Michael Neyland from Adelong and Mount Horeb brigades; and Christopher Sharp from the Portland brigade. I also congratulate the Fire and Rescue NSW recipients: Morgan Cook from the Fire and Investigation Research unit; Mark Dobson from the Alexandria Fire Station; Dennis Henry from the Ballina Fire Station; and retained firefighter David Hitchcock. I thank them for their tireless service to protecting our families, properties and communities.

TRIBUTE TO LORAINÉ UNICOMB

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (19:46:04): I regretfully note the recent passing of an outstanding woman in my electorate. The Ku-ring-gai Netball Association [KNA] and wider community have said farewell to their vice president, Loraine Unicomb, after her fighting a long and courageous battle with breast cancer. At 56 Loraine was a valued member of the local netball community, with her involvement spanning over 10 years. Since 2013 she held the role of president of the West Pymble Netball Club and for the past three years was the vice president of KNA. Loraine received numerous community awards for her volunteer efforts but at the end of the day she loved netball, the girls, the committee and the fun of the game. I have had the privilege of meeting Loraine at many KNA events over the years and I know she will be dearly missed. Although the KNA family sadly said goodbye to one of their own, Loraine will be remembered for being a kind, loyal and dear friend and a loving mother to her two daughters, Stefanie and Madison. Vale Loraine Unicomb.

NORAH HEAD WOMEN IN THE WAVES

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (19:47:15): Congratulations to Norah Head Women in the Waves for being one of the successful applicants in the Local Sport Grant Program 2019. The club received \$4,800 to purchase a trailer to transport its surfboards. Women in the Waves, which was established in 1998, was formed as a female boardriders club meeting once a month at Soldiers Beach, with the exception of the winter months of June to August. Its competitions consist of six divisions: A, B and C grade, Mini Mal, Over 30s and Seaweeds and whitewash riders of all ages. The club was created for females to enjoy the water, meet new friends, encourage one another in and out of the water and most of all have fun. They are very lucky: Soldiers Beach receives a mix of ground swells and wind swells and the ideal swell direction is from the south-east. The beach break provides left- and right-handers and also offers a left-hand point break. It is good surf at all stages of the tide. The Norah Head Women in the Waves group has success in a wide range of competitions.

DUBBO ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:48:20): I congratulate a pair of Dubbo residents recognised in the recent Queen's birthday honours. Nola Younghusband received a Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] for her service to education. In 1963 Nola began her career as a secondary teacher. Over the course of her career she held roles not only as a classroom teacher but also as a deputy principal from 1988 to 1991. She was the cluster director of the NSW Education Department's south-western area from 1995 to 1996 and spent three years as a

principal. Nola is a former treasurer with the Harmony Singers, has volunteered at the Western Plains Cultural Centre and is heavily involved with the Dubbo chapter of the University of the Third Age where she has been the president since 2015. Our other OAM recipient is Fran Rowe, who received her award for her outstanding service to rural communities in New South Wales. Fran served on the NSW Rural Assistance Authority Board and the Rural Women's Network as well as many other rural organisations. Fran was also the New South Wales Premier's Rural Woman of the Year in 2012. Both women make regional New South Wales a better place to live and I congratulate them both.

AUBURN ELECTORATE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:49:27): I take this opportunity to thank many of our community organisations that every week are still providing food and assistance, particularly to our international students, the homeless and the elderly. Organisations such as the Alliance of Philippine Community Organisations, Auburn Small Community Organisation Network [ASCON], the Celebration of African Australians, the Tamil Resource Centre and the Gallipoli Turkish Cultural Foundation every week provide hot meals and food hampers to those who are receiving no assistance. Many members of those organisations have taken people with no money and no options into their own homes. Joining them is a string of local businesses, including Cincotta Pharmacy at Auburn, which donated 500 surgical masks and five litres of hand sanitiser, and many of our local restaurants, particularly from the Pakistan and Afghan community, that have food packages readily available at their front doors for students to take home. It has been an overwhelming effort by the community of Auburn, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

JOAN CAROLA HAWKE 104TH BIRTHDAY

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:50:28): I take this opportunity to wish a very special Hawkesbury constituent a very happy birthday. Joan Carola Hawke is about to celebrate her 104th birthday on 29 June 2020. World War I would have been raging when Joan was born on 29 June 1916, and it is amazing to think of all that has occurred during her lifetime. In that time how the world has changed and grown, often for the better but sometimes for the worse. I am sure that Joan's upcoming 104th birthday will be a day to remember, hopefully surrounded by family and friends. I offer Joan my congratulations through this community recognition statement. I would be very excited to learn the secret to her longevity—although I do believe our precious Hawkesbury water packs a powerful youth juice. Perhaps Joan can share the secrets to a long life with us. I wish her the best of health and happiness for many more years to come.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmeh Singh): Happy birthday, Joan. One hundred and four, what an achievement!

COVID-19 AND NURSES AND MIDWIVES

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:51:38): In the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, I thank Kathryn Taylor and her colleagues. I give voice to her thoughts today and share her words with the House:

... I don't want a free McDonald's coffee on my way to Nepean Hospital to work on the front line as a midwife.

I don't want to home-school my teenager after a night shift.

I don't want to wear civvies to work because my scrubs identify me as a target for public aggression.

I don't want to wash my clothes twice daily and shower after work scrubbing my hair and skin raw so that I don't infect my family.

I don't want to be deployed to the COVID ward to be afraid, to wear a mask for 8 hours that cuts my nose and gives me a crushing headache due to lack of oxygen.

I hate that the Government's 2.5 per cent wage cut tells my 13-year-old daughter that the work many women do, doesn't matter to them.

I am so tired ...

Today I pay tribute to Kathryn and all our hardworking nurses and midwives. Thank you. You matter.

YASS LANDCARE COMMUNITY NURSERY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:52:34): Today I recognise the Yass Landcare Community Nursery located in the Goulburn electorate. It is part of the Yass area network of Landcare groups and one of the many terrific organisations that are contributing to the care of our local environment and beyond. The Yass Landcare Community Nursery is currently preparing to grow native plants for nearby cool climate fire-affected communities. The nursery is an important aspect of the Landcare group and is responsible for sorting, sowing and germinating native seeds to be planted for any number of initiatives. The Landcare nursery is supported by volunteer efforts. The volunteers are always endeavouring to make improvements to our local

environment and the wider community. The amazing efforts and many hours spent by the volunteers at the Yass Landcare Community Nursery are significant, and I publicly congratulate all those involved.

TOP SHELF LIVE

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (19:53:28): I congratulate William Derederenalagi and Holly Summers Clarke, who are a great Sydney entertainment duo called Top Shelf Live. William and Holly have been conducting weekly live streams on Saturday nights during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. William and Holly have been entertaining thousands of people and gaining new support with their highly entertaining performances, sometimes also with other added musicians to increase the duo to a five-piece band. They have received financial contributions from their viewers for their efforts and have donated the proceeds to a number of charities. These charities include: Project Kindness, an organisation that links people in need with donated goods and services; and Little Wings, which flies out of Bankstown Airport in my electorate of East Hills and is a fantastic charity that provides free transport for sick rural children and their families. I thank William and Holly for their entertainment throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. I am sure that many weddings will be rebooking their services now that restrictions have lifted somewhat, and I look forward to watching them perform at the Sydney Opera Bar again soon.

SURF LIFE SAVING CENTRAL COAST AWARDS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:54:35): Congratulations to all the winners at this year's Surf Life Saving Central Coast Awards. A particular shout-out to Umina Beach Surf Life Saving Club for being named the Central Coast's Life Saving Club of the Year for the third year running. A special mention also goes to Ocean Beach Surf Life Saving Club's Jamie Cairns on being named Young Volunteer of the Year. Well done and keep up the great work. Other winners on the evening included: Pam Edmonds, who took out the Trainer of the Year award; Mick Magurren, who received the Coach of the Year award; and Lachlan Braddish and Kai Darwin, who won Young Athlete of the Year and Young Lifesaver of the Year awards.

A well done to Rosie Pragono, Peta Netzler and Shelley Smith, also of Umina, on receiving the Rescue of the Year award. I congratulate the Umina Beach Surf Life Saving Club on all the honours it received on the evening and congratulate its president, Mr Stephen Scahill, on cultivating a community of surf lifesavers at Umina Beach who are dedicated to excellence and success. I congratulate the Central Coast surf life saving movement on the fantastic online presentation evening.

MARK HOSKINSON, OAM

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:55:38): Farmer and Kikoira local Mr Mark Hoskinson has received a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to primary industry and to the community. Mark has long been a passionate advocate for the farming sector, currently serving in significant leadership roles in the NSW Farmers Association and Grain Growers Association. Mark is passionate about the future of farming and the impacts of drought on farming families and the wider community, particularly in the areas of mental health, drought support and recovery policies. Mark is also a dedicated RFS volunteer, who has served in the Kikoira brigade for over 40 years, and has held various local and zone leadership roles. Well done to Mark on receiving this award recognising all he has done in the industry and the community.

WYONG LAKES AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (19:56:31): Congratulations to Wyong Lakes Australian Football Club for being one of the successful applicants in the Local Sport Grant Program. The club received \$15,000 for female playing jerseys, clubhouse CCTV and a PA system installation for the new clubhouse. The club was established in 1975 and has been calling Don Small Oval, Tacoma, its home ground for over 40 years. The club fields teams in junior and senior competitions, including women's and youth girls. The junior teams play in the Central Coast junior Australian Football League competition, which is part of Hunter Coast AFL, while we have two men's and one women's teams that play in the Black Diamond AFL, which is a Hunter and Central Coast based competition playing against teams as far as Muswellbrook. Wyong Lakes prides itself on being a community-focused club, helping to grow and positively influence the local community for the better. In recent years the club has helped raise money for the Wyong Hospital cancer care unit and the Beyond Blue organisation. Well done to Wyong Lakes Australian Football Club.

PENRITH ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (19:57:33): I congratulate and recognise local recipients of the Queen's birthday honours 2020. Local awards for the Medal of the Order of Australia included: Mr Maxwell Friend for his service to children through the Penrith City Children's Services Cooperative and the Jamisontown Children's Centre Committee; Mr John Bonwick for

his services to the Sydney Speleological Society—which is the study of caving and casting—and the late Mrs Lynette Vaak for her service to the community through the Girls' Friendly Society Australia. Mr John Foster was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal for 38 years of service to the Rural Fire Service. On behalf of Penrith and the greater community, I thank all the recipients for their dedicated and passionate service to our community.

LIFESTYLE MATTRESS & BEDDING, WOY WOY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:58:33): I acknowledge local small business Lifestyle Mattress & Bedding, Woy Woy, which has demonstrated a commitment to providing five-star service to customers and our community. I was notified by one of my constituents of a lovely story involving this small business and a family searching for an appropriate bed for a family member who suffers from Parkinson's disease. I have been advised that this family approached several major bedding companies to obtain a bed but were not satisfied with what was on offer or the service they received. On a whim, the family visited Lifestyle Mattress & Bedding in Woy Woy, where they found the bed they required for a reasonable price. They had it delivered and installed and the previous bed removed, all within seven days. The family was thrilled by the standard of service and care provided by Lifestyle Mattress & Bedding, Woy Woy. I commend this business for going above and beyond, and for proving that small businesses really are great. Keep up the great service, Lifestyle Mattress & Bedding, Woy Woy. I urge everyone to continue to buy local.

ST IVES PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (19:59:34): I recognise St Ives High School Parents and Citizens Association for successfully applying for a New South Wales Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation grant, to regenerate a remnant Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest near the school. The grant of \$14,456 will support a project targeting weed infestation and degradation of this endangered ecological forest, which provides habitat for local fauna and flora. Students, teachers, council and the community will join in the work to preserve the forest, nationally listed as a "critically endangered ecological community". The St Ives High School P&C has indicated how this marvellous environmental asset is valued by the school and local community. Good stewardship of this forest is essential as so much of the Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest has already been lost over the years to land clearing. I commend all those involved and I am pleased that the program and grants help to achieve long-term benefits for the environment through supporting on-ground projects such as the one I have highlighted in the Davidson electorate.

COUNCILLOR DAVID THURLEY, OAM

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (20:00:41): I congratulate long-serving Albury Councillor David Thurley, who has been recognised for his service with the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's birthday honours for 2020, announced by the Governor-General. David Thurley moved from Tasmania to the Albury-Wodonga border in 1980 when the paper mill commenced operations at Ettamogah. David is president of the Astronomical Society of Albury Wodonga and taught science to school students. He was elected to Albury Council in 2012 and has held the role of deputy mayor, officiating at many functions including citizenship. He has demonstrated his passionate support for the environment and science generally in the community. With the Murray Darling Association he has worked for the health of our rivers, holding his presidency since 2016, as well as being on a community committee for the Murray-Darling Basin.

RON ELSHAW

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:01:24): I congratulate the Chairman of the Gosford Masonic Centre, Ron Elshaw, on his recognition received earlier this year from the Crestani Scholarships foundation. Ron was presented with an award recognising the Gosford masons as a major sponsor of the foundation, which funds higher education for medical professionals treating cancer. Each year the foundation holds an awards ceremony to acknowledge sponsors and supporters who help to improve the professional development skills of our fantastic team of nurses, doctors and medical professionals at the Central Coast Cancer Clinic. I congratulate Ron on being recognised at this year's ceremony. Ron was presented with the award by Crestani Scholarships foundation volunteer Noelene Ryden. Ron and Noelene are friends and supporters of mine and I thank them for their long-time contributions to our Central Coast community. A special shout-out to Ron, who obviously lives in our electorate and has been a stalwart of our community. I wish him all the best for the future with the Masonic lodge.

GYMEA MIRANDA BOWLING & SPORTS CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:02:26): I acknowledge the wonderful Gynea Miranda Bowling & Sports Club for the role it plays in our local community. With a primary goal to be the number one club in Bowls New South Wales Zone 13, Gynea Bowls caters for social, competitive and barefoot bowls for

members of our community. I am pleased to announce that Gymea Bowls has received a \$10,000 grant from the Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP, to purchase outdoor furniture as part of a new outdoor extension. Gymea Bowls has also successfully secured \$1,053 from the New South Wales Government's 2020 Local Sport Grant Program to purchase new rink marker bins and numbers, enabling clear identification of each game played and ensuring bowlers have access to modern equipment. I acknowledge the hardworking team behind this fantastic club including Chairman Kevin Jeffree; Vice Chairperson Ian Clark; Treasurer Debbie Brooking; directors John Geraghty, Greg Letch and Marc Worthington; and Chief Executive Officer Keith Langelaar. I am delighted that the new equipment will be put to use at Gymea Bowls as COVID-19 restrictions continue to ease.

SUE HOLDEN

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (20:03:25): I recognise the wonderful contribution of Ms Sue Holden, former principal at Canterbury Girls High School. Ms Holden was principal for 14 years up until her retirement in 2019. Sue committed 38 years to public education, 26 of those as a principal, with her career beginning in 1982. As principal, Sue increased enrolments, positively enhanced the school culture and lifted the highly regarded profile of the school in the local community. This was built on her unwavering belief that having a quality teacher in every classroom would deliver the best teaching and learning for every student. The building of teacher knowledge and skill through high-quality professional learning was a hallmark of her leadership. Students in her care benefited from the programs and practices established to ensure every student was known, valued and cared for. The relationships she fostered over time made a significant impact on the future of the many young students under her care who have gone on to lead highly successful lives. I put on record my thanks to a fierce supporter of public girls' education.

ELDER ABUSE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (20:04:33): World Elder Abuse Day was on 15 June 2020. Elder abuse occurs when an act of harm upon an elderly person is perpetrated by someone they trust, such as a family member, friend or carer. The harm is often financial but can also include physical, social, psychological and sexual harm. I thank the Hawkesbury Police Area Command for continuously educating our community about elder abuse. The occurrence of elder abuse is often not obvious and the great work the Hawkesbury Police Area Command does in educating people about elder abuse and the signs of its occurrence is vitally important. The importance is also magnified during this COVID-19 period, when senior citizens are facing greater isolation. I also thank the many people in Hawkesbury who take an interest in protecting our seniors from elder abuse. Whether it is those who work in industries looking out for their elderly clients or patients, loved ones looking out for their elderly relatives and friends, or neighbours looking out for each other, everybody can take an interest. I am so glad that many in the Hawkesbury already have.

WOY WOY COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:05:50): This evening I celebrate the Country Women's Association [CWA] at Woy Woy. It has a bunch of strong women from diverse backgrounds who are not only great cooks but also fantastic contributors to our community. They maintain a very important local facility in our community, which also provides to the community. I am sure we are all looking forward to using the CWA hall when things open up again. It was great to see the BreastScreen bus sitting in our community, sending the message to women to look after themselves. I thank Margaret Tabone, who sewed 65 bags for We Care Connect during the lockdown and the looming queen, Sue, who donated 200 beanies to Coast Hands. I also thank our community for the very generous donations of clothing and bedding and the support to deliver those to Central Coast Disaster Relief, Because We Care Boutique, Evolution Youth Service, Coast Community Connections and Phoenix Youth Support Service. A big happy eighty-eighth birthday to the CWA at Woy Woy. I thank the ladies for the delicious online recipes during lockdown.

MAJOR-GENERAL PREM CHOWDRY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:06:57): I recognise local Mosman resident, retired Major-General Prem Chowdry, who recently celebrated his 100th birthday. I am disappointed I cannot join him for the party this evening. Prem served for 34 years in the Indian Army from the outbreak of World War II, where he served as a second lieutenant in the Royal Garhwal Rifles of the Indian Army. During World War II he saw action in North Africa and Italy and at the conclusion of the war served in the first Indo-Pakistani war in Kashmir. Prem was promoted to the rank of Major-General in 1967, and between 1970 and 1974 was General Officer Commanding Bengal Area, tasked with bringing the militant communist groups, the Naxalites, under control. With 75,000 troops under his direct command, he played a significant support role in the liberation of Bangladesh. Following his many years of service, Prem retired and held a number of leadership roles in industry, including becoming a life fellow of the Royal Geographic Society in the United Kingdom. He has since become a keen

photographer and enjoyed the occasional game of golf with his sons when he still could. I congratulate Prem on reaching his 100th birthday.

HANNAH DAVIES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:08:04): I congratulate Hannah Davies of Temora, who is one of four students from regional New South Wales to be awarded an Australian Rail Corporation Inland Rail Skills Academy scholarship. The scholarship program helps regional students get their careers underway and Hannah will be off to study an undergraduate degree at Charles Sturt University. The Inland Rail Scholarships program is an investment in the next generation of engineers, scientists and planning professionals who will further assist to grow our regions. It is a wonderful opportunity. I wish Hannah all the best with her studies and future endeavours.

WILL GRANGER

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:08:48): I take this opportunity today to acknowledge the work of Will Granger, head coach of the Central Coast Granite Basketball Program. For 11 years Will has served as a coach, including with the New South Wales championship team in the junior under-18 division. As head coach, he oversees the structure, content, style of play and delivery of weekly training sessions. Will also has 10 coaches under his guidance. Basketball is growing in popularity on the Central Coast and I know that Will plays a part in making more opportunities available to younger players. Will may be only 28 years old, but he has more than two decades of experience with basketball. I know that the players and fellow coaches involved with the Central Coast Academy of Sport appreciate his dedication. He is also a schoolteacher and I thank him for working in a number of different ways for our Central Coast community. I acknowledge the great work that Will is doing with the Central Coast Granite Basketball Program and with young players across the Central Coast.

WINDSOR PADDLESPOrts CLUB INC.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (20:09:50): The persistence of the Windsor Paddlesports Club Inc. has been rewarded. After three attempts at a substantial grant it has scored \$801,218, courtesy of the New South Wales Government's Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund. The construction will feature a clubhouse with watercraft storage, change room facilities, amenities and a kitchen. It is a wonderful opportunity for club members who have been changing in their cars on the shores of the river. This will be a great time for all because they can attract more groups into the schools to participate in paddle sport activities who have not been able to do so before. I am really excited for them.

CENTRAL COAST HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:10:40): As the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast, on 16 March I had the absolute pleasure of announcing more than half a million dollars to upgrade Central Coast Hockey Association facilities from a grass field to a water-based artificial playing surface. It was a pleasure to meet with the association's President Brett Johnson at the Wyong base. Brett told me that falling over on the old surface was like landing on concrete and that it has even caused concussions for many players. Thanks to the \$639,149 contribution from the New South Wales Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund, in addition to the \$600,000 secured by Liberal candidate for the electorate of Dobell Jilly Pilon, work is well and truly underway to resurface both courts at Wyong. It is a huge win for the club's 800 members. I again congratulate Brett Johnson and his committee on successfully applying for the funding. I cannot wait to return later this year when the project is completed.

CANTERBURY HOSPITAL STAFF

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (20:11:54): I thank the staff at Canterbury Hospital for their wonderful work, particularly during COVID-19. Last Monday was International Cleaners Day. I thank all the cleaners in my electorate and around the world for the amazing work they have done during this period. My mum is a cleaner, so as the daughter of a cleaner I can say that recognition and gratitude for them have gone right up. I acknowledge each and every one of them. I had a lovely morning tea—socially distanced—with the cleaners at Canterbury Hospital. I thank the Health Services Union, the management and our local delegates. I thank our wonderful cleaners.

GREEN POINT COMMUNITY CENTRE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:12:55): In my role as the member for Terrigal I have the ability to spend time in the community. One of those places to spend time is the Green Point Community Centre in Green Point. President Johan Luidens is a lovely fellow with whom I have had the pleasure of spending many hours at the Green Point Community Centre. Johan is an avid writer and I was honoured to be given the privilege to launch his latest book *Ship of the Week* on 7 March. *Ship of the Week* is a collection of more than a dozen short stories relating to radio communications by family members on a maritime voyage. Once a week sailors used to call in

from their ship to speak to relatives around the world and relay messages. It is an excellent story and a great read. I congratulate Johan on yet another successful publication in *Ship Of The Week*. I tell everyone to grab it and have a read. Congratulations to Johan on his latest publication *Ship Of The Week*.

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF SYDNEY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I take this opportunity to commend the Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of NSW The Most Reverend Dr Glenn Davies of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, 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 The Most Reverend Archbishop Davies and the Anglican Diocese of Sydney 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 Anglican Diocese of Sydney and thank them for their tremendous contribution to our community.

SERBIAN ORTHODOX EPARCHY OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I commend Bishop of the Metropolitanate of Australia and New Zealand, His Grace Bishop Siluan, 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 has required changes to many of their significant practices and traditions. I acknowledge His Grace Bishop Siluan and the Serbian Orthodox Church Australia and New Zealand 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 Serbian Orthodox Eparchy of Australia and New Zealand and thank them for their tremendous contribution to our community.

INTERNATIONAL CLEANERS DAY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—On Monday 15 June we celebrated International Cleaners Day. Today I say thank you to the unsung heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cleaners across every industry have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic, ensuring that our schools, workplaces, hospitals and public transport are clean and safe. I pay special tribute to the cleaners in our healthcare and aged care system. Throughout the pandemic our cleaners have risked their own health in order to serve others. Today we say thank you for the essential work they do and for keeping our hospitals running and keeping patients, nurses, doctors and visitors safe. Thanks also to the Health Services Union [HSU] for the work they do in supporting our cleaners and other frontline workers. On Monday I joined the HSU and the Prince of Wales Hospital and was able to thank some of our hardworking local hospital cleaners in person. Thank you to the HSU and the staff at the Prince of Wales Hospital for recognising the vital role of cleaners in our hospitals and our community.

EASTERN SUBURBS ROOSTERS PREMIERSHIP

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—Although the season has not run as smoothly as planned in 2020, at the time of this community recognition statement the mighty Eastern Suburbs Roosters have scored over 100 points in the past two weeks and, suddenly, it feels like things are back to normal. Winning premierships at the elite level is all about overcoming adversity and finding a way to win when it seems impossible. After overcoming huge obstacles this year and becoming one of the first major sporting competitions in the world to return to play, the 2020 premiership potentially means more than any other. As it often does, sport provides a good analogy for life. The greatest victories are often those we had to work the hardest to achieve. The people of New South Wales have done a fantastic job to limit the spread of the virus. Their success in doing so means that they can be back in stadiums across the State in just a few short weeks, watching their team play live. I wish the Roosters the best of luck for this upcoming season. Up the Roosters!

MR MITCH CHRISTIANSEN

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I offer my congratulations to Mitch Christiansen who earlier this year was a shining star at the NSW Athletics Para Championships held Sydney Olympic Park. Mitch won silver medals in the 100m, 200m and long jump events, competing in the T37 classification. It is unfortunate that COVID-19 has meant that the Melanesian Championships that Mitch had qualified for have had to be postponed indefinitely, however I wish Mitch every success whenever he is able to start competing again.

DIFFUSE ENERGY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—A small wind turbine created at the University of Newcastle had attracted significant commercial investment in a bid to improve remote and emergency telecommunication access. The university-based start-up, Diffuse Energy, has secured \$400,000 in seed funding from Shearwater Growth Equity to scale production of its promising renewable energy option. The turbine was created by PhD research, engineers Dr Joss Kesby, Dr Sam Evans and James Bradley. Unlike a traditional open-blade wind turbine, their invention spans less than a metre. This is achieved by enclosing the blades within a diffuser, which draws more air through the turbine. Powering critical telecommunications in the NSW summer bushfires Diffuse Energy proved the value of its technology for Vertel, Australia's leading provider of mission and life-critical telecommunication network services in late 2019. The Diffuse Energy small wind turbines continued to power critical voice and data services for NSW Police, Rural Fire Services, State Emergency Services and NSW Health while catastrophic bushfires raged throughout the Mid North Coast and Coffs Harbour region. Congratulations to Joss, Sam and James on securing this investment and on the University of Newcastle for continuing to support great local initiatives.

GLENDORE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—I wish to congratulate Glendore Public School, Principal Khalil Khay, the staff and all the students, on successfully being announced as national finalists in the Australian Education Awards for 2020. The country's best performing schools, principals, department heads and teachers are recognised for their outstanding achievements and celebrated by the Australian Education Awards. They are finalist in three separate categories; Primary School of the Year – Government, Primary School Principal of the Year – Government, and School Principal of the Year – Government. Winners will be announced at the award ceremony on 6 November 2020. Glendore was also nominated for several other categories; Best Co-Curricular Program, Best STEM Program, Best Student Wellbeing Program, Best Use of Technology, Best School Strategic Plan, and Best Professional Learning Program. Once again, congratulations to Khalil, the teachers and students of Glendore Public School on all your hard work. Good luck at the award ceremony.

PARKLAND NURSERY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I congratulate Leah and Bernard Hunt of Parkland Nursery. With steady rainfall overhead and puddles at their feet, Leah and Bernard recently invited me to visit their Nursery at Tinonee. The Hunts have seen firsthand the brutal impacts of Mother Nature, if drought wasn't enough to disrupt production, a devastating bushfire in November 2019 destroyed infrastructure and almost wiped them out. To get them back on their feet, the Hunts purchased a new potting machine with the assistance of a \$75,000 NSW State government grant. Bernard commented to me during my visit that the purchase and installation of the machine was the turning point with Leah adding that the grant ensured they could stay in business which would ensure that their 10 full time staff would continue to be employed. Mr Speaker I applaud the tenacity of both Leah and Bernard along with the commitment of their staff and wish them continued success with their operations. I would also like to thank the NSW Government for helping another Primary Producer get through what has been a terrible time with drought and bushfires.

CUNDLETOWN SOCCER CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I congratulate the Cundletown Soccer club on successfully completing the upgrading of their lighting on the soccer and cricket fields at a cost of some \$158,710. The upgrade was made possible with a funding grant of \$133,810 from the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Program Round 2 with the club contributing \$24,900 to complete the project. I was pleased to recently visit the project and meet with club president, Carissa Black to see firsthand the finished project. I would like to thank the NSW Government for supporting Regional NSW with the Stronger Country Communities Program that has helped the Cundletown Soccer Club with the new lighting structures as well as assisting another 17 community groups in the Myall Lakes with funding of over \$5.53 million in this round of the program. The programs that will receive the funding will not only support the communities with some much needed infrastructure, but will also have great economic benefits to the business community in the Myall Lakes.

PENRITH RAMS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—For the past three years the Penrith Rams have been strong supporters of Gotcha4Life and in particular with their sportsman's lunch which has been held for the past 2 years and has raised close to \$250,000 for this fantastic program. Unfortunately due to COVID-19 they had to cancel this year's lunch with the hope to be back bigger and better next year. Not to be deterred, the Penrith Rams have created limited edition Penrith Rams AFL and Rugby League style training jerseys with all profits being donated directly to Gotcha4Life and their partner

programs so they can continue to provide the much needed support in the community. Previous years jerseys were designed by Penrith Rams Chairman John Rix however this year to keep the club connected with the community they ran a competition which received 40 creative entries. The entries were judged by a high profile panel including Gus Worland, Jake Trbojevic, Jude Bolton, Steve Smith and Hugh Jackman with Zac Pianta winning the competition. The Penrith Rams are committed to giving back to our community and I commend them for their ongoing support.

SERBIAN CULTURAL PARK

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I am pleased to recognise the local Serbian community in South West Sydney and particularly in Liverpool. I acknowledge the very significant contribution the community makes to our area. I also acknowledge the Serbian Festival held annually and the Serbian Orthodox Youth Association (SOYA) who organise it. Mr Michael Mijatovic President of SOYA and a Director of the Festival has recently proposed the development of a cultural park in Liverpool to celebrate the ties and connections between Serbia and Australia. Such a park would provide an opportunity to acknowledge modern Australian figures with Serbian heritage. I would be a celebration of multiculturalism in our community. The proposal has been passed to Liverpool Council who I hope can work constructively with the plan's proponents.

2020 QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—Today, I would like to pay tribute to some notable constituents in my electorate who have received awards as part of Her Majesty's Birthday Honours List. Dr David Robert Bell of Beecroft received a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his service to medicine and professional organisations. Mr Stuart Andrew Woodward of Cherrybrook received an OAM for his service to the banking/finance sector, and his service to the Uniting Church of Australia. Mr Patrick Gregory McCabe also received an OAM for his service and contribution to hockey. Finally, Dr Bruce Fairgray Harris was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his significant service to higher education, veterans and to the community at large. On behalf of the NSW Parliament and the Epping Community, I congratulate you on receiving these prestigious awards.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—Owning a small business is not easy. There is the constant stress of whether there will be enough clientele to pay the bills and employees. And there is no such thing as sick leave or holidays – that's simply unpaid leave. But the stresses faced by small businesses – particularly those in Campbelltown – over the past few months during this pandemic has been an entire new level. Many trades-related businesses were forced to lay off workers, stand them down or reduce their hours due to a change in working conditions. Those in the hospitality industry were among the most impacted, with restaurants and cafes resembling ghost towns for several weeks. Many businesses were able to adapt temporarily but others were forced to close their doors completely. There is no doubt that small business is the lifeblood of our community. When small businesses suffer, so does the entire community. Now more than ever it is important to support your corner store, local café, restaurant, mechanic and electrician. Small businesses have always supported our community so it's critical that we do the same. Shop local and support our local small business owners.

TENTERFIELD'S NATIONAL MONUMENT RECOVERY PROJECT

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I applaud Tenterfield Shire Council's decision to direct \$700,000 in Federal funding towards stage one of Tenterfield's National Monument Association Incorporated's Streetscape Recovery Project. I have championed the more ambitious Tenterfield National Monument Recovery Project, since leading architect Robert Perry briefed me on his vision that includes reinstating the civic building fabric which existed during the town's most active era of nation-making. Students of history know that Sir Henry Parkes' Tenterfield Oration, in the School of Arts in 1889, was the tipping point in the movement towards Federation in 1901. There were other local heroes in this border and customs town who played vital roles in Australia's Federation. The initial streetscape project involves reinstatement of a selection of verandahs which were stripped from historic buildings in the 1960s to make way for cars. Mr Perry will also display for six months the full scope of the project in premises opposite the Tenterfield Saddler, the town's most visited tourist attraction. I will continue to support Tenterfield Shire Deputy Mayor Cr Greg Sauer, who heads the Association, Mr Perry, Peter Reid and others to realise their vision. "In one hand I have a dream..." [Sir Henry Parkes]

CELEBRATING 2020 RECONCILIATION WEEK AT THE SERPENTINE GALLERY, NORTH LISMORE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I celebrated 2020 National Reconciliation Week by joining local elders at an exhibition by Ngalingah Minjung Dubais (Our Happy Women in Bundjalung) at North Lismore's Serpentine Gallery. Aunty Gwen Hickling, Aunty Jacqui Williams, Reverend. Aunty Dorrie Gordon and Aunty

Charlotte Williams presented me with a beautiful dyed silk scarf. Our Happy Women in Bundjalung is a Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) program which uses art, storytelling and cultural knowledge to build leadership skills, women's networks, and fosters intergenerational collaboration. Our Happy Women's Aunty Mim Bolt works tirelessly to bring people together to find their strengths and to support each other to grow. I also acknowledge the support of YWCA Northern NSW Regional Manager Kayeleen Brown. The women's art group has developed a range of textile arts which have been showcased at pop-up shops, fashion parades, art exhibitions and market stalls, providing an opportunity to 'try', 'test' and 'learn' business and interpersonal skills. I bought a painting from upcoming artist Tara Freeburn, whom I first met at Casino High School. Tara was already a leader then and she told me she was more inspired to paint during this time of COVID-19.

ERYLDENE RECOVERS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Eryldene is an historic home and garden located in Gordon, in my electorate of Davidson, which I spoke about in May last year in this place. In November last year a fierce storm ripped through the Electorate, uprooting trees, felling power lines and damaging properties. Unfortunately this wonderful heritage property did not escape its wrath. Eryldene experienced winds up to 100km/hr which felled a large Lilli Pilli, destroyed a Maple, flung large branches around the garden and broke fences. The storm extensively damaged the study, potting shed and shade house. Fortunately no volunteers or staff were injured and within days arborists had ensured the remaining trees were safe. During the recent lockdown, Eryldene also underwent some valuable repairs and painting, funded by the Eryldene Foundation. I understand it has now recovered to a fine condition. Green spaces like the gardens of Eryldene provide tranquillity and peace for people during difficult times, while embracing nature and valuing heritage.

TONY DONOGHUE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I am delighted to bring to your attention that Coolamon Shire General Manager, Mr Tony Donoghue has received the Public Service Medal for outstanding public service to Local Government in New South Wales following the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Tony has served the community of Coolamon Shire for over two decades and has worked tirelessly for the betterment of the towns and villages of the Coolamon Shire and wider Riverina Region. Congratulations Tony on this well-deserved award.

COOTAMUNDRA RED CROSS SHOP

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful work carried out at the Cootamundra Red Cross Shop. I had the pleasure of visiting the shop last week to hand out a Community Building Partnership cheque for \$18,491 to upgrade the 100 year old heritage shop. Helen Eccleston is the inspirational volunteer shop coordinator whose infectious enthusiasm is shared by the team who provide incredible support to the community through drought, people impacted by bushfires and others facing tough times. The volunteers knit trauma teddies, make library bags for schools, give out food and clothing to people in need and offer a drop in centre for a cup of tea and a chat. Thank you Helen, Betti Punnett, President of the Cootamundra Red Cross Branch and all the amazing volunteers who provide support, care and compassion to our communities.

SAM WHITE – PRESIDENT OF ANGUS AUSTRALIA

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I congratulate Sam White of 'Bald Blair', Guyra, on his election as the new President of Angus Australia, following years of service as an active Board member. Sam White owns and runs a family farming business, Bald Blair Angus, located near Guyra, with his wife Kirsty and their sons Abbott and Arthur. Sam is the third generation of his family to run Bald Blair Angus having run cattle on their properties for over a century. Sam is a passionate advocate for the Angus cattle breed, their advantages to the Northern Tablelands landscape and environment and their appeal to the domestic and international markets. Angus Australia will only continue to go from strength to strength with Sam at the helm and I wish him all the best for his term as President.

CLONTARF FOUNDATIONS

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)—I would like to congratulate the Clontarf Foundation for their youth employment initiative in partnership with Woolworths Mount Druitt. The Clontarf Foundation's purpose is to improve the education and employment prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in our communities. Woolworths Mount Druitt offered the Clontarf Foundation the opportunity for some of its young men to be interviewed with the prospects of obtaining casual or part time work, with hopes of easing the employee demand brought on by the covid-19 crisis. The Clontarf foundation put forward 13 young men from my electorate for the interview process. The 13 boys performed so well in the interview that all of them were given a position and are thrilled to be working within the local community. I applaud the Clontarf Foundation on their incredibly successful program, and congratulate all the young men who are helping our community during this unprecedented time.

AMELIA MAZZEI

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I congratulate Armidale Secondary College student Amelia Mazzei on her selection for the NSW 2020 Target Talent Program para squad. The Athletics NSW 2020 program will be held in Sydney between July and November and will include technical training and educational sessions. It is a high performance program which aims to engage the best junior athletes in NSW with practical and theoretical development opportunities. Amelia is a very talented, determined and hard-working athlete and will certainly benefit from what the program has to offer.

OATLEY FLORA & FAUNA CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—I acknowledge the Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society, and the important work they do for the environment in our local community. The Society was formed in 1955 by a group of local residents who were concerned about the vandalism of flora and fauna in Oatley Park. Since their establishment, the Society's focus has expanded to Australian flora and fauna in general, promoting the need to conserve the natural environment. The Society has been active in the local area, participating in initiatives such as Clean Up Australia Day, where they assisted in collecting waste from Poulton Park in South Hurstville. The Society have also been valuable in working collaboratively with other community groups, which can be seen in their efforts in cleaning up Georges River. I would like to thank President Graham Lalchere and the entire Society for their time and effort in protecting our beautiful flora and fauna and ensuring the preservation of the environment for future generations.

MURRAY MEN'S SHED

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—During International Men's Health Week, it is my honour to recognise the amazing work of the 14 men's sheds in my electorate. With Sheds beginning to re-open after closing their doors for nearly two months due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the timing could not come soon enough for many regional men facing increased levels of loneliness and inactivity. Our men's sheds provide an opportunity for men to build friendships and improve their mental health and wellbeing through having a chat over a cuppa with other blokes. In regional areas alone, one in eight men will experience depression at some point in their lives and men's sheds are aiming to reduce these numbers through reducing isolation. As a community based organisations each Shed is servicing their local communities through creating products, be it garden bed containers from recycled materials or made to order pieces for locals, adding to sense of giving back to their community. I congratulate Murray's men's sheds and encourage any men in need of some mateship to drop in and check them out.

GREG ALLUM, AM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I highlight the contribution of, and congratulate, Greg Allum, AM, of Cronulla who was made a Member of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours list "for significant service to surf lifesaving, to international federations and to the community". Greg is a life member of Wanda Surf Life Saving Club and of Surf Life Saving Australia. Greg was a fierce competitor in the water, winning the 1979 Australian Open Ironman title, 10 Australian R&R championships and 32 other national championship medals. He was runner-up in the 1978 and 1981 Australian Open Ironman. He won two world championships, four NSW Open Ironman titles and more than 50 NSW championship medals. Greg is also an excellent and well-respected coach, manager, referee and administrator at a national level, serving with the International Life Saving Federation. Greg's contributions to the community go beyond life-saving. Greg is a member of St Andrew's Anglican Church in Cronulla and is a Parish representative on the Sydney Diocese Synod. He has been a member of the Cook Community Classic Committee since 2011.

OATLEY HERITAGE & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—I acknowledge the great work of the Oatley Heritage and Historical Society as they celebrate their 25th anniversary. The Society was first established in 1995, with their inaugural meeting held at the Oatley School of Arts. The Society undertakes research in historical events and places around Oatley, with meetings held quarterly and informal Coffee and Chat's held three times a year. The Society has been a valuable contribution to the local community, actively participating in the Oatley Village Festival and visiting schools in the area to discuss matters of local history. I encourage residents throughout my electorate to check out their ever evolving website. I congratulate President Julian Sheen, Secretary Bill Wright and the rest of the Society on their brilliant work, and look forward to continuing my relationship with them. Thank you for keeping our community informed about the local history of the Oatley area.

KERRY BRAY, OAM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I highlight the contribution of and congratulate Ms Kerry Bray, OAM, of Cronulla who received the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours list for service to running, and to the community. Ms Bray has helped organise community running groups and events such as parkrun at Menai and Cronulla for 40 years. Ms Bray is a founding member of Woodstock Runners which now has about 200 members. Parkrun Cronulla is held every Saturday morning and usually attracts around 50-60 runners with the goal of challenging oneself and aiming to improve fitness. Ms Bray worked as a volunteer for the 2000 Sydney Olympics from 1992, was a torch runner at Cronulla and a member of the Olympic Communicators Team. Since the 1970s, Ms Bray has made more than 600 blood and plasma donations and has been a great supporter of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service. Each donation can be used by three people. This means that Ms Bray has saved an estimated 1,650 lives.

NOLA YOUNGHUSBAND AND FRAN ROWE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I'd like to congratulate a pair of Dubbo residents recognised in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours. Nola Younghusband received an OAM for her service to education. In 1963 Nola began her career as a secondary teacher, and over the course of her career she held roles as not only a classroom teacher but also a deputy principal from 1988-1991. She was the cluster director of the NSW Education Department's Southern Western Area from 1995-1996 and spent three years as a principal. Nola's a former treasurer with the Harmony Singers, she's volunteered at the Western Plains Cultural Centre, and is heavily involved with the Dubbo Chapter of the University of the Third Age, where she's been the president since 2015. Our other OAM recipient is Fran Rowe, for her outstanding service to rural communities in NSW. Fran served on the NSW Rural Assistance Authority Board and the Rural Women's Network, along with many other rural organisations. Fran was also the NSW Premier's "Rural Woman of the Year" in 2012. Both women make regional NSW a better place to live, and I congratulate them on receiving such deserved recognition.

TAREN POINT TITANS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge Taren Point Titans Junior Rugby League Football Club who are the recipients of \$2,000 from the NSW Government's 2020 Local Sport Grant Program. Based at Gwawley Oval, the Titans were originally founded in 1963 and known as Taren Point Youth Centre. Having been renamed in 2004, the Titans are a tight-knit, "family club" operating with the motto "many hands make light work". Operating with the aim to retain existing members, gain new members and promote rugby league to the community as a whole, the secured funding will facilitate a website upgrade to improve access to information and usability for members. Of course none of this is possible without the dedicated volunteers behind the Titans who work tirelessly to support players throughout the rugby league season. I particularly acknowledge the executive committee, including President Brett Robinson, Secretary John Keith, Senior Vice President Noel Thornberry, Vice President Adam McPherson, Treasurer Julie Robinson and Assistant Secretary Joe Pirrello. I thank Taren Point Titans Junior Rugby League Football Club for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and extend my best wishes for the resumption of the rugby league season.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE NETBALL ASSOCIATION

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge Sutherland Shire Netball Association who are the recipients of \$4,750 from the NSW Government's 2020 Local Sport Grant Program. Sutherland Shire Netball Association is comprised of 24 member clubs and caters to junior and senior players from around our Shire and beyond. The secured funding will allow the association to facilitate two great projects to benefit the many members of our community. The purchase of new equipment will ensure that modern resources are available to facilitate the development of players, whilst improving management committee skills will benefit the association as a whole. Of course none of this is possible without the dedicated executive committee who work tirelessly to support our netballers. I particularly acknowledge President Karen Salter, Secretary Prue Haberecht, Treasurer Margaret Burke, Registrars Shirley Way, Jenny Rees, Tammy Moussa, Kerry Phillips and Aynsley Dryden, Tournament Coordinator Nerida Noble, Coaching Coordinator Lisa Filby, Representative Liaison Officer Sue Woods and Umpires Convenor Dianne MacLachlan. I thank Sutherland Shire Netball Association for bringing the importance of these projects to my attention and extend my best wishes for the resumption of the netball season.

ABBY ROWLAND-JONES

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—The lives of so many people have changed as a result of COVID-19, and I have been heartened by the way people have adapted to new ways of doing things. One person who has done just that is Abbey Rowland-Jones, a fantastic dancer from the Mid-Western area who has shined

bright on stage prior to and during the pandemic. Abbey is only 11 years old but has been dancing for nine years, and she travels from Pyramul to Mudgee each week to practice her craft. In January of this year Abbey attended her first Nationals competition where she placed in each section she contested. After this, she was preparing for another national event in April but the COVID-19 pandemic forced it from the stage to online. Abbey altered some of her routines and again performed well, placing first in jazz championship, lyrical solo and lyrical improvisation, second in jazz solo, contemporary solo, ballet solo and ballet improvisation, and third in jazz improvisation, contemporary improvisation and modern championship. The results were a reward for all the hard work put in by Abbey and her supportive family. Congratulations Abbey and good luck for the future.

LOCAL SPORTING CLUBS

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I want to draw the attention of the house to the many local sporting clubs who have done a marvellous job throughout COVID-19 to advocate for our community and the vital role of sport. Coronavirus saw the shutdown of many aspects of our lives but no more important to our health, well-being and community as the shut-down of community sport. Over the past few weeks and months players, parents and administrators have been pushing for the safe return of community sport. I want to acknowledge everyone who has contacted my office from Leichhardt Saints Football Club, Inner West Netball, Tigers Netball Club, Balmain and District Football Club, Glebe District Hockey Club and APIA Leichhardt FC. We were all pleased and relieved to learn that sport would return for everyone on 1 July. This means our local clubs can return to the work of helping to build stronger, healthier, happier, and safer communities. See you on the field, the court and the pitch in July.

WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—World Blood Day (14 June 2020) is dedicated to recognising the important work of the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood Service and 1.5 million Australians who donate blood every year. Due to COVID 19, blood stores across the country have dwindled and this World Blood Donor day, there has never been a better time to roll up your sleeve. Every day, someone's life is saved by a stranger. That stranger could be you or someone you love. This World Blood Day, I also recognise the persistence and tenacity of ACON, the NSW Gay and Lesbian Lobby, Rainbow Labor and other LGBTIQ+ activists for your advocacy to overturn the outdated and discriminatory ban on gay men donating blood. This rule has prevented generations of gay men from donating blood and has contributed to stigma against people with HIV and other blood borne viruses. This World Blood Day, I sincerely thank the Australian Red Cross and all the generous blood donors in my electorate of Summer Hill and across NSW who have rolled up their sleeves and donated blood this year. You are all life savers.

PAINT MARRICKVILLE READ-NATIONAL SIMULTANEOUS STORY TIME

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Paint the Town Read Marrickville recently celebrated the 20th National Simultaneous Storytime with an online reading of Whitney and Britney the Chicken Divas. The National Simultaneous Story Time is hosted by hundreds of libraries, schools, family homes and childcare centres across Australia. The event encourages kids to discover their love of reading and to seeks to improve the literacy rates of kids in Australia. Every year the event showcases a new story book written and illustrated by an Australian author and illustrator, helping to promote our unique Australian publishing industry. This year, Paint Marrickville REaD is encouraging inner west families to take the time during lockdown to read with their little ones and help them discover their love of reading. Paint Marrickville REaD plans to come together in person in November. I know that inner west kids will be excited for the special guest appearance of Garranga Bummari the Pelican. Thank you to all the Paint Marrickville REaD volunteers for providing such wonderful and welcomed entertainment for inner west kids during this pandemic. I look forward to joining you in November to help spread the love of reading.

NEIL'S GREAT SHAVE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise community advocate for suicide prevention Neil Clancy from Port Macquarie for starting a campaign to raise funds for Lifeline Mid Coast. Sadly, Neil and his wife Lorraine know all too well the heartbreak of losing someone they love to suicide. During their period of loss, Lifeline was a mountain of strength that supported the family as they coped with the unimaginable trauma of losing their son, Sean. Acknowledging the crucial work Lifeline Mid Coast undertakes each day for people bereaved or living with mental illness, 'Neil's Great Shave' was born to raise funding and create awareness for suicide prevention. Partnering with Neil to raise money for Lifeline was Andy Liebeck of Andy Pandy Hair Candy who shaved his way through Neil's hair on the 11 June raising a total of \$1,800. Overwhelmed by the communities' support, Neil is optimistic that his campaign will shine a spotlight on those facing similar challenges in the hope that people will seek help for their mental illness or bereavement. Lifeline is a not-for-profit organisation and is there 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week for those who need support.

LEADING SENIOR CONSTABLE GRANT CHRISTENSEN

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise Port Macquarie's Leading Senior Constable Grant Christensen who recently announced his retirement following a remarkable career spanning 41 years of service in the NSW Police Force. His colleagues will stand proudly when they attend the ceremonial March Out for Leading Senior Constable Grant Christensen on the 15 July 2020 to acknowledge an extraordinary man that has served his community with integrity, compassion and kindness for 41 years. Joining the NSW Police Force on the 2 July 1979, Grant commenced duty at the Academy in Darlinghurst before transferring to Dubbo in 1981 to commence Highway Patrol duties in the region. He returned to Mudgee in 1990 to perform General Duties until he discovered the beautiful Mid North Coast region, where he served as one of two officers at Laurieton Police Station as the Lock Up Keeper in 1995. Grant has been honoured with a National Medal, 2nd Clasp, National Police Service Medal and the NSW Police Medal, 5th Clasp. Described as a leader, role model and loyal friend, Grant will be missed both by his colleagues and the community that he has so proudly served.

HILLS BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Hills Hornets Basketball Association, a club truly dedicated both to the sport and the Castle Hill community in which it is situated. I have previously mentioned on Hansard their Walking Basketball program, allowing all ages to get involved in the physical and social aspects of the sport. This is one of a number of community oriented programs the club gets behind, which also includes the CEO Sleepout, Westmead Children's Hospital and Shoes 4 Planet Earth. They are also a very successful club in the NSW and Australian Competitive Basketball Scene, with over 5,000 players, 29 rep teams and a strong wheelchair basketball presence, the Hornets are a force to be reckoned with! As such, it was recently my pleasure to announce \$5,000 worth of funding to improve both their walking basketball and refereeing programs. This was part of the State's \$4.6 million Local Sport Grants Program, of which Castle Hill was the beneficiary of \$50,000. My congratulations and best wishes go to all involved in running this club, namely Russell Graham, Mitzi Crawford, Lyle Vallance, Marinette Impreso, James Murray, Olivia Nicholls, Damien Power and Steve Burke.

KELLYVILLE UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Kellyville United Football Club, who despite being the youngest club in the Hills Football Conference, are already proving themselves to be a leader in terms of the community spirit they portray every weekend. They are also proving themselves to be a strong group of footballers, winning 5 of the 18 divisions they participated in last season, and achieving a top 3 in 7 more. It was recently my pleasure to announce \$7,000 worth of funding to the club, to assist in referee accreditation programs, and to purchase gazebos for weather protection. This was part of the State's \$4.6 million Local Sport Grants Program, of which Castle Hill was the beneficiary of \$50,000. I wish the club all success and would like to mention in particular the committee consisting of: David Duggan, Stuart Meighan, Belinda Atkins, Dave McKenna, Adam Sharpe, Roxanne Hope, Mario Zullo, Bill Renton, Donna Renton, Stephen Wellington, Scott Howard, Trena McKenna, Terry Deacon, Cameron Joyce and Joe Carnevale.

THANK YOU ILLAWARRA SCHOOLS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)—The COVID-19 crisis has thrown our lives into chaos and required us all to adapt in our daily routines under unprecedented conditions. Teachers and principals have done this often while putting aside concerns for their own health and that of their families to ensure students have consistency and reassurance in face of confusion, mixed messages and rapidly changing circumstances. I spoke with teachers and principals who spent endless hours planning and delivering online curriculum, providing feedback and encouragement to parents and students navigating home learning. I humbly acknowledge the teachers and principals who spent hours phoning students and parents at home checking in on their wellbeing and progress during this difficult time. The task is far from over for teachers and principals as they face the challenge of assessing the needs of individual students that have been impacted by the crisis and accommodate more changes as we continue to reshape how we deliver education in a COVID-19 world. On behalf of the Illawarra community I offer my sincere gratitude to the schools of Keira and the Illawarra for their outstanding commitment to the wellbeing and education of our children through the COVID-19 crisis.

JANE CROWLEY

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I would like to congratulate Jane Crowley who is the proprietor of Dirty Janes in Bowral, an iconic antiques and gifts emporium that supports many local stall holders and attracts many visitors to the Southern Highlands. Jane is Chair of the Community Strategic Working Group and Facilitator of the Communications Action Group. She is working to identify opportunities for local community groups, not for profit organisations and volunteers to collaborate and share limited resources. She also helps them

scope out projects that can attract funding at both government and private sponsorship level. She is encouraging community groups to participate in the proposed Southern Highlands Resilience Hub. Jane offers also mentors those who are seeking to commence their own small business by passing on her great experience. In addition Jane has kindly offered to help activate a Sustainability Working Group project and a Repair Café which people can bring broken and old artefacts and even clothing for rejuvenation. She has provided space in Dirty Janes for this. Thank you Jane for all that you are doing.

SERVICE NSW – MITTAGONG OFFICE

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I would like to commend the Mittagong Office of Service NSW for their outstanding work during the recent bushfire period and the current COVID-19 crisis. They have provided service of the highest order to the community. Over the past few months my Electorate Office has received many enquiries about the Government response and assistance to the current COVID-19 situation. Where my office was unable to assist we were able to put them in direct contact with the Mittagong Office. Their response was always immediate and effective and always done with an empathy for the situation which ensured that those seeking assistance were put at ease. The team at Mittagong is led by Rebecca Thompson who provides strong and effective leadership. They have been able to provide me and my staff with the information that is needed to deal with the many complex enquiries that we receive. Service NSW is one of the great initiatives of this Government and Minister Dominello should be justifiably proud of this great service. Thank you Rebecca and the team at Service NSW Mittagong.

GLENMORE ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL P & C

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I congratulate the Glenmore Road Public School's P&C for their fundraising and commitment to sustainability for the school and students education. In 2018 I supported the P&C's application for a Community Building Partnership Grant providing solar panels for the school. In February this year I joined senior students to race the solar cars they had created, learning how solar energy works, and the solar buddy lights project that provides renewable energy powered lights to remote and at risk communities suffering energy poverty. More recently the P&C was successful with grants from Woolworths Junior Land Care to create a native plant nursery and update the school's sensory garden designed to stimulate sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound. The P&C has also obtained a Woollahra Council grant for further sustainability projects. I congratulate the Glenmore Road Public School P&C for their work to improve resources for students and this practical commitment to sustainability and environmental awareness.

EMMA BURNETT

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I wish to congratulate Glenmore Park resident, Emma Burnet, who was selected to complete an elective unit overseas in Pokhara, Nepal in this past January. During her studies there, Emma took the opportunity to help raise funds for Nepalese hospitals in local and rural locations after witnessing how different healthcare is in a foreign country. She participated in operating a mobile health camp in villages where access to healthcare was limited. Through these camps, physical assessments were conducted along with education sessions informing local boys and girls about sexual and reproductive health in order to improve their quality of life and encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles. To assist in raising funds for those with limited healthcare, Emma had set herself a goal of running 305km between November and January and started a GoFundMe page where all the money raised would be used to purchase hospital equipment such as wheelchairs and to assist scholarships for Nepalese university nursing students. Well done Emma, congratulations on this outstanding achievement!

NEKEA TALAIA

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to acknowledge Glenmore Park resident Nekea Talaia, who was awarded the NSW Government State Representative Award for her outstanding achievements in Long Jump and the 800m Medley Relay at the School Sport Track and Field Exchange in September 2019. Nekea began her athletic journey at a very young age and progressively improved in her track and field abilities through diligent training and determination. Nominated for the award by her mum Nicole, Nekea has made all of her family very proud and is most deserving of this prestigious award. The 2019 School Sport Track and Field Exchange saw children from all across the country come to compete for 1st place. Nekea placed 2nd in the Medley Relay along with three other NSW Representative runners and placed 5th for Long Jump with only 2mm between 3rd and 5th place. Congratulations Nekea on your success at the 2019 competition and I wish you all the best for your future in athletics.

RECOGNISING OUR LOCAL HONOURS RECIPIENTS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I rise to acknowledge the further recipients of the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours in my electorate of North Shore. These honours are awarded to those in our

community who have made an outstanding contribution locally, and to Australia globally or domestically. These recipients embody all the positives we see in our community, the great ideas, hard work, and compassion for one another. I would like to congratulate Mr Patrick Bollen of Wollstonecraft who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his significant service to the community and to sailing. I would also like to congratulate Mrs Janice Cunningham who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to Australia-United States Military commemorations. Lastly, I congratulate Professor Roy MacLeod of Neutral Bay who received a Medal of the Order of Australia for his significant service to education, particularly to history. Congratulations to these recipients, and as the Member for North Shore I am incredibly proud to represent outstanding individuals such as Patrick, Janice and Roy.

FATHER WILFRED PLUNKETT, OAM

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to acknowledge and pay tribute to the life's work and dedication of Father Wilfred Plunkett, who passed away earlier this month. Fr Plunkett was well known, well respected and well-loved across Wagga Wagga, not just in the Catholic community but much more widely. At 92-years of age, he had spent more than six decades serving the church and God as a member of the priesthood and in 2006 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his service. Throughout this time, he played an integral role in building up Koorinal's Sacred Heart Catholic Church, which was once an old army hut, in addition to the Mater Dei School in Wagga Wagga. I can personally recollect the great work and kind nature of Fr Plunkett, who baptised two of my own children and whose work was so critical to the success of Sacred Heart Primary School which my children attended. He was a parish priest who knew the "smell of the sheep of his flock"; he was practical and concerned with the real day-to-day issues of his parishioners. His faith and love showed in his works and caring.

THANK YOU CLEANERS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I rise today to commend and acknowledge the contributions of cleaners throughout NSW, who during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic remained on duty in support of the health and safety of our communities and our State's healthcare and frontline workers. Throughout a time of great uncertainty and pressure, cleaners within our public spaces and healthcare facilities took on critical roles within our community as all environments needed additional sanitation and the stakes had never been higher. This Monday, 15th June 2020, it was great to see communities across the globe taking the time to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of cleaners during International Cleaners Day to thank them for everything they have done, especially during the global pandemic. On behalf of the Fairfield Electorate I extend our sincerest appreciation to cleaners throughout NSW and commend you all for your ongoing efforts.

MS IRIS TERRY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On behalf of the Fairfield Electorate I would like to extend a great big congratulations to Ms Iris Terry, who celebrated her 103rd Birthday on 19th May 2020. Ms Iris Terry is a Veteran who served in the RAAF and remains as vibrant and energetic as she's ever been. Mrs Terry continues to serve our local community through the Fairfield RSL-Sub Branch and Ladies Auxiliary and has shown no signs of wanting to slow down. Although Ms Terry was unable have a big birthday bash due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was heart-warming to know her friends and family took the time to celebrate and keep in touch utilising video conferencing through ZOOM. For those in the Fairfield community who have had the great pleasuring of spending time with Ms Terry would know her presence alone lights up an entire room. On behalf of the Fairfield Electorate, I would like to extend our sincerest admiration and appreciation to Ms Iris Terry for her many years of service and wish her a very Happy Birthday. Iris, you are a true inspiration to us all.

INTERNATIONAL CLEANERS' DAY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—In recent months the world has waged war against the spread of COVID-19. In NSW, as we've emerged from the isolation of our homes, we have been constantly reassured that cleaning regimes are being undertaken with diligence and greater regularity to prevent the spread of coronavirus. In the background, in our schools, public buildings, hospitals, retail outlets, businesses and homes, who is doing this unsung, potentially unsafe and sometimes unpleasant work? Our cleaners. When there is a known outbreak, who is sent in on the front line to reclaim the space and make it once again safe? Our cleaners. The work of cleaners goes on every day of every year and is sometimes taken for granted. However, never before have our cleaners played a more vital role in keeping our communities safe. In honour of International Cleaners' Day, which was celebrated globally on Monday, I thank our cleaners, in all facets of our community, for the work they do, today and every day. I acknowledge and appreciate their efforts, particularly in the face of the threat of COVID-19. And I ask them to be mindful of their own health and safety as they move through their days.

ULTRA FOR EVERYONE: WESTPAC RESCUE HELICOPTER FUNDRAISER - ROD MARSHDALE AND SCOTT ELLIS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—COVID-19 has taken its toll on our communities in myriad ways, and traditional fundraising activities, such as charity balls, have been curtailed. To address this, the Hunter Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service is running a virtual event called the AW139 Ultra for Everyone. People can take on a range of challenges to raise their fitness while raising funds. Two East Maitland men – Rod Marshdale and Scott Ellis, are among those who have accepted the challenge. Rod, who was born with cystic fibrosis, says he owes his life to the chopper, which flew him to the John Hunter Hospital for a life-saving double lung transplant in 2015. Rod knows that flight cost about \$3500. He's determined to raise double that sum – one to cover his own flight, and one for another person. Scott, who owns Ted's Bike Shop at East Maitland, is undertaking the cycling challenge. He says that if he raises more than \$5000 he'll ride an extra 139 kilometres on a penny farthing. With contributions such as Rod's and Scott's, it is hoped the AW139 Ultra for Everyone will raise more than \$40,000.

CONJOINT PROFESSOR PAUL WALKER

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Conjoint Professor Paul Walker, who have been recognised for his service to paediatric medicine and professional organisations with a Medal of the Order of Australia. As an ear, nose and throat specialist Conjoint Professor Walker has played a significant role in the improvement of health outcomes for children, most notably through being a driving force in making airway reconstruction and cochlear implantation available in the Hunter, preventing local children from having to travel to Sydney for procedures. His pioneering attitude has also seen him serve as President of the Australia New Zealand Society of Paediatric Otolaryngology. This is a testament to Conjoint Professor Walker's dedication to both paediatric health and improving the skills of his colleagues. Conjoint Professor Walker has undoubtedly improved the lives of countless children. This honour is much deserved.

DR JAELEA SKEHAN

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Dr Jaelea Skehan who has been recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia for her phenomenal work in mental health and suicide prevention. As the first female director of mental health institute Everymind, Dr Skehan has played a key role in the development of programs that support mental wellbeing and is currently serving as a Special Advisor to the National Suicide Prevention Taskforce. Dr Skehan has an unwavering commitment to reducing the suicide rate, both through the prevention of mental illness and the treatment of complex mental health challenges. Her work for better outcomes has undoubtedly saved many lives and improved the quality of life for many other. Dr Skehan's passion for her vocation is an inspiration. This honour is well-deserved, but I'm sure there are bigger things to come.

REFUGEE WEEK – HOUSE OF WELCOME

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—Refugee Week raises awareness to issues refugees in Australia face, and recognises the many positive contributions refugees have made to make Australia the enchantingly diverse community it is. During the Covid-19 pandemic, House of Welcome (HoW) saw a huge increase in referrals. The demand for food services doubled and the distribution of emergency relief payments increased seven-fold. The HoW has done fantastic work to support refugees during this difficult time, tripling case work appointments and catering to an increased demand of 77% to their food bank service. Australia is a signatory to The Refugee Convention hence is legally and morally obliged to develop law and policy in the spirit of the Convention, in both federal and state jurisdictions. Since the end of World War II in 1945, Australia has accepted more than 880,000 people in humanitarian need. The Granville electorate is home to a considerably large number of those who have successfully started a new life in Australia with their families, and often started successful local businesses. Since their arrival refugees have been contributing to the growth of Australia so it is important to show our continued support to show that they are not just welcomed in and abandoned.

CHERRY STREET SPORTS, BALLINA BOWLING AND RECREATION CLUB

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I acknowledge the efforts of Tere Sheehan and his team at the Ballina Bowling and Recreation Club (Cherry Street Sports) in Ballina. During the restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the club was able to keep many employees engaged in innovative ways and give back to the community by providing half price, ready to heat and eat meals to elderly members, free meals to frontline workers in the Ballina community and delivered directly to hospitals, schools and GP clinics. The team kept in contact with many older club members, calling to see how were doing and offering assistance. I commend Tere and the club for engaging with Cape Byron Medical Centre, NSW Health and Aspin Medical to establish a respiratory medical clinic in the club's spacious grounds. Their community concern and innovation during this difficult time had a positive impact on our community.

PARADISE FM – 19TH BIRTHDAY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Congratulations to Ballina-based community radio station Paradise FM on celebrating 19 years on air on 19 June 2020. Station Manager Jenny Ellenbroek, Production Manager Jim Bowtell and presenters Warwick Manning, Sandra Jackson, Marilyn Perkins, Linda Airey, Bob Bolewski and Rod Bruem do an excellent job of keeping listeners informed of local and national news as well as entertained and engaged. With the transition of our local newspapers to online only we will rely on our community radio station now more than ever. Happy Birthday Paradise FM!

TWEED RESIDENTS' COVID RESPONSE

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—I wish to congratulate the residents of the Tweed in controlling the spread of COVID-19. As of 8pm on the 15th June, 649,337 people across NSW had been tested for the virus, with 7895 tests completed in the Northern NSW area. The suppression of the virus in Northern NSW is a huge accomplishment and in many ways is owing to the response of local communities who have adhered to social distancing and isolation restrictions. Like most of NSW, we have seen a significant number of jobs lost in the Tweed, with many businesses hit hard by enforced closures. But the people of the Tweed are resilient and as restrictions ease and life begins to return to its new "normal", Tweed residents are rebuilding. I would also like to pay tribute to the hard work and dedication of our health workers, who have worked extremely hard in a fast-changing and high-pressure environment to stem the spread of COVID-19. In what has been an extremely challenging time, I am very proud of the response of the people of the Tweed and am pleased to be able to formally thank the Tweed Electorate for its commitment to containing COVID-19.

WILLOWDALE COMMUNITY PLACE - BOOK BUS

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I commend the Willowdale Community Place for having launched their free Book Bus service for kids in Willowdale. I note that these books are sterilized and given to children in Willowdale, fostering the next generation of readers in the Camden community. I acknowledge the wonderful impact this initiative has for the children in Willowdale, particularly during the COVID19 pandemic.

DOMENIC PEZZANO

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I acknowledge Domenic Pezzano who received a Group Bravery Citation at the annual Australian Bravery Awards. Domenic was among a group honoured for the courage and bravery shown throughout a riot and hostage event Long Bay Metropolitan Remand Centre in 1986, where their professionalism during the event saved lives and saw nobody get seriously hurt. Domenic has had a long and distinguished career working in corrections, having reached the rank of superintendent. Congratulations Domenic.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 20:16
until Thursday 18 June 2020 at 9:30.**