



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 18 June 2020**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday, 18 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.

## *Notices*

### **PRESENTATION**

*[During the giving of notices of motions]*

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The giving of the last two notices of motion went for over 35 seconds each. I draw to the attention of members that, under the standing orders, the maximum time for the giving of each notice of motion is 30 seconds.

*Later,*

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the member for Oxley to rephrase her notice of motion so that it reads as a notice of motion, particularly towards the end.

## *Bills*

### **WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (INFORMATION EXCHANGE) 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) (09:45:00):**

I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020. The bill demonstrates the Government's ongoing commitment to ensuring that every worker in this State has a healthy, safe and productive working life. It lays the groundwork for information sharing between NSW Health and the New South Wales work health and safety [WHS] regulators. The Government believes that information sharing will play a valuable role in helping to reduce the prevalence of occupational diseases in this State. The Government intends initially to use the information-sharing power created by the bill to address the increase in reported cases of the occupational lung disease silicosis. That is just one part of a broader package of reforms which the Government has developed to tackle this disease.

Silicosis is a lung disease caused by inhaling respirable crystalline silica dust. Crystalline silica is a naturally occurring mineral present in most rocks, sand and clay, as well as in brick, concrete, tile and manufactured stone. Respirable crystalline silica dust is produced when those materials or products are cut, drilled, ground or polished. When it is inhaled the dust can permanently scar a worker's lung tissue, progressively cause respiratory impairment and reduce lung functionality. The damage is irreversible and, in the most serious cases, fatal. Silicosis does not always take a long time to develop, unlike other occupational lung diseases with which members may be familiar. Silicosis has forms: acute, accelerated and chronic. Acute silicosis can kill young people who have only just begun their working lives. It has been observed in workers within a few months to two years after they have been exposed to high concentrations of respirable crystalline silica. Accelerated silicosis can appear in workers who have had high levels of exposure over one to 10 years. Chronic silicosis results from long-term exposure—more than 10 years—to low levels of silica.

One worker with this disease is one too many. Every person who goes to work in this State should come home safe at the end of the day and not end up with a permanent or fatal disease as a result of their work. The dangers of respirable crystalline silica have been known for a long time and silicosis remained a rare condition until recently. This has primarily been because the traditional industries in which there is exposure to crystalline silica have protective measures in place. Its re-emergence is linked to the increasing use of manufactured stone in



housing and construction, particularly for benchtop material in kitchens, bathrooms and laundries. Manufactured stone can contain much higher percentages of crystalline silica than traditional materials and products.

This rise in popularity has coincided with a sharp spike in silicosis cases across New South Wales. From 1 July 2019 to 31 January 2020, 70 cases of silicosis were identified by icare in New South Wales. In the 2018-19 financial year there were 40 cases and in the year before there were nine. The frustration for WHS regulators, workers and families affected by this disease is that it is preventable. The exposure need not happen if the appropriate risk management steps are taken when working with manufactured stone and other materials containing silica. In response to the rise in silicosis cases, the Government has developed a comprehensive, multi-agency silicosis prevention strategy to ensure that everyone in this State is working safely with silica. The strategy is attacking the rising onslaught of silicosis diagnoses on three fronts.

First, the Government is acting now to explicitly ban dry cutting of manufactured stone. Secondly, the Government has already acted to halve the workplace exposure standard for respirable crystalline silica [RCS]. Thirdly, with this bill the Government proposes to enable regulators to target their compliance and enforcement at workplaces who are not protecting their workers from exposure to a risk of contracting silicosis by allowing a notifiable disease. The first element of the strategy is being enacted by the Government amending the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 to explicitly ban the practice of uncontrolled dry cutting of manufactured stone containing crystalline silica. Dry cutting manufactured stone with a power tool is particularly dangerous because of its potential to generate a high volume of respirable crystalline silica dust. This practice has always been prohibited under the broader obligations of health and safety duty holders in the Act not to expose workers to risks to their health and safety.

But this amendment will make clear to those working with manufactured stone that no-one should be using a power tool to cut these materials without controls, such as water-fed tools, an extraction system attached to the power tool, or an exhaust system in place to reduce the generation of dust. The amendment also makes clear that persons conducting a business or undertaking [PCBUs] must ensure that all workers potentially exposed to a dangerous level of respirable crystalline silica dust—not just those doing the cutting, but workers nearby—are provided with and are wearing adequate personal protective equipment. PCBUs who allow workers to perform uncontrolled dry cutting or who do not ensure workers are wearing adequate protective respiratory equipment will be committing an offence. The Government is giving work health and safety inspectors the power to issue on-the-spot penalties to PCBUs who do not comply with the ban on uncontrolled dry cutting. The Government has acted quickly to ensure that this ban will be in place by 1 July this year.

The Government has also moved swiftly on the second element of the silica strategy. The workplace exposure standard is determined at a national level under the harmonised work health and safety laws. It sets the maximum airborne concentration of respirable crystalline silica that a person should be exposed to in a workplace. It is an offence for a PCBU to allow a person at a workplace to be exposed to RCS in an airborne concentration that exceeds the workplace exposure standard. Late last year, after being presented with new evidence about the dangers of RCS, I agreed with the Commonwealth and other State and Territory work health and safety Ministers that the workplace exposure standard for respirable crystalline silica should be lowered from a time-weighted average over eight hours of 0.1mg/m<sup>3</sup> to 0.05mg/m<sup>3</sup>. That is halving the workplace exposure standard.

At the national level, the deadline for implementing that revised standard is not until October 2022. That is too long to wait while workers are being exposed to unacceptably high levels of silica in workplaces in New South Wales. That is why the Government is implementing the revised standard in New South Wales well in advance of the national deadline, by 1 July this year. I realise that this may require businesses to adjust their work practices swiftly. The Government wants to help businesses to meet that standard and conduct their activities safely. That is why SafeWork NSW has been offering rebates of up to \$1,000 to manufactured stone businesses that purchase new equipment to control the risks of dry cutting, and will continue to do so until 30 June.

This brings me to the third element of the Government's silica strategy—the reform contained in this bill, which will be supported by a declaration by the health Minister under the Public Health Act 2010, that silicosis is a scheduled medical condition, notifiable to NSW Health. The goal of creating the information-sharing power in this bill is to enable NSW Health to assist WHS regulators to target their ongoing efforts in education, enforcement, and compliance at the workplaces where they are most needed—that is, at workplaces where workers are contracting silicosis. Our existing laws require PCBUs to ensure that workers who are exposed to respirable crystalline silica are subject to regular health monitoring. If a worker is diagnosed with silicosis, then the PCBU is required, by law, to provide a copy of the health monitoring report to the WHS regulator.

This process and these requirements are designed to quickly identify workplaces of greatest risk so that there can be targeted education and enforcement action. However, in practice, the notifications are not reliably consistent and, alone, are not sufficient to stem the increasing number of diagnosed cases. The WHS regulator cannot take enforcement action against a PCBU for failing to inform of a diagnosis when the WHS regulator does

not know there has been a diagnosis. Additionally, not all cases of silicosis are diagnosed through the health monitoring PCBUs are required to provide under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. Workers may be diagnosed outside that process by their own doctors. In that case, there is presently no obligation on doctors or workers to notify WHS regulators.

WHS regulators have explored all available options to get information about silicosis diagnoses. With the assistance of icare, which provides screening services for silicosis, WHS regulators have been able to obtain some information about cases of silicosis diagnosed in workers using their service. But WHS regulators are still not informed of all diagnoses of silicosis in New South Wales. This is the only way to halt this rapid increase in the number of workers affected by silicosis. The Government therefore intends to implement a system that will seek to ensure that WHS regulators, with the cooperation of the New South Wales department of health, are informed of all diagnoses of silicosis in this State. This bill is the first step in establishing the legal framework for that system. The next step is for the Minister for Health and Medical Research to declare that silicosis is a scheduled medical condition within the meaning of part 4 of the Public Health Act 2010.

The effect of that declaration is that when a medical practitioner diagnoses an individual with silicosis, they will be required to notify the New South Wales department of health in. To do so, they will need to use a form that has been designed to ensure it collects the information WHS regulators need to target their compliance and enforcement efforts, including the details of the worker's current or most recent employer. Workers in silica-exposed jobs need us to get this framework in place as soon as possible. The Government is working to get this system operating as soon as possible so that regulators can take action where it is needed. That brings me to another aspect of the Government's silicosis strategy. It is the ongoing efforts of our WHS regulators to ensure that workers are being protected from the dangers of contracting silicosis.

The New South Wales Work Health and Safety Act requires PCBUs to do what is reasonably practicable to ensure their workers' health and safety and our WHS regulators will be vigilant in ensuring that they do. SafeWork NSW and Safe Work Australia offer guidance on how PCBUs can meet their requirements under the legislative framework. For example, there is a number of work methods that PCBUs can put in place to ensure that their workers are not being exposed to an unacceptably high level of silica from working with manufactured stone. These include wet cutting, using tools fitted with extractors, working with local ventilation systems, using dust suppression techniques, isolating high dust generation work processes and ensuring that adequate personal protective equipment is worn.

If there is any doubt about the level of respirable crystalline silica in the air, our laws require PCBUs to conduct air monitoring to determine whether they meet the standard. PCBUs also need to provide health monitoring to workers who are exposed to respirable crystalline silica on an ongoing basis to determine whether their health has been affected by the exposure. The New South Wales WHS regulators, SafeWork NSW and the NSW Resources Regulator have been active in ensuring that PCBUs understand and comply with those obligations. SafeWork NSW's activities have been directed by its five-year hazardous chemicals strategy, the 2017-2022 Hazardous Chemicals and Materials Exposures Baseline Reduction Strategy. The strategy identifies silica as one of its top two priority chemicals. As part of the strategy, SafeWork NSW has undertaken extensive educational activities across the State to ensure that employers and workers understand how to work safely with manufactured stone.

The educational outreach has been accompanied by a strong focus on compliance and enforcement at manufactured stone sites. SafeWork NSW has visited every site where manufactured stone is fabricated in the State. In addition to continuing to implement the strategy, the Government is taking the following steps to prevent workers from being exposed to respirable crystalline silica. Together with our existing workplace laws, the Government's reforms make up a cohesive, whole-of-government strategy to address the re-emergence of silicosis. In the first instance, the Government intends to use the information-sharing power to target silicosis. But over time, as new materials and new technologies come into use in New South Wales, other threats to workers' health may emerge—or re-emerge—as silicosis has.

That is why the Government has ensured that the bill will enable information sharing between NSW Health and WHS regulators in relation to other conditions if it becomes necessary in the future. As is the case, the Government will consult with the Information Commissioner and Privacy Commissioner on any future information-sharing proposals. New South Wales WHS regulators must be able to respond swiftly and flexibly to protect workers in the State. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of having the infrastructure in place to mobilise quickly and efficiently to respond to a health crisis, particularly in our workplaces. The bill will ensure that if threats to workers' safety emerge, our WHS regulators can seek assistance from the Health department, which has well-established systems for monitoring the prevalence of conditions or diseases of public concern.

That efficient approach makes use of the existing expertise of two government agencies. NSW Health and WHS regulators are united in their concern for the long-term health of workers in the State and will work together to stem the tide of increasing silicosis diagnoses. The Work Health and Safety Act is based on a national model Act, which has been adopted in all Australian jurisdictions except Victoria and Western Australia. The Government knows how valuable the harmonisation of our work health and safety laws with those in other Australian jurisdictions has been for workers and businesses in the State. It has enabled businesses to streamline their operations across State borders and to adopt a consistent approach to health and safety issues in workplaces across the country.

The bill to amend the Work Health and Safety Act will not affect that harmonisation. The Inter-Governmental Agreement for Regulatory and Operational Reform in Occupational Health and Safety allows jurisdictions to make changes to their work health and safety legislation if the changes do not affect the operation of the model laws materially. The amendments contained in the bill do not affect the operation of the model work health and safety laws materially. They cover internal information sharing between two New South Wales government agencies. Other jurisdictions have enacted reforms to address the issue of notification of silicosis using the mechanisms appropriate to their own internal administrative arrangements. The information-sharing arrangement between NSW Health and WHS regulators is vital to ensuring workers' safety and will not affect national harmonisation.

I turn now to the substance of the bill. The bill seeks to amend the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to authorise the Secretary of NSW Health to provide information to the regulators established by that Act. There are two work health and safety regulators that enforce the Act: SafeWork NSW, which is responsible for the Act in all workplaces subject to New South Wales law, except mining and petroleum sites; and the NSW Resources Regulator, which is responsible for mining and petroleum sites. Clause 3 inserts new section 271B into the Work Health and Safety Act. The section will authorise the Secretary of NSW Health to provide information to the New South Wales work health and safety regulators if the provision of that information is necessary for the regulators to exercise their functions under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

The health secretary is not under any duty to disclose information. The health secretary will have discretion to provide or withhold information and the decision to do so will be based on the secretary's assessment of whether the information in question is necessary for the work health and safety regulators to enforce work health and safety laws in New South Wales. The bill does not restrict the type of information that the health secretary may provide to the work health and safety regulators. The health secretary may provide any information the secretary has, as long as the information is necessary for the regulator to carry out its functions under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. Clause 3 of the bill also provides that information may be shared under new section 271B (1) despite any prohibitions or requirements in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002.

That is an important provision. The Government understands the importance of protecting workers' privacy. However, the Government has good reasons for providing that the secretary's discretion to disclose information to the regulators will not be fettered by the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act. In exceptional situations, NSW Health may provide limited personal and medical information about workers in order to protect those workers and other workers from serious risks to their health and safety. Our WHS regulators must know which workers are getting occupational diseases so that they know which workplaces are the problem, and can intervene where necessary. In the case of silicosis, it is the Government's intention that SafeWork NSW and NSW Health will enter into a memorandum of understanding that will set out the means by which those agencies will share information.

In that memorandum of understanding, SafeWork NSW and NSW Health will make commitments as to how they will share, use and store the information that they receive from health practitioners about diagnoses of silicosis. The memorandum of understanding is being developed by SafeWork NSW and NSW Health in consultation with the Information and Privacy commissioners to ensure that workers' personal information is treated with the respect for their privacy that the Government believes it deserves. Access to the information will be restricted to those who need to know. It is the Government's intention that it will be held in a secure database with restricted accessibility and access auditing. The commissioners will be informed of any amendments to information-sharing arrangements under the memorandum of understanding relating to silicosis and will be consulted on the sharing of information about other workplace health issues should they arise in the future.

Clause 2 of the bill provides that the amending Act will commence on assent. The Government is aiming to have the silicosis notification system in place by 1 July. I am proud to have worked with the health Minister on the bill and on developing a mechanism through which WHS regulators can be notified of silicosis cases. I commend the Minister and his department for their contributions to the important reforms. With the new information-sharing power, WHS regulators and NSW Health will be in a stronger position to respond to emerging

threats to workers' health and safety, including the current increase in silicosis cases. The Government wants to see every worker go home safely at the end of their day and every workplace using hazardous materials doing the right thing by its workers. With all these reforms—this bill, banning dry cutting and lowering the workplace exposure standard—the Government aims to once more make silicosis a disease of the past. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (WATER RIGHTS TRANSPARENCY) BILL 2020 (NO 2)**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Helen Dalton, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (10:10:15):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I reintroduce this extremely overdue bill to Parliament. The bill will not only force New South Wales MPs to declare their water interests but also create an online public register of all companies, foreign and domestic, that own water. This is very similar to the bill I introduced last year, which led to months of vicious personal attacks on me by the National Party MPs. When I first tried to introduce the bill an anonymous National Party MP tried to report me to the ethics committee. The Government then stalled this bill until it expired. I note that this week water Minister Melinda Pavey introduced a bill requiring politicians to declare their water ownership. Fancy that! After nine years of allowing politicians and corporations to secretly own water, the New South Wales Government is finally doing something. While I am glad to have finally forced the Government's hand on this, Minister Pavey's watered-down bill falls a long way short of what we need. For a start, it only covers 135 State MPs among the thousands of groups that own water.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** But it covers water trading.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Murray has the right to introduce her bill and be heard in silence.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON:** While it is vital for all politicians to declare their water ownership, the public also deserve to know about political donors, politicians' spouses, foreign companies and Sydney traders who own our most precious valuable resource. As per usual, the National Party is protecting its donors and special interest groups by allowing them to keep their water ownership secret. This week Melinda Pavey actually made the water register more restrictive. She has inserted a clause not currently in the Act that gives the Minister the power to restrict access to personal information to protect the privacy of that information. What on earth is she hiding? What on earth is this Government hiding?

The media recently reported that Chinese state-owned corporations are buying up Australian water. If this is happening, Australians have a right to know about it. The Nationals remain silent as our national interest is compromised. I have no idea why Melinda Pavey continues to allow foreign corporations and foreign governments to buy our water in secret. Secrecy is the mother of corruption and mismanagement. I believe the toxic level of secrecy surrounding water ownership across New South Wales is a major reason we find ourselves in the water mess we have today. We all know the drought in Australia has caused misery and hardship for many, but the drought has also been extremely profitable for a select few. We do not always know who because it is impossible to find out who owns water in New South Wales, nor how much water they own. There is no online register where I can type the name of a person, a company or a government department and find out.

This is something the National Party refuses to change. Anyone, foreign or Australian, can buy vast quantities of our most valuable natural resource while concealing their identity. A secret speculator can buy up water, manipulate the price and make millions off the back of struggling farmers. The purpose of my bill is to end the secrecy of water ownership across the State. My bill changes the pecuniary interests form for New South Wales MPs so that they have to declare their water ownership—not just MPs but their spouses too. This is something that Minister Pavey's bill does not address. Unlike Minister Pavey's bill, my bill is retrospective for MPs. If a member has bought up any water in the past five years and sold it, they will still have to declare that. I am very suspicious that the Government, which spent six months delaying my bill, is suddenly introducing its own. MPs could have spent the past six months selling their water. I tried to make Melinda Pavey's bill retrospective; the Government voted down my amendment.

Minister Pavey said the idea that politicians own water is a conspiracy theory. The Government could kill that conspiracy theory by making water ownership transparent. It is a requirement of the Federal Water Act

2007 to have a searchable, transparent water register. Again, what is the Government hiding? It is just fuelling the conspiracy theory. My bill does not just apply to politicians; it also changes the application process for anyone getting a water licence so that they cannot hide their identity when they apply for the licence. My bill also changes the online NSW Water Register to allow people to search for the water holdings of people, companies and government departments. Minister Pavey's bill does not do that. She will continue to make it impossible for people to search for water owners. I do not know why The Nationals are so terrified of water transparency. We have a register of property and land where we can find out who owns what and where. So why on earth do we keep water secret?

Since water was separated from land and became an individual property right there have been many issues around registering and providing public transparency on water ownership. At present it is very difficult for ordinary members of the public to find out who has entitlements to New South Wales river water, groundwater and flood plain harvesting water. While the New South Wales Government authority WaterNSW maintains an online water register, the limited information contained in the register and its restrictive search functions block transparency. It is not possible to search for a water access licence [WAL] using an individual's name, a company name, an Australian business number, a government department name or an irrigation scheme name. Instead, the register allows people to search for a water licence number or a works approval number to find out details on water entitlements.

At present, the water register is deliberately complex and difficult to use. Moreover, getting a water licence is easier than opening up a bank account. It is possible for corporate entities to obtain a licence without disclosing names of major shareholders, company owners, parent companies or other individuals who may directly benefit from the water purchased. Former Australian Federal Police commissioner Mr Michael Keelty recently said that the current rules left the door open to criminal activity. If we do not know who is purchasing water and checking the credentials of the individuals, companies and corporates—both foreign and domestic—we could be opening the door to money laundering. We need a searchable, transparent water register.

There is another big issue undermining transparency. Those of us here in this Chamber—members of the New South Wales Parliament—are not required to disclose our water entitlements as part of our disclosures of pecuniary interests. Members are required under legislation to disclose property ownership, gifts, income sources, debts and contributions to travel, but there is no requirement to disclose water entitlements. For nine long years the New South Wales Government knew this but did nothing about it. It is only now with me introducing my bill that the Government is dragging itself kicking and screaming into Parliament. Again, it is protecting its donors and special interests outside Parliament.

The bill I put forward proposes a number of simple changes to allow a member of the public to search for water entitlements by the name of the individual, the Australian business number and government department names. This information is to be available, either free of charge or for a small cost via an online database. There is also a need to increase the amount of information a person or entity must provide authorities to hold or obtain a water access licence. It is not good enough for a company in the Cayman Islands to buy large quantities of water while keeping the names of directors, board members and major shareholders a secret. If a foreign or domestic corporation wants to own Australia's most valuable natural resource then the Australian taxpayers deserve to know about them.

The National Party and its surrogates have used the excuse of privacy concerns. It claims to be concerned about the privacy of farmers. It says it is worried about Australians' rights and activist-style terrorist attacks. What a lot of rubbish. For irrigators like me it is pretty obvious when we have water. I use water to grow food. I am proud of that fact and I have declared it. But nobody knows if the corporate trader in Pitt Street, Collins Street, Wall Street or Wangfujing, a commercial street in Beijing, owns water. They are the ones we must capture and they are the ones that The Nationals are protecting. Water bureaucrats are another group that have come under scrutiny over the past few years. People have asked me if they can trust them to manage a water register like this.

The bill addresses this as well, as it mandates an audit to be carried out on the operation of the water register by the Natural Resources Commission every 12 months. The bill is absolutely vital. Water use in New South Wales has been subject to considerable controversy over the past 20 years. There have been allegations of corruption, mismanagement, insider trading, conflicts of interest, market manipulation, misuse of environmental allocations, water theft and over extraction. As a result drought conditions across the State have been made much worse than they needed to be, causing a considerable hardship for people across western New South Wales. The long-term future of the river systems is under threat with potentially disastrous consequences for the economy and the health and welfare of regional New South Wales.

The impact speculators have on water prices is also an increasing concern. Increasing transparency over who owns water is an important first step in addressing those problems. Several government departments have water entitlements, but little public information is available on how they use water or the outcomes from that

water use. This needs to change. Rumours abound about individual politicians, political donors, celebrities, companies and foreign governments owning water. Allegations are often made about those groups manipulating the market, restricting water availability and keeping prices high for their own private benefit. Minister Pavey called this a conspiracy theory, but she still wants to keep it all secret. She has effectively labelled the 11,000 people who signed the petition demanding a searchable water register as conspiracy theorists. Their concerns are legitimate and they are far from paranoid. People signed the petition in two short months and it was introduced to Parliament. They lined up in droves to sign the petition because they can see the validity of having an open and transparent water register.

A better online water register containing more information on water licences and allowing people to identify water licence holders would increase public confidence and trust in our water system, which is broken. It would also allow researchers and oversight bodies to better scrutinise water use, which would be handy for The Nationals to know, and to analyse how the allocation and trade of water could better meet the needs of agriculture, the environment and critical human needs. They have fallen desperately short, especially in the past 12 months. At present there is less transparency in water ownership compared to ownership of land, property and company shares. It is possible for the general public to search for the names of people and companies that own a property or shares for free. As water is a scarce, valuable natural resource currently under threat, water ownership should be subject to more transparency than property and company share ownership, not less.

New South Wales is Australia's biggest State. We should be leading the way when it comes to water transparency. One would think that the National Party would show some leadership in this area. It is what the public demands and what we as representatives must give them. This legislation today is an important first step in fixing our water woes. It would send a message to the bush that we have turned the corner, that we are moving away from the darkness and secrecy towards progress and light. Unless people secretly own water and are making lots of money, I cannot see any possible reason for rejecting this sensible law change. For the sake of our farmers and our rural communities, I urge members to support the bill.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AMENDMENT (SERVICE PROVIDERS) BILL 2020**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Paul Lynch, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (10:27:07):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the Labor Opposition to introduce the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Service Providers) Bill 2020. The object of the bill is to amend the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 [PPIPA] so that the application of the Act is extended to a person or body that provides services for or on behalf of a public sector agency, or that receives funding from a public sector agency in connection with providing any services, if that person or body is prescribed by the regulations under the Act. The current rules covering and protecting privacy in the State date from 1998. As I have said before, that predates the invention of the iPhone. It is hardly a surprise that there are calls from a range of sources to improve and update the contents of the State legislative framework on privacy.

The State Labor Opposition has over recent years pursued those calls by way of a number of private members' bills. The bills in my name have sought to introduce mandatory reporting of serious breaches of privacy by State Government agencies and to extend the privacy regime to those State-owned corporations not currently governed by State or Federal Government privacy rules. Both those proposals were recommendations by the NSW Privacy Commissioner. I note that the Government acknowledged in a previous debate that it will pursue some of those initiatives. It was said the process might start this year. Additionally, I introduced a private member's bill to implement the numerous unanimous recommendations of a cross-party Legislative Council committee on civil remedies for serious invasions of privacy. Those recommendations would have increased the powers of the Privacy Commissioner, introduced a capacity for take-down orders without criminal proceedings and introduced a statutory cause of action for serious invasions of privacy.

I also note that earlier this year the current Privacy Commissioner was asked about gaps in the current regime. On 18 February I asked those questions to the commissioner at a hearing of the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission. At my suggestion, the

commissioner took the question on notice and provided a considered response. Among other things in that response, she said:

The PPIP Act is 20 years old and there is scope to enhance the legislation to address more contemporary issues.

Some of the examples she then mentioned included a mandatory data breach notification scheme and the inclusion of State-owned corporations in PPIPA. She also mentioned amending the Privacy Commissioner's functions to exercise an explicit function of audit and to also create a function for the Privacy Commissioner or their staff to enter premises and carry out inspections. The fact that such a list was provided by the Privacy Commissioner underlines the need for renovation and improvement of the current system, as has been proposed by the State Opposition over a number of years. We must go further than that, especially bearing in mind some of the data protection initiatives in Europe and California over recent years. In light of what Shoshana Zuboff calls surveillance capitalism and in light of Edward Snowden's revelations about the sharing of information, it seems to me that we must do much more to protect people's private information and data. That protection is just as important or in some contemporary senses even more important in the private sector than in the public sector, which brings us precisely to the bill before the House.

The object of the bill is to extend the coverage of PPIPA to non-government agencies that are performing government functions. The obligation to respect a citizen's privacy and to secure their data does not cease merely because a non-government organisation is performing functions on behalf of government, especially ones that government used to carry out. Increasingly, functions are being outsourced by government to bodies that are not the Government. The original provisions of PPIPA do not extend to NGOs unless they provide "data services" and the NGO has been prescribed. No bodies have been prescribed under the current legislation. Thus, the PPIPA regime has almost no coverage of non-government agencies. Some may be covered under Commonwealth legislation, but that is only for comparatively large organisations. It leaves a very wide field uncovered.

Demands by State agencies that contracted parties abide by PPIPA are inadequate, even if it is a contractual term. It provides no remedy for the citizen who has no privity in that contract between a State agency and NGO, and the citizen certainly does not have access to the statutory regime—PPIPA in such a case. At one level, it is not that surprising that the gap has arisen. PPIPA dates from 1998. The number of functions outsourced since then has increased significantly and the legislation has not kept up.

**Business interrupted.**

## **TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TRAVEL CONCESSIONS) BILL 2020**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 4 June 2020.**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (10:33:44):** On behalf of the Government I speak in debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (International Students Travel Concessions) Bill 2020. The bill seeks to have international students who pay a full fee enrolled at New South Wales tertiary institutions receive the same travel concessions as domestic students. The bill proposes to repeal section 88 (3A) of the Transport Administration Act 1988, which enables regulations to prescribe a class of persons who are not entitled to concession travel despite the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. It also contains changes to schedule 7, which would specify that international tertiary students are eligible for concessions. While no regulations have been made under section 88 (3A), clause 159 of schedule 7 entitled "Savings, transitional and other provisions" has operated in the absence of regulations to prevent overseas students paying a full fee from being entitled to concessional travel. The changes proposed by the bill have the intended effect of removing any ministerial or government discretion regarding concession entitlements for international students and deeming them automatically eligible for any entitlements that domestic students receive.

The longstanding position of successive New South Wales governments has been that international students are granted a visa to study in Australia on the basis that they have adequate funds to pay for their living expenses. The New South Wales Government provides the most generous transport concessions of any jurisdiction in Australia. Each year over \$1 billion of public transport concessions are provided to assist people in need. However, concession resources have to be targeted. The policies, eligibility criteria and administrative processes that govern the concessions system ensure that concessions are available to those most in need. Currently, those who benefit from concessions include students, children, seniors, pensioners, people with disabilities, asylum seekers and war veterans.

The Government does not believe international students paying a full fee are a funding priority for such assistance. Those students must apply to the Federal Government for a visa and during that process they are required to demonstrate that they are able to pay for tuition and living expenses for the duration of their studies.

As part of the visa process, they also declare themselves ineligible for benefits such as Medicare, Newstart Allowance or Austudy. However, our existing policy recognises that some international students are in need of support within our community. Students on scholarships or exchange programs that are fully funded by the Australian Government are already entitled to transport concessions.

In its current form, section 88 (3A) of the Transport Administration Act 1988 allows the Government to determine its own transport concessions policy. That ensures that limited concessions resources can be targeted to those most in need. It should also be noted that section 129 and section 130 of the Passenger Transport Act 2014, which have been passed by this House but have not yet commenced, will repeal and replace all provisions of the Transport Administration Act 1988 that deal with concessions and subsidised travel, including the ones that the bill seeks to amend. Once commenced, the Passenger Transport Act 2014 will allow regulations that detail eligibility for concessions to be passed. At that time, provisions within section 129 and section 130 will continue to give the Government discretion to determine how concession resources should be targeted.

The Government supports international education strongly and is committed to ensuring that international students who choose New South Wales have the best possible experience while they are here. International student enrolments stand at around 250,000 in New South Wales, the highest number of international student enrolments in Australia. Via its agency Study NSW, the Government currently provides a number of services and tools that make the experiences of international students better, safer and more enjoyable. The New South Wales Government recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has created a challenging environment for the international education sector. It knows that some international students are struggling to meet their living expenses. Given the global impact of COVID-19, many families and funding sources from students' home countries have also been impacted.

Study NSW and the Australian international education sector are working hard to support the health, wellbeing and academic success of international students. Immediate support responses have included referring international students to appropriate agencies, including those dealing with welfare, mental health and emergency relief. COVID-19 is an unfolding situation and assessments will be made over the coming months about the extent of the impact of the pandemic on the international education sector. The Government's response, including the involvement of transport concessions, will be determined after a careful cost-benefit analysis. The existing provision gives the Government discretion to tailor its response appropriately. Based on that, the Government will not support the bill.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (10:39:20):** I speak in debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (International Students Travel Concessions) Bill 2020. The bill is conceived from the laudable and understandable desire to help people in difficult circumstances who are studying in Australia during this global pandemic. The member for Newtown pointed out that the circumstances surrounding international students studying in Australia are extremely tenuous. The COVID-19 pandemic has wrought enormous disruption to the higher education sector. It is worth noting that the international student sector supports close to 100,000 jobs in this State and 250,000 jobs across Australia, contributing around \$38 billion to the national economy. In the 2018-19 financial year New South Wales received around \$14 billion of that. I understand that New South Wales has the second highest number of international students, just slightly behind Victoria.

It is unknown if international student numbers will bounce back to the levels experienced before COVID-19 and what the impact of that will be on one of Australia's most important export industries. It is a future industry that does not rely on ripping national resources out of the ground. We need to act to protect this important export market. With the world transitioning away from coal towards renewable energy, leaving our existing export markets vulnerable, we must fill the gap with other export industries. In other words, we need to grow the education sector. The question for all legislators—the Government, the Opposition, The Greens, the crossbench—is: How do we do it? Considering the limited resources, what is the best way to grow the education sector? How do we protect important jobs and opportunities while protecting those in need?

The member for Newtown made important points about many people finding themselves in desperate circumstances during this crisis. We have heard a litany of stories about young people in Australia performing jobs in a desperate attempt to earn some income to cover their costs. My colleagues, including the member for Cessnock, and I have heard many personal stories from food banks and charities that have been overwhelmed by international students in desperate need of help. This situation should have prompted the Government to act. An ounce of compassion and forethought would have seen debate on this problem arise earlier. The Victorian Premier took early action with a \$45 million program covering rental relief and food provision as well as a help centre to place young students in job opportunities throughout the public sector.

In New South Wales Labor has proposed emergency payments to the students who are doing it tough. Labor has said unambiguously that the Government has a responsibility to those who have effectively been stranded in Australia during this pandemic. We believe that emergency transfer payments are urgently required.



My colleague the member for Cessnock has forcefully called on the Government to follow Victoria's lead and to provide a \$60 million package to fund survival grants of up to \$1,100 for international students experiencing hardship, possibly with co-contribution from universities. We would welcome that action. In fact, we would say to universities that they have a responsibility to this important export market, which generates billions of dollars of revenue for their higher education institutions. We believe the Government should advocate in the national Cabinet for the inclusion of temporary visa workers, including international students, in the JobKeeper program.

We call on other universities to follow Western Sydney University's lead and offer international students a 10 per cent fee rebate as a cash injection. It is interesting that it is often Western Sydney University that is leading the way on progressive policies to deal with emerging situations. It is in touch with its student population and it makes sensible decisions to protect this export industry. The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that New South Wales is the only State not to provide an emergency package for international students and it risks being a terrible global advertisement for our international student market. I have laid out a series of reasons why I am fundamentally sympathetic to a program that would treat international students in New South Wales the same way that they are treated in other States and Territories. If this Government is looking at potentially reviewing concessional arrangements for transport commuters, I sincerely hope that any review will also look at the impact travel has on international students.

However, in these unprecedented and dire economic times Labor believes that the estimated cost of this program each year is too great for the New South Wales taxpayer. The Government has plans to ask taxpayers to carry the burden of much of the recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 through privatisation, toll increases, Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] fare hikes, potential increases to the GST and a suggested land tax. We simply cannot ask taxpayers to dig even deeper at this point. The report from CAPA, the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, suggests that the annual cost would be \$168 million. Back-of-the-envelope mathematics indicate that if the IPART fare rise goes through, it will cost the New South Wales taxpayer \$200 million every year. In fairness to the member for Newtown, she pointed out that—

*[A member interjected.]*

They do pay tax. But do you believe we have that money available? Do you believe the equivalent of 2,000 extra public schoolteachers being injected into the New South Wales public school system is a more important priority?

*[A member interjected.]*

I listened to the member for Newtown in silence. I ask her to consider that there has been a \$9 billion writedown in revenues this financial year and according to Treasury it is \$20 billion over the forward estimates. That is a competing priority. Obviously Labor is sympathetic to the ideals that have been put forward, but we are in unprecedented economic times. It is worth noting that the member for Newtown did not point out the economics of today's public transport. The cost recovery model implemented by the New South Wales Government indicates it is around 22 per cent. That means that if someone were to travel from Martin Place to Blacktown this afternoon on a one-way fare, it would cost them \$4.80. However, it costs Transport for NSW on average \$24. The New South Wales taxpayer covers \$20 of that one journey every day.

I support cross-subsidisation of public transport; I am not suggesting otherwise. The cost recovery model in Hong Kong is something like 150 per cent. In Singapore it is about 122 per cent. In London it is about 92 per cent. In Paris it is about 95 per cent. In Sydney, it is 22 per cent. The commuter pays \$4.80 and every other taxpayer pays \$20 to get them home in the afternoon. That is the economics of public transport as it stands in Sydney. Any debate about the economics of public transport has to acknowledge it is not true that there is not already public transport subsidisation for all Sydney commuters at this moment. It is also important to note that the member for Newtown spoke forcefully about section 88 (3A) of the Transport Administration Act 1988, which was inserted in 2006 to ensure that the legislation was exempt from section 19 of the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. The member for Newtown made some important points. I will endeavour to speak to my colleague the member for Liverpool about this exemption, its impact on the law and its possible message to international students. The Opposition will then re-confer with the member for Newtown.

We must be cognisant of the media attention on international students who are living and studying here, particularly during these charged times. I realise the serious limitations of me speaking to that point as a non-international student, but like many people in this House I have close friends who came to this country to study, meet friends and experience another lifestyle. They have been near-unanimously positive in saying that it is the best decision they have ever made. Australia is a wonderful destination for higher education. It is an open country and it has an open economy. We want international students to study here. That vital export sector is facing an unprecedented threat and we need to do more about it.

**Debate adjourned.**

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

**Second Reading Speech**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (10:49:49):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I speak to the Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work) Bill 2020. All of us come into this place to make a contribution to the lives of the people whom we are fortunate to represent. For some of us in this House, it is because we have grown up in the communities that we love, we live in and we call home. For some people, particularly in the other place, it is about making reform to key policy areas and legislation and to improve the lives of working men and women across New South Wales. As parliamentarians, we should all continue to have a drive to improve the State. If we lose that passion and drive we should look for something else to occupy our time. With this in mind, I congratulate and thank my colleague the Hon. Mark Buttigieg on putting forward one of the most important pieces of legislation to come out of a tragedy that this Parliament has seen in recent times.

The Hon. Mark Buttigieg is someone who wants to make a difference, and today it is a great honour to read his bill—a bill that will improve this State if this place, the oldest Parliament in the land, passes this important legislation that arose off the back of a tragedy that hopefully we can ensure will never happen again. It has been four long years since the cross-connection of gas delivery outlets at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital led to the devastating death of a baby boy, John Ghanem. A baby girl, Amelia Khan, was tragically left with catastrophic brain damage. In these four years there has been complete and utter silence and a lack of action from the Government on this issue. I say to the families of Amelia and baby John that our hearts and thoughts are with them and I hope today that this Parliament is with them as we do what we are expected to do, what they would expect of us and what I am sure the community expects of us and improve legislation to ensure a tragedy like this never happens again.

It is what all of us would want if it were our children—we would expect a fighter in this place to bring it to the House to make a change. In this place that fighter has been the Hon. Mark Buttigieg. I am disappointed that after four years we now have a situation where we have a comprehensive bill from the Opposition yet a two-page regulation from the Government. That is not good enough. That is pettiness. This place is better than that; we are better than that. The community expects us to be better than that. We do not always get it right on this side. Those on the other side have to realise they do not always get it right either. If we have this attitude too many times then important pieces of legislation and reform will not be delivered in this place. I ask Government members: If this were their child, their family, would there have been a four-year delay? I think not.

The Government's criticism about the bill's deficiencies demonstrates it has had no consultation with industry experts and shows it does not possess a great deal of knowledge about the issue, which can be expected as the Government has ignored it over a number of years. If the Government had any real concerns about the bill that the Hon. Mark Buttigieg has brought forward, it could simply have moved sensible amendments and put the safety of New South Wales first. My colleague the Hon. Mark Buttigieg has been open to that from day one. He has said repeatedly to me, to his colleagues and to the families that he wants to get the best legislation passed. That is his job. If a few more of us had that attitude, there would be an improvement to the legislative schedule and the legislation that passes this place.

The Government's regulation is two pages long and only prescribes types of medical gases where there needs eventually to be some form of licensing for people who deal with them. This is a lightweight, light-touch measure as there is nothing in the regulation that ensures individuals have comprehensive trade training and education—something the Hon. Mark Buttigieg's bill addresses. There is nothing in the regulation or the mechanism it creates that will prevent the tragedies that happened at this hospital. Labor's bill will protect the residents of New South Wales with its robust requirements going forward. The Government has not regulated to have a comprehensive licensing regime, whereas Labor has set out legislative requirements that ensure that only highly skilled, trained and educated individuals—tradespeople—carry out work with life-and-death consequences.

The bill amends the Home Building Act 1989 to provide for the licensing of mechanical services, including medical gas systems works, and the new licence will be administered by NSW Fair Trading. Unlike New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria have building authorities. The Queensland Building and Construction Commission and the Victorian Building Authority are able to administer important licences like mechanical services and medical gas licences. As our State urgently requires medical services and medical gas licensing, the Hon. Mark Buttigieg's bill, which comes out of a tragedy, seeks to operate within the existing legislative

framework in New South Wales and functions in an equivalent way to other licences that are operated and administered through the Home Building Act. The bill incorporates the key concepts and requirements from the Queensland and Victorian legislation—a smart move, a smart practice. It is not about reinventing the wheel. It is already happening in this country. These are widely known measures that are accepted by industry professionals to be the world-class standard for mechanical services and medical gas. The bill amends the Home Building Act 1989 to include a new category of specialist work called "mechanical services work", which includes medical gas. The new definition of mechanical services work to be included has been developed to align with industry expectations and follows the current successful regulatory regime definitions in the other jurisdictions.

Another important part of the bill is new section 15A, which prohibits an individual from doing any mechanical services work, including medical gas work, without a licence—a key component and a key outcome as a result of the tragedy that we are all familiar with. The maximum penalty for failure to comply with this requirement is 1,000 penalty units, or \$110,000, for a corporation and 200 penalty units, or \$22,000, in any other case. The section of the bill is consistent with the drafting of the Home Building Act as the equivalent statutory fine is currently in place for other specialist works that we would be familiar with, such as electrical work when work is done without a licence. New section 33E is a very important part of the bill. It is the component that provides the minimum requirements to attain a licence to undertake mechanical services work. This is the gatekeeper, the stopgap, and the requirement that I am sure we all thought was in place but was not.

The requirements in new section 33E (1) are the successful completion of the applicable Certificate III in the Plumbing (Mechanical Services) course, which includes the medical gas competency unit. People will then be competent when using this type of material and equipment. There also must be the successful completion of an apprenticeship, or four years' experience acceptable to the secretary that must include—and I stress it must include—mechanical medical gas experience. Additionally, new section 33E (2) ensures that this new regime does not unfairly omit individuals from an entitlement to be licensed when they have had at least four years' experience in mechanical services work in addition to completing the necessary updated unit of medical gas competency within the preceding two years.

In addition, the bill provides for the commencement of the proposed Act six months after the Governor's assent. Members come to this place to make a difference. That is a common theme in all inaugural speeches. Today we can make a difference. Today we can right a wrong. Today we can learn that from a tragedy can come some hope. We can look the family members in the eye and say clearly that their Parliament and representatives listened and acted. It has taken too long. It has taken an Opposition member to bring a bill to this place. I hope we learn a couple of things today: one, that the Government must move a lot faster in the future; and two, today the Government can reach out across the table and say that it has put the lives of our community above petty politics and the political divide. The Government can reach out and amend the bill, if it can be improved, which my colleague the Hon. Mark Buttigieg has offered in a genuine spirit to do to ensure that we achieve the best outcome.

Those two things can start today. Our community and the families affected are closely watching today's debate to see if we put public petty politics to the side and put their interests front and centre. If it were my baby, I would demand nothing less. Let us show everybody that in the darkest times that we are experiencing across the community, members in this place can come together and deliver legislative reform brought by my colleague the Hon. Mark Buttigieg with a spirit of passion and determination. He had only one focus in mind: to ensure that that tragedy never happens again and that the families of babies John and Amelia, whose lives will never be the same again, feel that they have done their very best so that no other family experiences the tragedy that they have.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (11:02:40):** The Home Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work) Bill 2020 is dealing with incredibly tragic circumstances. All members agree that we must do more to lift standards and license those installing medical gas. There is no disagreement on that; we do not need to debate that issue. I speak on behalf of all members when I say that nobody wants to see the tragedies repeated like the ones that occurred at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. Our thoughts and prayers continue to go to the families affected. I know Danial, father of Amelia, is present in the public gallery today. As a father of three, I can only imagine the absolute devastation facing those families. We must ensure as much as possible that it can never happen again. We must take steps and we will take steps to provide a strong, robust licensing framework for those installing medical gas in New South Wales. On behalf of the Government, I give a commitment to the families affected that we will take action to ensure that no other families have to endure what they have.

I thank the Hon. Mark Buttigieg, who is in the gallery today, for the work that he has done to bring the bill to the House. I have discussed the bill with him. There is absolutely no doubt that the Hon. Mark Buttigieg's passion for, and understanding of, the area runs deep. I commend him for the work that he has done in bringing the bill to the House. I have indicated to him that the Government is absolutely supportive of the intent of the bill and is committed to introducing new regulation and licensing requirements for medical gas installation in

New South Wales. I have also told him that we cannot support the bill in its current form. While it is well intentioned, and while it has the foundations of what is needed to license medical gas installation in New South Wales, a number of areas need more work. Those areas must be addressed before we pass the bill so that there are no unintended consequences or blind spots in the legislation, because no member in this House wants to see that.

I will spend time in my speech outlining some areas that the Government believes need refinement. After deep consideration and analysis, the Government will not support the bill. It is absolutely committed to bringing in a licensing scheme in New South Wales by 1 November this year. In fact, we have already started that work. Yesterday the Governor approved the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Amendment (Medical Gas Work) Regulation 2020, which brings specific medical gases under the overall regulatory regime of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2017. That is the first step in the Government's process for establishing a strong regulatory framework for licensing persons who carry out medical gas work. On Tuesday I gave notice of a motion to introduce legislation that will deal with the issue. I have also indicated that it is my intention to work closely with the Hon. Mark Buttigieg, if he wishes, so that we develop that legislation. Obviously the Government will draw out workable elements from what he has proposed and build on them to ensure that we have a strong, coherent licensing system. It is also my intention to bring the Gas Legislation Amendment (Medical Gas Systems) Bill 2020 back to Parliament in the next session.

I now turn to the substance of the bill to highlight some areas where the Government and the community believe improvements are needed, and the issues that the Government will seek to address in its bill. The Government opposes the bill because a number of issues make it impractical and unworkable. The Government's biggest concern is that the bill creates a shell for a licensing framework under the Home Building Act 1989 without the detail necessary to ensure a comprehensive and effective regulatory regime. The Opposition's bill proposes to amend the Home Building Act 1989 to establish a licensing scheme for persons engaged in the construction, installation, maintenance, repair, alteration, testing or commissioning of medical gas or medical gas systems. The bill appears to mirror the Victorian plumbing legislation without any consideration of how the provisions of that legislation would interact with existing New South Wales laws.

The bill seeks to extend its ambit to mechanical heating and cooling systems used in air conditioning, including heating and cooling towers that are used in buildings. That is unnecessary. The Home Building Act 1989 already substantively covers persons involved in those processes. The definition also extends to all premises where medical procedures are carried out, which could be problematic. For example, the Victorian legislation includes veterinary surgeries, which appear to be beyond the intended scope of the bill. The basis of the licensing framework in the bill is also inadequate. The bill combines work requirements and licensing procedures within the one instrument, which is inconsistent with building standards and licensing frameworks in the State. For example, licensed gasfitters have oversight under the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2017. The licensing and regulation of those persons is contained in the Home Building Act 1989. The benefit of this is that the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2017 already provides the heads of power for the regulator to put in place specific conditions and obligations for workers, as well as strict compliance requirements and strong enforcement powers.

In addition, under the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act and regulation the existing provisions offer benefits of mandatory testing, inspection and compliance following gasfitting work. The way the bill has been drafted means that those powers are not available. The bill also lists the education and experience requirements for licence holders. This detail is better placed in regulation and published in the *Gazette* to allow the Government to update requirements quickly as they change. The way the bill is drafted, if the regulator determined that it was appropriate to urgently require updated qualifications for licence holders that would be unable to happen without members returning to Parliament to amend the Act. That is an unnecessarily complex and cumbersome process. It is also out of step with the process used for mandating qualifications for other licensing frameworks used in New South Wales.

This issue is also replicated in schedule 1 to the bill, which lists the classes of medical gas that will be subject to the new licensing obligations. As drafted, the gases reflect those listed in the relevant Australian standard. The problem with this approach is that if and when the Australian standards change and new gases need to be added or removed, we will need to return to Parliament. As with mandating qualifications, those requirements should be mandated by regulation so that changes can be made quickly without the need to return to Parliament. This is precisely why on Wednesday the Government moved to gazette the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Amendment (Medical Gas Work) Regulation 2020, which brings specific medical gases under the overall regulatory regime of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act.

The bill also requires the licensees have at least four years' experience. Any experience component is best left to be determined by the regulator in consultation with the industry that is to be regulated. It should not be placed in the Act. Section 15A of the Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work)

Bill 2020 would make it an offence to do mechanical services work if a person is not qualified. The provision does not commence until six months after the assent of the Act. However, section 33E outlines the proposed qualifications and experience required to become qualified. Those requirements do not commence until two years after the assent of the Act. Under the bill qualified gasfitters and plumbers would also need to undertake additional units of competency for medical gasfitting such as a Certificate III in Plumbing (Mechanical Services). I am advised that no training providers in New South Wales currently offer that course.

During this 18-month gap it is proposed that the secretary, under the existing section 33D of the Home Building Act, would determine qualifications and experience for those wanting a mechanical services licence. While that provides time to ensure training is fit for purpose, the industry is uncertain what would be expected of it to be able to continue operating in that period. More importantly, under the existing section 33D of the Home Building Act, the secretary would determine what qualifications and experience are required for those who need a licence. Because there are no equivalent training courses in New South Wales, the secretary would determine whether applicants hold appropriate skills and competencies, without a fit-for-purpose course that could be used as a benchmark. The outcome would be similar to what is currently available and would not meet the objective that the bill seeks of lifting safety and qualifications. There is also risk in effectively authorising a lower qualification threshold. This issue needs serious consideration before any new licensing scheme is set up.

The bill inadvertently creates a loophole which could be exploited by those seeking to avoid undertaking the further qualifications of medical gas installers that the bill requires. During the most recent licensing reforms undertaken in New South Wales, we moved to introduce standard one-, three- or five-year licensing periods for all trade licences in New South Wales. Those reforms were supported by Labor. Under the Opposition bill, if an installer was to apply for a licence in the 18-month grace period—relying on having attained the qualifications as determined under section 33D—they could request a three-year or a five-year licence.

Once the requirement to attain the new qualifications came into force under section 33E of the bill, two years after assent, anyone previously granted a licence by the secretary under section 33D could continue operating with that licence. That means they would continue to be licenced under a different system with a lower qualification threshold. Under the bill there would be no requirement to gain the new qualification until they renewed their licence some five years after it was issued. That could mean that people with no specialist medical gas qualifications could work on medical gas systems in our hospitals for up to five years before they are required to gain the new qualification. I am sure that this is not the Hon. Mark Buttigieg's intention. Again, this is a significant issue that the Government will address in its legislation.

The Government has committed to addressing the issue effectively, which means establishing an appropriate and robust licensing system. Yesterday the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Amendment (Medical Gas Work) Regulation 2020 was approved by the Governor. The regulation brings specific medical gases under the overall regulatory regime of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act. That is the first step in the Government's process of establishing a strong regulatory framework for the licensing of persons who carry out medical gas work. The regulation has put the industry on notice that a strict and robust licensing framework with appropriate oversight is on the way. The object of the Government's bill is safety first.

The Government's bill will include strict requirements for the observation of Australian standards to ensure the testing of non-flammable medical gas pipeline systems so that medical gas systems, once installed, are regularly tested to ensure all components are continuing to operate safely, reliably and consistently. The Government recognises that responding in a timely manner is critical, but it is also critical to ensure that the system we establish is robust, effective and comprehensive. To this end the Government is committed to establishing a licensing framework by 1 November 2020—which is earlier than the commencement of the private member's bill, if it were to pass. The Government thanks the Hon. Mark Buttigieg for bringing this important issue to the House and looks forward to delivering on its promise to strengthen the regulation of medical gas work.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (11:20:30):** I make a brief contribution to this simple yet critically important bill: Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work) Bill 2020. I am not shocked by what we have just heard from the Minister today. I am saddened by his response and I am sure so will the families involved. I will address more of what he said a little later. First, I acknowledge the efforts of the Hon. Mark Buttigieg who, like a dog with a bone, brought this bill to Parliament and saw it pass the upper House yesterday. The Hon. Mark Buttigieg's bill was introduced in the absence of any action from this Government. The genesis of the bill stems from the most awful circumstances. It is a story that has been told here today and yesterday; it has shocked families across the country and changed lives forever. Today I am reluctant to revisit the pain of the families involved by retelling their stories.

I place on record my deep admiration, and I am sure the admiration of every parliamentarian in this place, for the courage and strength of Benish and Danial Khan. Danial is with us today. After watching their story on *60 Minutes* recently many of us cannot stop seeing or stop hearing their nightmarish experience. Nor can we

imagine that experience, based on what we now know happened four years ago, in any of our lives. It is unimaginable that a healthy baby was suffocated, poisoned by nitrous oxide after delivery instead of being given lifesaving oxygen. It is also unthinkable that two families have experienced this nightmare. And four years on for the Government not to have acted to prevent it from occurring again is unforgiveable. As a result of these terrible tragedies, baby Amelia has been left with lifelong quadriplegic cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities and vision impairment. Baby John lost his life. I extend the deepest condolences of all members to the Ghanem family who lost baby John.

In my former career as a medical negligence lawyer I acted on behalf of too many parents whose babies lost their lives during or immediately after childbirth, or were permanently injured. I remember each and every one of those families. The burden they carry—and will carry for a lifetime—is incredibly heavy. Alongside their pain they carried with them an inexplicable, and quite unfair, sense of guilt. It is about the what-ifs in their life. We owe it to the Khan family, to baby Amelia, to the Ghanem family, to baby John and to every family in Australia to prevent anyone else experiencing the horror, grief and heartbreak that these families have gone through and will hold for their entire lives.

I was shocked to realise that there is currently no requirement for anyone who installs or maintains medical gas in New South Wales to have any special qualification. Legally, anyone can do it. One has to have a licence to plumb water in New South Wales, but no licence is required to undertake the high-risk, complex medical gas and mechanical services work. Extensive training is required to do it safely and well; that has been missing in New South Wales. It was identified four years ago; it has not been addressed since. We already know the consequences of not doing it properly. The risks of incorrectly undertaking mechanical services work also has deadly consequences—for example, risking legionella outbreaks in air conditioning systems of hospitals and shopping centres—which we have seen in the past and will no doubt see again if this bill is not passed. It is fundamental that people undertaking this complex work should be required to have the necessary experience and skills.

These tragedies at Bankstown Hospital were caused by the incorrect connection of gas delivery outlets. The doctors and nurses thought they were delivering lifesaving oxygen. Instead, they were delivering nitrous oxide and poisoning these babies. Alongside the horrific heartache to the families involved, I simply cannot imagine the devastating impact this has had on the nurses, doctors and hospital workers involved. They should never have been placed in that situation. They had every right to expect that the tools of their trade would be safe to use. Like all tragedies the effects have been felt by many. Today members have an opportunity to put politics aside and to make sure that tragedies like this do not happen again. Indeed, it is incumbent on all of us to do that.

I do not understand how the Government could be so careless to have not acted on this yet. Thank goodness the Hon. Mark Buttigieg heard the pleas of the families and the plumbers' union and brought a bill, which if passed today, could save lives. The Government has had four years to close a loophole, but it has not. At the eleventh hour the Government decided to regulate—that was the first move, as I understand—and now that has turned into legislation because it realised that it does not look good enough. In response to tragedies that happened in New South Wales the Queensland and Victorian governments acted, and this bill reflects the mechanisms and protections in place in Queensland and Victoria.

The Minister's suggestion that the bill is impractical and unworkable is an attempt to make the Government feel okay about not supporting it. Let us be frank, the convoluted contortion the Minister put himself through today was nothing more than a poor attempt to avoid the embarrassment that the Government thinks it will feel by supporting a Labor bill. Government members must not back a Minister who has provided no justification for not supporting a realistic and practical bill. The Minister says the Government is putting safety first, but Government members will be putting safety second, behind politics, if they do not support the bill. We plead with you to put safety first—to have baby Amelia and baby John and their families front of mind—when deciding whether or not to support the bill. Let's prevent tragedies like these from happening in the future. I urge members to look inside and to support the Hon. Mark Buttigieg's bill, which will see a real difference made to people's lives.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (11:30:26):** On behalf of the Government, I contribute to debate on the Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work) Bill 2020. I join the Minister in acknowledging the presence of the Hon. Mark Buttigieg in the gallery this morning. I have taken the time to read Mr Buttigieg's second reading speech and I join with the Minister in acknowledging his passion for and commitment to the cause. As members have heard, the bill seeks to amend the Home Building Act 1989 to establish a new licence for mechanical services plumbing work, which includes medical gas work. If passed, the bill would require persons engaged in the construction, installation, replacement, repair, alteration, maintenance, testing or commissioning of medical gas ventilation systems in a building to be licensed. Make no mistake: The Government supports the intention of the bill.

These are necessary reforms but it is equally necessary to get them right. The important issue means that the Government believes changes must be made to ensure that the tragic incidents that occurred at the Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital in 2016 are not repeated. I acknowledge the courage and loss of both the families affected. The Government is opposing the bill but has committed to developing its own bill which will be drafted in close consultation with industry, NSW Health, potential licensees and registered training organisations and with the expertise of the regulator. Pleasingly, the Government is acting on the issue and has given notice of a government bill with a shorter time frame for commencement than the private member's bill, if it were to be passed.

This week the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Amendment (Medical Gas Work) Regulation 2020 was approved by the Governor. The regulation brings specific medical gases under the overall regulatory regime of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2017. That is only the first step in the Government's process for establishing a strong regulatory framework for the licensing of persons carrying out medical gas work. The making of the regulation has put the entire industry on notice that a strict and robust licensing framework with appropriate oversight is on the way. It is not about taking credit; it is about getting it right. The Government acknowledges the work of the Hon. Mark Buttigieg. There is no doubt about his passion and commitment to seeing those important regulatory changes being introduced.

As members have heard, the bill has been brought about in response to two tragic incidents at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital in 2016 in which two newborn babies were mistakenly administered nitrous oxide instead of oxygen. Tragically, one of the babies, John Ghanem, died while the other, Amelia Khan, suffered brain damage as a result of the wrong gas being administered. I too extend my deepest condolences and sympathies to both families. I cannot begin to imagine what they have been through but I can promise that the Government will bring forward new legislation to strengthen the regulation of medical gas workers in the State.

The bill before the House inserts a provision into the Home Building Act that duplicates the regulation of air conditioning work. I note that the Home Building Act already provides for the regulation of mechanical cooling services. If the bill is passed, the new provision in the Opposition's bill and the provision that exists currently in the Home Building Act will sit side by side and result in duplication. That is one of the main reasons for the Government opposing the Opposition's bill, in addition to the fact that the Government has given notice of a Government bill with a shorter time frame for commencement than the private member's bill.

I repeat that the bill put forward by the Government will be thoroughly researched, developed and consulted on with industry to ensure that it has no unintended consequences or inconsistencies with existing laws. As the Hon. Mark Buttigieg said in the other place, mechanical services work has a great deal of complexity and requires extensive technical training to be performed safely. As the Minister has outlined, the private member's bill has a number of significant issues that need to be resolved. I have taken the time to read the Hon. Mark Buttigieg's second reading speech in the other place. I echo his words:

I believe it is our obligation to examine issues that are affecting the health and safety of our communities and to do everything possible to protect people across the State.

To that end, I look forward to seeing the Government's bill introduced to this place and delivering on its promise of robust, workable regulation for the medical gas industry in New South Wales as quickly as possible.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:35:45):** I make a contribution to debate on the Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work) Bill 2020. I thank the Hon. Mark Buttigieg for bringing the long overdue bill to the Parliament. It has been four years since two newborn babies died as a result of being administered nitrous oxide instead of oxygen due to crossed gas lines. That is an absolute tragedy. It is disappointing that it has taken four years for the issue to be considered by the Parliament. Until yesterday the Government had taken no action whatsoever. Yesterday the Government presented a regulation, which is its first step in dealing with the issue. I am disappointed that despite the bill passing the other place unopposed yesterday, the Government will oppose it in this place. The Minister believes there are a number of issues with the bill. Why not amend it here and now, given that the Government supported it yesterday, so that together we can move forward? That is incredibly disappointing.

We should never forget that baby John Ghanem lost his life and baby Amelia Khan's life has been changed forever due to the problems that occurred at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital that day. I will focus a lot of my contribution on how SafeWork NSW has dealt with the situation in the ensuing four years. Getting back to the families and how much they have suffered, it is an absolute tragedy. It should not have taken four years. There was no need to wait for the full inquiry to work out what we are dealing with today: Qualified people must do plumbing work. Pretty soon after the tragedy it was obvious that there is a shortcoming in the regulation of plumbing work, which is highly specialised and should not be undertaken by plumbers unless they have done additional, specialised training. It is disappointing that it led to the death of baby John and the permanent disability

of baby Amelia. In that time 36 babies were delivered in that ward. Thankfully, none of them needed medical gas. The lines had been installed incorrectly with nitrous oxide being supplied through the oxygen line.

We all know what happened once that occurred. There was an enforceable undertaking given to NSW Health and the investigation focused on the installing company. In the end Christopher Turner, the installer, was fined \$100,000. He did not inspect the work that he signed off on and this tragedy ensued. It is an absolute disgrace and an absolute tragedy. I note some issues that have been raised by the Plumbing Trades Employees Union over that four-year period. While there was an enforceable undertaking by the department of health and a lot of perhaps good work was done in that regard, the fundamental issue that we are addressing today was not fixed. The plumbers union has raised concerns that during the construction work done at Royal North Shore Hospital over the past four years, medical gas lines were installed by a baker working on the site. More recently at Wagga Wagga hospital that work was done by a plumber who does not have specialised training.

I am very concerned that knowledge has not been taken on from this failing. That is one of the reasons it is so important that the bill is supported today. If the Government thinks that it can improve the bill, it should improve it by way of amendment rather than voting against it. In some ways this is quite petty. After everything that has happened, the Government should not be worried about being embarrassed when dealing with something this tragic. In a few years' time no-one will remember that today the Government was embarrassed because an upper House backbencher introduced a private member's bill to deal with a problem it should have dealt with years ago. No-one will care. But people will remember if the Government votes against the bill just to be petty. Four years on we have an opportunity to do the most essential thing to address this issue and make sure it will never happen again. It will be absolutely tragic if we pass up that opportunity because the Government is a bit embarrassed that the Opposition has introduced the bill.

Representatives of SafeWork NSW have been questioned a number of times during budget estimates and on other occasions about how their investigation was carried out and what happened. It was disappointing to learn in March that SafeWork was not sure if it had ever spoken to the families about the tragic circumstances in which one child died and one child was permanently disabled. It could not answer that question. That speaks volumes about a lack of care and concern. The enforceable undertaking should not have been the end of the matter. Taking the installer to court should not have been the end of the matter. SafeWork should have ensured that this tragedy will never happen again, but it did not. The only person who has pushed to make this happen is my colleague and friend Mark Buttigieg, who has done some great work in putting the bill together. I urge the Government to change its mind about voting against the bill. If it thinks it can improve the bill it should move some amendments. But if the Government votes against the bill it is about its ego, not the content of the legislation.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (11:44:05):** On behalf of the Government I speak in debate on the Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work) Bill 2020. I start by extending my deepest condolences to the parents and family of baby John, who died as a result of being mistakenly administered nitrous oxide instead of oxygen, and to baby Amelia and her family. Amelia suffered brain damage as a result of the same tragic mistake. They are tragic incidents and I reiterate that the Government has committed to address the issue, to establish an appropriate and robust licensing system for medical gas and for persons and entities involved in installing medical systems.

The Government supports the intent of the Opposition's bill but it cannot support this bill. The object of the Opposition's bill is to provide for the licensing of contractors and the certification of supervisors and tradespersons who carry out mechanical services work and medical gas systems work. The bill attempts to license persons to undertake mechanical services and medical gas work in New South Wales. I echo the comments of the Minister and note the keen interest and advocacy that the Hon. Mark Buttigieg has shown in this matter. Unfortunately the bill falls short of its objectives. The bill fails to bring the regulation of medical gas work under the overall regulatory regime that already exists under the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2017. The bill as currently drafted does not achieve what it sets out to achieve. It simply creates a shell for a licensing framework under the Home Building Act 1989, without the detail to ensure an effective and comprehensive regulatory framework.

The Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2017 provides a regulatory framework for licensing gas workers and already includes wideranging and extensive compliance requirements and enforcement powers. The effective regulation of medical gas workers in New South Wales needs to begin with ensuring that there is a good regulatory base. The Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act already provides the heads of power for the regulator to put in place specific conditions and obligations for workers, like prescribing the medical gases that are within the scope of the new regime and dealing with installation commissioning and testing, as well as requiring compliance with Australian medical gas standards. Unfortunately solving this problem is not as simple as copying a part of the Victorian Plumbing Regulations 2018 into the New South Wales Home Building Act, which is what appears to have been attempted in the bill.



The bill appears to have been copied from the Victorian Plumbing Regulations 2018 without any consideration of how the provisions of the Victorian regulation would interact with existing New South Wales laws. The bill's definition of medical gases extends to those used in work relating to the mechanical heating and cooling systems used in buildings and cooling towers. The definition also extends to those used where medical procedures are carried out. That could be problematic and may be interpreted to include veterinary surgeries. The bill also duplicates existing provisions in the Home Building Act related to air conditioning. This is wholly unnecessary as the Home Building Act already regulates persons who carry out air-conditioning work. The legal foundation of the licensing framework in the bill is also flawed. The bill combines work requirements and licensing procedures within the one instrument. That is inconsistent with building standards and licensing frameworks in New South Wales.

The bill contains the education and experience requirements for licence holders. That detail is better placed in orders and published in the *Gazette* to allow the Government to update requirements expeditiously as they change from time to time. The way the bill is drafted, if the regulator determined that it was appropriate to urgently require updated qualifications for licence holders that would be unable to happen without members returning to Parliament to amend the Act. That is an unnecessarily complex and cumbersome process. It is also out of step with the process used for mandating qualifications for other licensing frameworks used in New South Wales. This issue is also replicated in schedule 1 to the bill, which lists the classes of medical gas that will be subject to the new licensing obligations. As drafted, those gases reflect those listed in the relevant Australian standard.

The problem with that approach is that if and when the Australian Standards change, and new gasses need to be added or removed over time, we will need to return to Parliament. As with the issue of mandating qualifications, those requirements should be determined by regulation so that changes can be made quickly without needing to return to Parliament. That is precisely why the Government on Wednesday moved to gazette the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Amendment (Medical Gas Work) Regulation 2020, which brings specific medical gases under the overall regulatory regime of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act.

On this point the bill fails to consider the availability of training that licensed gasfitters in New South Wales will be required to undertake to meet the education and experience requirements. Again, any experience component for occupational licensing is best determined by the regulator. It should not be arbitrarily determined by one person and placed in the Act. The Government is developing its own bill to establish a more coherent and workable regulatory and licensing scheme for persons and entities involved in medical gas systems in health and medical facilities in New South Wales. The Government recognises that responding in a timely manner is critical, but it is also critical to ensure that the system we establish is robust, effective and comprehensive. The Government is committing to this process and will introduce its own bill to this place in the next session.

The Government's bill will amend the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act to extend its ambit to medical gases and amend the Home Building Act 1989 to create a new class of specialised licence for medical gas work. Conditions will also be placed on licences to require the strictest compliance with the Australian Standard for Medical Gas Systems, which sets out specifications and procedures to ensure medical gas systems are installed and tested safely, reliably and consistently. While the Government supports the intent of the bill, it is for those reasons that the Government opposes the bill. Later this year I look forward to debating in this House the Government's bill to introduce a licensing system for medical gas work in this State.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI:** I move:

That the question be now put.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** The motion is that the question be now put. All those in favour say, "Aye."

**Government members:** Aye.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Oppose, say, "No." The ayes have it. The ayes have it. The question will now be put. The mover will be exercising his right of reply. The mover will not be exercising his right of reply? You are not exercising your right of reply at all?

**Mr Ryan Park:** No. I don't need to speak again.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** I am just checking. The question is that this bill be now read a third time—second time, thank you, Clerk—this bill be now read a second time. All those in favour say, "Aye."

**Opposition members:** Aye.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Oppose, say, "No." The ayes have it.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Ayes have it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** The ayes have it.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** A division is called.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Hasn't the bill just passed?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Would you like to call a division?

**Mr Ryan Park:** Well, you didn't say it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** You need to call a division if you would like to.

**Mr Ryan Park:** He didn't say it yet.

**Ms Kate Washington:** The bill has just passed.

**Ms Anna Watson:** The bill has just passed.

**Mr Ryan Park:** The bill has just passed.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** A division is called. A division is called.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Thank you very much.

**Ms Anna Watson:** The bill has just passed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** A division is called. Ring the bells.

**Ms Anna Watson:** No, the bill has just passed.

**Mr Ryan Park:** No. No, you've passed the bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Members—

**Ms Anna Watson:** No, the bill has just passed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Members. Members, a division has been called.

**Ms Anna Watson:** No. No, it hasn't.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Oh, come on.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Ring the bells.

**Ms Anna Watson:** No, no—

**Mr Ryan Park:** Oh, come on. Come on.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Don't debate this with me.

**Mr Ryan Park:** This is not the North Sydney branch.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Excuse me, member for Keira.

**Mr Ryan Park:** This is the New South Wales Parliament.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Member for Keira—

**Mr Ryan Park:** This is not the North Sydney branch.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Resume your seat, member for Keira. A division has been called.

**Ms Anna Watson:** No, it has not—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Ring the bells.

**The House divided.**

*[In division]*

**Ms Anna Watson:** —because the Minister did not call a division.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Ring the bells.

**Ms Anna Watson:** And we all saw it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Member, sit down or you will be removed from the Chamber.

**Ms Anna Watson:** I will not sit down. This bill has just—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** You will be removed from the Chamber. A division was called and you all heard the member say it.

**Ms Anna Watson:** It was not.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** If you would like to reflect on yesterday, members on my left—

**Mr Guy Zangari:** It was not called. A division was not called.

**Ms Anna Watson:** It was not called.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Yeah, right.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** The second time, no. We said, "No. Division."

**Mr Ryan Park:** You're asleep at the wheel.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** That's what we said, "No. Division."

**Ms Anna Watson:** You're asleep at the wheel.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Exactly.

**Ms Kate Washington:** No way was that called.

**Ms Anna Watson:** That was not called.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** It was.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** If members want to dispute that, they can discuss it with the Speaker at a future date—

**Mr Ryan Park:** You're the Speaker. You're it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** —but you may also want to get the recording—

**Mr Ryan Park:** The bill passed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** —from the day—

**Mr Ryan Park:** The bill passed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** —because the members to my right called a division.

**Mr Ryan Park:** You lost one to three. The bill passed.

**Ms Anna Watson:** The bill passed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Member for Keira!

**Mr Ryan Park:** Come on, Felicity, you know what happened. Don't look at me like that.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** I'm looking at you like that, member for Keira, because you are being rude to me for no reason.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Oh!

**Ms Anna Watson:** And you're not doing your job.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Don't speak to me about being rude.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Members, I will start putting those on my left on calls if they continue to be disorderly.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Have you got your iPad?

**Mr Ryan Park:** Have you got them organised?

**Ms Anna Watson:** Yes.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** We don't say, "Lock the doors", do we?

**The CLERK:** No, not really.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** What do we say at the 10 minutes?

**Ms Anna Watson:** You didn't say it.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** We said, "No."

**Ms Anna Watson:** No, you didn't.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** We said, "No." I went like this. My hand was, no, division is called.

**Ms Anna Watson:** No, you didn't.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** I was sitting here. You couldn't see me from where you were, anyway.

**Ms Anna Watson:** I was standing there. I could see you.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** No, you couldn't see me.

**Mr Ryan Park:** I want the Clerks outside. I want to have a look at this. I want to have a Clerk outside. That's rubbish, and you guys know it's rubbish too. And I won't be spoken to like that by you, ever.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** Minister Anderson—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Member for Keira, if you continue I will put you on a call to order.

*Later,*

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Felicity, I went like that, no, division called. I just want to say that I definitely said "No. Division called."

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** I heard you say it. I called the division.

*Later,*

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** They called for a division, and you heard them call for a division.

**Ms Anna Watson:** No.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Oh, rubbish.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Ryan and I both saw it.

**Mr Ryan Park:** There is no division.

**Ms Anna Watson:** He did not call for a division.

**Mr Ryan Park:** And listen to this.

**Ms Anna Watson:** I don't tell lies and neither does Ryan.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It passed.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Passed.

**Ms Anna Watson:** It absolutely passed the House. Because you were asleep and so was the Minister. You both were asleep at the wheel.

**Mr Ryan Park:** This passed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Member for Shellharbour, I will put you on a call to order.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You can put the whole lot of us on a call.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Put the whole lot of us on a call.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It passed the House because you don't know what you're doing.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the first time.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** You got a call.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Throw me out and you will see what will happen. It passed the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** You can sit down if you would like, Opposition leader. We are in the middle of a division.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It passed the House.

**Ms Anna Watson:** It did. She can't do it.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Because the Minister and the Speaker have no idea what they are doing.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Ryan and I both were here and we absolutely saw it. I nearly—I couldn't believe it. The Minister said nothing, did not call for a division, neither did she. Passed.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Do we vote now?

**Mr Ryan Park:** Yes.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Okay, get everyone in to vote and then we will. If they don't do this, we will shut down the Parliament today. This has never happened.

*Later,*

Ayes .....40  
Noes .....44  
Majority.....4

#### AYES

Aitchison, J  
Barr, C  
Catley, Y  
Crakanthorp, T  
Donato, P  
Greenwich, A  
Haylen, J  
Leong, J  
McKay, J  
Minns, C  
Parker, J  
Smith, T  
Warren, G  
Zangari, G

Atalla, E  
Butler, R  
Chanthivong, A  
Dalton, H  
Doyle, T  
Harris, D  
Hornery, S  
Lynch, P  
Mehan, D (teller)  
O'Neill, M  
Piper, G  
Tesch, L  
Washington, K

Bali, S  
Car, P  
Cotsis, S  
Dib, J  
Finn, J  
Harrison, J  
Kamper, S  
McDermott, H  
Mihailuk, T  
Park, R  
Scully, P  
Voltz, L  
Watson, A (teller)

#### NOES

Anderson, K  
Berejiklian, G  
Conolly, K  
Coure, M  
Dominello, V  
Gibbons, M  
Hancock, S  
Lee, G  
McGirr, J  
Perrottet, D  
Provest, G  
Sidgreaves, P  
Smith, N  
Toole, P  
Ward, G

Ayres, S  
Bromhead, S  
Constance, A  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Elliott, D  
Griffin, J  
Henskens, A  
Lindsay, W  
O'Dea, J  
Petinos, E  
Roberts, A  
Sidoti, J  
Speakman, M  
Tuckerman, W  
Williams, L

Barilaro, J  
Clancy, J  
Cooke, S (teller)  
Davies, T  
Evans, L  
Gulaptis, C  
Johnsen, M  
Marshall, A  
Pavey, M  
Preston, R  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G  
Taylor, M  
Upton, G

## PAIRS

Daley, M  
Hoenig, R  
Lalich, N  
Saffin, J

Hazzard, B  
Kean, M  
Stokes, R  
Williams, R

**Motion negatived.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** There being 44 noes and 40 ayes, the division is lost. The Clerk will read the next item of business.

**Mr Ryan Park:** What an absolute joke. You have one job in this place.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Member for Keira—

**Mr Ryan Park:** One job.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** Member for Keira, I warned you earlier. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the second time and I will put you out if you continue.

*Motions***COVID-19**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (12:09:56):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Government on its decision to ease restrictions on pubs, clubs, restaurants, libraries and other community services from 1 June 2020.
- (2) Congratulates the Government on its decision to allow churches and other places of worship to reopen from 1 June 2020.
- (3) Welcomes the campaign by the Government to encourage tourism to the regional areas of New South Wales.

Initially it was important to ensure that the community was protected and alerted to the impacts of COVID-19. As a result, various State and Federal regulations were enacted and the community accepted them. As a regional member of Parliament whose electorate and region has been devastated by drought, bushfires, floods and now COVID-19, I realised the community needed more than just Government action; it needed hope and direction. The region was just getting back on its feet from the bushfires when the mandatory regulations associated with COVID-19 came into place.

The Government can provide a framework for certainty but in the end the community must embrace and implement that framework. Regional New South Wales is an integral part of the State. We can shake off the shackles of restrictions and go forward to enable the community and all the pubs, clubs, businesses and community facilities to survive, achieve and prosper. The community can then set its own course to recovery. The easing of the restrictions will ensure that it happens. I am sure that such a step forward will be rewarded by a grateful community. People need to live their lives with a sense of certainty, hope and vision for the future. Regional areas are resilient, as they have proven throughout the recent drought and bushfires, but they must have some control over their own destiny. They are responsible and can manage the risk associated with the kickstarting of local business.

As the COVID-19 crisis evolved, it was apparent that the decisive action taken by the State and Federal governments was slowing the spread of the virus. It became clear that it was necessary to restart business and community life and to provide a direction forward. The relaxation of the restrictions had an instant and telling impact on people's lives. Speaking to the first paragraph of the motion, many business and community facilities in my electorate were impacted severely by the restrictions. The main streets of the many towns and villages in the electorate were almost deserted as people observed COVID-19 restrictions. Many businesses and other community services were struggling to survive. The easing of the restrictions could not have come at a better time, as so many organisations had contacted me to ask about it.

A simple example of the impact can be drawn from Mittagong RSL Club, which during the recent bushfire crisis acted as the evacuation centre on several occasions. On one horrible night it sheltered 749 people and enough animals to fill Noah's ark but again the club was superb in everything that it did. I was inspired by the outstanding leadership of club general manager Craig Madsen. The service provided by his staff ensured that everyone was well looked after. The club was an integral part of the community recovery process. It was faced with closure and, if it were not for JobKeeper, the potential loss of over 150 jobs. Many local suppliers of goods and services to the

club would also have been impacted. I am sure that the scenario was present across the State but, having had firsthand knowledge of the club, I understood too clearly the implications. I am pleased to say that the club, like many other businesses and community facilities, is now back in operation and looking forward to a bright future.

I address the second paragraph of the motion. I was contacted by a number of constituents from a wide range of faiths and beliefs about the reopening of churches and other places of worship. As a result, I launched an online petition asking the Government to ease the restrictions. As a person of faith, I strongly urged the Government to consider the reopening of churches and places of worship in line with similar allowances for pubs, cafes and restaurants, provided they took appropriate social distancing measures. I am pleased to say that it has been done and many people have come forward to thank me and the Government for it. Places of worship and reflection are not optional extras in the life of people of faith; they are as essential as their local supermarket or health clinic. Therefore, the easing of restrictions has been welcomed by people of faith. As a person of faith, my place of worship is essential for me, my friends and my family. On a personal note, I thank the Premier for easing those restrictions.

Speaking to the third paragraph of the motion, I am delighted that the campaign to encourage visitors back to regional areas is in full swing. The Wollondilly electorate is close to Sydney and has many wonderful tourist attractions. As members may already know, on 1 June Pie Time was launched in the Southern Highlands. It was pleasing to see the influx of tourists visiting the area to sample the many pies, great dining and wine tasting on offer. The only downside was that my favourite bakery, Gumnut Patisserie, no longer makes my favourite, the massaman beef pie, which is absolutely delicious. The electorate was buzzing with tourists on the Queen's Birthday long weekend. All local businesses are now on the road to recovery. But we must remain vigilant and ensure that the gains that we have made are not lost. I congratulate Premier Berejiklian and her team, who helped steer us on the course back to some level of normality. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (12:16:33):** I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after "That" with a view to inserting instead:

this House:

- (1) Notes the decision to ease restrictions on pubs, clubs, restaurants, libraries and other community services from 1 June 2020.
- (2) Notes the decision to allow churches and other places of worship to reopen from 1 June 2020.
- (3) Notes the failure of the Government to adequately support New South Wales regional tourism operators.
- (4) Notes the failure of the Government to provide rent relief for residential tenants and its failure to provide any genuine support for community clubs including Crown land rate and council rate relief as many of these clubs are facing financial difficulties.
- (5) Notes that the Government's small business package is severely lacking, largely underspent and has supported very few small businesses that desperately need assistance.

Whilst I note the enthusiasm of the member for Wollondilly for the Government, a reality check is needed. The time for platitudes and spin must stop. We need a government that is in touch with the people and understands the impact that the COVID-19 crisis is having on tenants, clubs, places of worship and tourism, and small business operators. They do not want to hear backslapping motions, especially so early in the COVID crisis. Much more needs to be done. The Government announces its cash-splash incentives but when one looks at the fine print it is too little and too late. The Government's small business package for cash assistance is more akin to contestants in one of those wind-tunnel booth games where cash is flying around everywhere but no-one can get their hands on it. There is an old adage: privatising profits and socialising the losses. The Government has amended it to: The Government takes all the accolades but socialises the problems.

The Government has not taken responsibility for many of its decisions, whether it was the initial inertia of doing nothing when the crisis was emerging or the *Ruby Princess* debacle, where no-one from State or Federal government, the Minister, the Premier or the Prime Minister will take responsibility, saying that it has all been a general misunderstanding. I can understand that the member for Wollondilly wants the Government to take credit for removing restrictions but the facts are clear: The Government has been dragged kicking and screaming to ease restrictions, without a plan. The National Rugby League and the Australian Football League, not the Government, are setting the agenda of when teams are returning to training, when games can start and when crowds are returning to the games. Despite the Australian Institute of Sport having a road map for how sports can return safely, the Government is more interested in allowing people back into pubs and clubs before it even considers community sports or gyms. Did anyone from the Government listen to and participate in those plans?

Amendments in the other place, endorsed in this House, have called for tenants to be paid up to \$2,500 if their financial situation has been impacted by COVID-19. I appreciate Julia Finn, the shadow Minister leading for Labor, and the crossbenchers who have supported this amendment. I wish for the member for Wollondilly to reflect on what the Government has done with this tenants' package. I foresee members saying, "Oh, well.

The Government has done landlord tax relief." But I challenge the member for Wollondilly—and anyone in this Parliament—to find out how many residential landlords have benefited in his electorate, or even in mine. Most people across western Sydney are below the land tax threshold, so nothing is going to the tenants. We need to support the tenants. Something like 30 per cent to 40 per cent of people in the State are based in a tenancy area. They are suffering, especially in their ability to pay their rent.

The member for Wollondilly put up a motion to congratulate the community clubs on their return. It is one thing for the larger clubs that have struggled and are fighting through it, but many of the clubs are actually ethnicity based or community based. In the City of Blacktown there are many of these clubs. They originated in the 1950s and 1960s through emigration settlement, establishing churches, orphanages, nursing homes, clubs and community spaces. Most of them are run by volunteers; there are no paid staff. Most of the volunteers are in their 60s to their 90s. A lot of these clubs provide language skills and opportunities, even for the next generation. Many of the elderly revert back to their mother tongue—that way they can rekindle old friendships.

The clubs provide a vital resource for our area. We find that for most of these clubs, which only have around \$100,000 in turnover, something like \$10,000 to \$15,000 goes to council rates. Why does the Government not step forward and cover the council rate payment, at least? That would give these community clubs a go. I acknowledge clubs across the Blacktown area such as the South Hungarian Club, the German club and the Maltese clubs, La Valette Social Centre and the Hamrun Club. The Italians have the CSI Club and the Polish have the Polonia Sports Club. I acknowledge the Australian Croatian Cultural and Educational Association and St Raphael's German Catholic Centre. There are so many clubs that are supporting new migrants, because they cannot afford to build their own club.

There is so much that the Government has failed to do. The Government has failed to provide for our residential tenants. The Government has failed to supply or support small businesses. It has failed clubs and pubs, community clubs, major indoor venues and community sports. The Government should not just throw out \$1,000 and say, "Good luck to you. Let's see if you all survive." It has failed places of worship and it has failed regional tourism. Unlike Blacktown, the Wollondilly electorate is part of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. Blacktown is not part of western Sydney. There are lots of people struggling in regional areas. Small regional centres are not being funded.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:23:40):** I make a brief contribution to the motion moved by the member for Wollondilly about easing COVID-19 restrictions. I recognise that, while I have not seen the wording, my preference would be to note these things. Subject to seeing the wording, I indicate support for the proposed Opposition amendment to the motion. I want to talk about the benefits of the easing of restrictions and how they have been handled. I particularly want to give a shout-out to the venues, pubs, clubs and bars in the electorate of Newtown that have really done it tough. Lots of the people living in our community are hospitality workers. They are artists. They are working in creative industries. The challenge faced by seeing all the pubs, clubs, restaurants and bars shut was a real one.

I am pleased to be meeting with the Newtown Liquor Accord next week. I will chat to our local venues about the easing of what could be referred to as "nanny state" measures, put in place to restrict certain things about how people are able to operate responsibly in a community, to make sure that they are continued in a way that is responsible and that respects the need for responsible service of alcohol. Some small bars are too small to meet the restrictions. They need to have other, flexible ways to raise income and to be able to pay their rent. It is crucial to recognise that there is mention of other community spaces in the motion—libraries and community venues. It is important to acknowledge that many people doing it tough in our community do not have access to the internet or to computer and printing services. When those services shut down it was a real challenge and a risk to people.

One of the simple things that my electorate office did was put our wi-fi details on the front door. We knew that people could go there and, if they were not able to contact us by phone because they had run out of credit, they could log on to the wi-fi to contact us. It is great to see those community venues and libraries reopening, and the adaptability of some councils that provided drop-off and no-contact library services during that time. There is a special need for us to recognise that communities must be able to come together and connect. It was an incredible feeling to be with people at a local pub on Friday night and to see the pubs respecting distancing and respecting all the rules. There was an absolute buzz in the community and people were feeling so wonderful about being in the same place again. As the member for Wollondilly mentioned, I am sure that for those who regularly attend places of worship there may be a similar level of connection that is felt when they are in the same place. As someone that spent over 13 years at a Catholic school, I know that the connection, the community and the social interactions before and after a service are absolutely crucial. In the same way, meeting the community at a park, a rally or a public event are also ways that we connect as humans. That is really valuable to see.

I conclude by putting on record my pleasure that escape rooms are now able to open. On 13 June the public health orders specifically mentioned that escape rooms could reopen. Marise Watson, a constituent in the



electorate of Newtown and owner of The Cipher Room, contacted me because she was very worried that no-one in NSW Health or the Government would know what an escape room was. She was very worried that The Cipher Room would not be included in the reopening. If the Chair will give me a brief extension of time, I can explain what an escape room is; otherwise we will have to leave that to our googling skills. Marise advocated for herself and for the 33 other operators of escape rooms in New South Wales. People from Galston, the CBD and Port Macquarie have contacted us to say thank you. I acknowledge the health Minister for directly being able to provide support on this. It may sound obscure, but if people know restrictions are being lifted and they are not being listened to or considered as part of those restrictions, they need some clear advice. They adhered to that advice and got the restrictions lifted on 13 June. I encourage members to go to their local escape room sometime soon. [*Time expired.*]

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (12:28:02):** I congratulate the New South Wales Government on the decision to reopen pubs, clubs, restaurants, libraries and community services, as well as churches and other places of worship. The Government understands that creating jobs and restoring confidence for the hundreds of thousands of people impacted by COVID-19 is at the heart of its economic plan. The easing of restrictions will enable many people to return to work and regional travel. We will see New South Wales moving once more. This is a direct result of the efforts of our dedicated frontline workers, led by a strong government that was not afraid to make tough decisions to keep our communities safe. Now is the time when we reap the rewards of this hard work and open up again—particularly our regions that have been hit hard with drought, bushfires and now the COVID-19 pandemic.

The opening of pubs, clubs, restaurants and libraries is welcome news in my electorate. The Deputy Premier visited and shouted the bars at Taralga and Crookwell only a week ago, which was very well received. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government knows that to get New South Wales back on its feet it must support businesses and get them back to the new norm as soon as possible. The local bar staff, cleaners, cooks and suppliers are the people who keep our communities humming. With the easing of restrictions we are one step closer to recovery.

I know from speaking to and meeting with my local communities and business owners that they are hurting. Those who have received government support during the crises have welcomed every dollar to help keep locals in jobs. The small business recovery grants are one example of the support received and I cannot stress enough the difference those grants have made throughout the Goulburn electorate. I continue to encourage all small businesses to check their eligibility for the grants. I congratulate the New South Wales Government on the tourism campaign to encourage visitors back into our regional areas. The impact to our tourism business has been enormous. I encourage everyone to hit the road and support regional New South Wales, whether that means travelling to the Southern Highlands for pie time, to the South Coast, passing through Goulburn on the way to the Snowys in the ski season, or heading out west to Boorowa to sit around a cosy campfire. We are open for business and we encourage tourists to explore our beautiful region.

When one looks at what has happened across the globe, one finds that the New South Wales Government has managed the COVID-19 crisis well under the exceptional leadership of Premier Gladys Berejiklian. It is now time for our communities to get back on their feet and bounce back stronger and better than ever. I congratulate this Government on the further easing of restrictions and welcome the tourism campaign in our regional areas. I particularly thank the member for Wollondilly who, with the member for Camden and the Federal member for Hume, put together a regional task force. The task force included business leaders, community leaders and local government members to discuss some of the huge issues confronting them. We discussed the restrictions that had been put in place and whether there were other ways we could let people know the boundaries and what we could do to ease that pain. I congratulate all members of the regional task force in our electorates on coming together and helping us to advise the Ministers responsible for different areas about the restrictions. I support the motion.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (12:32:19):** I welcome the opportunity to speak in debate on this motion. I refer to the comments of the member for Wollondilly and what struck home to me was the word "hope". As the member for Wollondilly said, over these challenging months during the bushfires and then COVID our communities have been through much and seek hope at this time. It was wonderful to listen to the member for Newtown, who spoke with enthusiasm about the challenges facing the hospitality industry but also the green shoots there. I did not quite get that sense of hope from the member for Blacktown. I express gratitude for the way that our community has responded to COVID-19. I acknowledge the challenges and hardships and I am conscious of the jobs lost in our community. But I am also conscious of the empathy, the kindness, the reaching out to one another that has occurred over the past few months. I am grateful and humbled to serve my electorate and for the way in which people have responded.

It is pleasing to see the green shoots, but we still have many challenges. Last week I saw Rob Hobart at the Northside Hotel. It was great to see people back at the hotel enjoying a meal at the bistro. I called in to see Brendan,

who is the licensee at Sodens Hotel in Albury, one of the major hotels in the area. He spoke of how things are challenging and will continue to be for the next several months. That is the case with a lot of our hotels, cafes, restaurants and clubs as well. What drew me to this motion was the way the member for Wollondilly spoke about faith communities. The Albury electorate has strong communities of faith, both in the City of Albury and in the regional areas. They have been reaching out to me to advocate and talk about the need to return to worship not only so they can worship but also just as importantly so they have a sense of community care and love around them. My conversations with the Premier's office have been about the importance of the community returning to worship as well as easing restrictions on those things that touch deeply on one's life journey, in particular attending funerals and weddings.

We know how important tourism is going to be for the recovery of many of our communities impacted by fire. Places like Braymont Gardens near Tumbarumba were impacted significantly by the bushfires, then they were hit by COVID-19. It was great to call in and see them starting to renew and getting ready for what will hopefully be a spring where we can all move forward away from the clouds of COVID-19. I give a shout-out to Richie Robinson and his team at Destination Riverina Murray. They have been doing a fantastic job so far. We have a lot of great things to offer tourists in the Albury electorate. As did the member for Wollondilly and the member for Goulburn, I invite all members of this place to take time to visit the wonderful electorate of Albury. I thank the member for Wollondilly for bringing this motion to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:36:27):** I make a contribution to the motion and thank the member for Wollondilly for bringing it before the House today. As we all know, this pandemic is a once-in-a-century event. There is no rule book or how-to book when it comes to beating a pandemic. Under the leadership of Premier Gladys Berejiklian, and through the unprecedented nationwide cooperation of National Cabinet, our State has done a fantastic job over the past few months. Our community can be proud of our progress in beating COVID-19. However, we cannot let our guard down. Complacency is the new killer. People need to come forward for testing—even if they have the mildest symptoms. Practising good hand hygiene and following the social distancing rules is vital. We must all remain vigilant and do our bit to avoid a second COVID-19 outbreak.

As the Treasurer said earlier this week, the New South Wales Government is pivoting from response to recovery. This is all about keeping people in jobs and keeping businesses in business at this difficult time. Unfortunately, the months ahead will be the biggest economic challenge in a generation. The Treasurer also said that this Government has committed \$13.6 billion to the health and economic COVID-19 response, the largest of any State or Territory in Australia. Together with support from the Federal Government this has mitigated some economic impacts. Despite this, our State's economy is still forecast to contract by as much as 10 per cent in the second half of the 2019-20 financial year. Unemployment is also forecast to rise to around 7.75 per cent. The flow-on effect to revenue streams for the New South Wales Government is expected to result in approximately \$20 billion of lost revenue over the next five years.

I am proud to be part of a government that is also working at a local level to support individuals, families and businesses at this difficult time. In the past two months around 1,500 small businesses on the Central Coast have applied for the \$10,000 one-off grant. It can be used to cover bills like utilities, council rates, telecommunications, insurance payments, wages and more. The criteria for funding has been extended to include microbreweries, cellar doors and events, and commercial vessel businesses. Recently a new \$10,000 Export Assistance Grant has been made available to small- and medium-sized exporters on the Central Coast. This funding is targeted at helping local businesses access new markets or re-enter old ones where opportunities are no longer available. Before COVID-19, exports accounted for around 14 per cent of the New South Wales economy. I know it is crucial that our State defends its international trading position and maintains contact with key markets.

Also announced recently by the New South Wales Government is a one-off \$3,000 Small Business Recovery Grant. This funding aims to help with reopening costs. Applications are open from 1 July onwards through Service NSW. I encourage the thousands of local businesses on the Central Coast and in Wollondilly to apply for this funding. I conclude by mentioning another initiative from the New South Wales Government, which is an online tool for local businesses to check, test and promote their COVID-safe credentials. While it is important that businesses reopen their doors and welcome back customers, it is essential to keep our community safe while we are living with COVID-19. All industry information is available under the one roof through one website, including downloadable badges for businesses with COVID-safe plans to display. Once again, I congratulate the member for Wollondilly on moving the motion. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (12:40:34):** In reply: I thank the member for Blacktown, the member for Newtown, the member for Goulburn, the member for Albury and member for Terrigal for their contributions to debate on this motion. At the outset, I fully reject the amendment moved by the member for Blacktown—who probably is now known as "Mr Doomsday". One thing that will get communities and businesses back on their feet is hope. I saw that. The member for Albury saw that. The member for Goulburn saw that. The

member for Blue Mountains saw that. The member for Bega and other members whose electorates have been affected by bushfires, including northern electorates represented by members of The Nationals, know that hope is the one thing that will get our communities back on track. The Government is giving the people of New South Wales hope. With the easing of restrictions by the Premier and her team, with advice from Health, we will be back on our feet as soon as possible.

Over the past year we have had a very tough time. It has been a bit like something out of *The Ten Commandments* starring Charlton Heston. We have had drought, bushfires, floods and now we have COVID-19. The Government is doing its best and working with the community. The member for Newtown referred to cafes, pubs, bars, and musicians and artists who are doing it tough. Everyone is doing it tough. We are all in this together. I thank the member for Goulburn for her work. She has been assisting me, the member for Camden, the Federal member for Hume and representatives of the six local government areas in the Hume electorate. Some time ago we set up a regional task force. We meet regularly—in fact, we are meeting today at 3.00 p.m. via Zoom. The task force comprises the Federal member, three State members, representatives from local government areas, and representatives of government agencies, such as the NSW Police Force and Service NSW.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** We are going to put a motion on at three o'clock.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** We will have it on mute and bring it down here. The task force also includes great industry leaders—people like Jim Marsden from the Marsden Law Group, Adriana Care and Brett Kelly from Kelly+Partners—who have offices across New South Wales and who are giving up their time to help the community. I acknowledge that the member for Newtown referred to tenants and businesses doing it tough and she asked what the Government has done to help them. The Government is supporting all those people, and we are doing a great job.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The member for Blacktown will come to order. The member for Maitland will come to order.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** Our regional task force put together a two-page guide that was kindly written by Jim Marsden and another lawyer to help businesses and landlords negotiate those issues.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! I call the member for Blacktown to order for the first time.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** The member for Terrigal referred to the Government's incentives. I proudly moved the motion.

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

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** I know that Opposition members are doomsayers. Every day the Leader of the Opposition is on the front page of *The Daily Telegraph* with a bad story.

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

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** The Opposition is trying to dish out stuff to Government members and that will not work. The people of New South Wales voted for this Government at the last election.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I call the member for Blacktown to order for the second time. I call the member for Maitland to order for the first time.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** This Government has been able to support people already adversely affected by bushfires and who now face the adverse effects of COVID-19 because of its fantastic economic management over the past nine years. In stark contrast, the Opposition did absolutely nothing during its 16 years in government. Opposition members should be ashamed of themselves for yelling in this Chamber. I commend the motion to the House.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....34  
Noes .....49  
Majority.....15

AYES

Aitchison, J  
Barr, C

Atalla, E  
Car, P

Bali, S  
Catley, Y

## AYES

Chanthivong, A  
Dib, J  
Harris, D  
Hornery, S  
Lynch, P  
Mehan, D (teller)  
Park, R  
Smith, T  
Warren, G  
Zangari, G

Cotsis, S  
Doyle, T  
Harrison, J  
Kamper, S  
McDermott, H  
Mihailuk, T  
Parker, J  
Tesch, L  
Washington, K

Crakanthorp, T  
Finn, J  
Haylen, J  
Leong, J  
McKay, J  
O'Neill, M  
Scully, P  
Voltz, L  
Watson, A (teller)

## NOES

Anderson, K  
Berejiklian, G  
Clancy, J  
Cooke, S (teller)  
Dalton, H  
Donato, P  
Greenwich, A  
Hancock, S  
Lindsay, W  
O'Dea, J  
Petinos, E  
Provest, G  
Sidgreaves, P  
Smith, N  
Taylor, M  
Upton, G  
Wilson, F

Ayres, S  
Bromhead, S  
Conolly, K  
Coure, M  
Davies, T  
Elliott, D  
Griffin, J  
Henskens, A  
Marshall, A  
Pavey, M  
Piper, G  
Roberts, A  
Sidoti, J  
Speakman, M  
Toole, P  
Ward, G

Barilaro, J  
Butler, R  
Constance, A  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Dominello, V  
Gibbons, M  
Gulaptis, C  
Lee, G  
McGirr, J  
Perrottet, D  
Preston, R  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G  
Stokes, R  
Tuckerman, W  
Williams, L

## PAIRS

Daley, M  
Lalich, N  
Minns, C  
Saffin, J

Hazzard, B  
Kean, M  
Johnsen, M  
Williams, R

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**Motion agreed to.**

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:56:20):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that reports from the New South Wales Domestic Violence Review Team show that in 99 per cent of domestic violence cases in New South Wales, the relationship between a victim of domestic violence and their abuser is characterised by the abuser's use of coercive and controlling behaviours towards the victim.
- (2) Notes the use of these coercive and controlling behaviours is not a crime in New South Wales.
- (3) Acknowledges legislation seeking to criminalise coercive control in other jurisdictions is proving successful.
- (4) Calls on every member of the Legislative Assembly to take real action on domestic violence and support legislation which seeks to criminalise coercive control in New South Wales.

For as long as I can remember I have heard women talk about domestic abuse of one sort or another. When I was very young I would incidentally hear snippets of worried conversation about abuse being had by women who, on my approach, would just fall silent. As I got older I became privy to those sad and disturbing conversations. The nightly news and the print media provided very dark glimpses of the macabre and frightening world of abused

women. My contact with the Warilla women's health centre and women's refuges have given me a one-on-one exposure to abused women.

The laws of New South Wales have attempted to address domestic violence and related issues but they have failed to deal with coercive control, which focuses on and sustains domestic abuse towards intimate partners. When coercive control is coupled with the psychological damage done to young children, the problem is so much bigger. The demand for services relating to family, domestic and sexual violence continues to rise in New South Wales. This State needs to do more. It needs to examine, educate, legislate and prosecute coercive controlling behaviours. A number of enlightened jurisdictions around the world have already criminalised coercive control behaviour, including one Australian State. Prosecution is allowed on the grounds of coercive control, with a sentence for aggravation for harm done to children in the abuse situation. Recommendation 9 of the New South Wales Domestic Violence Death Review Team 2017-2019 report states:

2. monitoring the progress and implementation of offences of coercive control ... in other jurisdictions.

The term "coercive control" is used to describe the abusive treatment of mostly women in an intimate relationship by their male counterpart. It is described as an act or acts that are set to intimidate, humiliate, punish, belittle, frighten and control their victim. It is very often a precursor to the physical violence which almost always follows. This type of abuse goes unpunished under current New South Wales law. The NSW Police Force states that its officers are dealing with incidents relating to some form of domestic abuse every 8½ minutes. Police officers from the Lake Illawarra local area command estimate that they spend half their time on domestic-related violence incidents every day. The laws of Australia and New South Wales have sought to treat the results of coercive control—that is, physical abuse—but not the malignant philosophy that underpins it and is used to control women in abusive relationships.

The United Nations *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women* states that domestic violence refers to acts of violence that occur between people who have or have had an intimate relationship. While there is no single definition, the central element of domestic violence is an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner through fear—for example, by using behaviour which is violent and threatening. In most cases the violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics to exercise power and control over women and their children and it can be criminal and non-criminal. Domestic violence includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and can include a range of controlling behaviours such as control of finances, isolation from family and friends, continued humiliation, threats against children and also being threatened with injury or death.

As with domestic violence, the Australian national plan of 2010-2022 recognises that although only some aspects of family violence are criminal, any behaviour that causes the victim to live in fear is unacceptable. This unacceptable behaviour could be best described as those behaviours that fit under the term "coercive controlling behaviour". This unacceptable abusive behaviour usually occurs for years and is often revealed only as evidence in domestic violence cases. The evidence always identifies an escalating pattern of negative behaviour towards an intimate female partner which all too often ends in violence or death.

A 2019 study by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare established that stable rates of partner violence in Australia contrast with the falling rates of overall violence. The national population survey showed that the rates of partner violence and sexual violence have remained stable since 2005, while total violence from any one person has declined significantly over the same period. But that is not so in New South Wales. Police statistics on domestic violence in New South Wales indicate that there was a 4 per cent rise in domestic violence between 2018 and 2019. Sadly, we are bucking the national trend. Some eight out of 10 of these attacks are perpetrated on women by men. I say to the Attorney General that it appears that whatever we are doing in New South Wales is just not working.

However, some countries and jurisdictions have made coercive control a crime. Countries such as England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and States such as Tasmania have all criminalised coercive controlling behaviour. In Scotland some 190 cases have been reported to the Crown, it being the office responsible for the prosecution of crime, with 13 convictions in that jurisdiction. Ireland has had one conviction. I have so much more to say on this but I am running out of time. Members in this place have an opportunity to get something right. We need to get this right for all women—one every day and 21 in the past three weeks—who have been killed at the hands of a monster with whom they have had an intimate relationship. I seek full support from this Government on coercive controlling behaviour so that it is criminalised in New South Wales and that we take real action to protect women and children in this State.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (13:03:33):** I move:

That the motion be amended by:

- (1) Leaving out the word "crime" in paragraph (2) and inserting instead the words "specific criminal offence".

- (2) Leaving out the words "is proving successful" in paragraph (3).
- (3) Leaving out the words "and support legislation which seeks to criminalise coercive control in New South Wales" in paragraph (4).

I thank the member for Shellharbour for her motion. I discussed coercive control with her some months ago. I thank her for raising this important issue. Coercive control is a complex issue that encompasses a wide range of behaviours used to intimidate, degrade, isolate and control another person. While physical violence is often a component of domestic violence, coercive control includes non-physical abuse such as isolating a partner from their friends and relatives, compromising their autonomy by preventing them from doing what they want, monitoring their activities, preventing them from engaging in education or work, or controlling their finances. On 24 March I tabled the 2017-2019 report of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team, known as the DVDRT. The report reviewed 53 closed cases of domestic violence homicides that occurred between July 2014 and June 2016 and made 34 recommendations. Recommendation 9 stated:

That the Department of Communities and Justice examine the extent to which existing NSW laws (criminal and civil protection orders) respond adequately to non-physical forms of domestic and family violence and to patterns, rather than incidents, of violence. This examination should include:

- (1) a qualitative review conducted with NSW police about what forms of behaviour are being targeted under the offence of "stalking or intimidation", whether such charges are laid on their own or in combination with other offences, and the relationship context of such offences; and
- (2) monitoring the progress and implementation of offences of coercive control and domestic abuse in other jurisdictions.

While I commend and acknowledge the member's enthusiasm and passion for preventing domestic and family violence, the Government is unable to commit to the creation of a new coercive control offence at this time. The DVDRT did not recommend the introduction of a new criminal offence in its report. It did recommend that the Department of Communities and Justice conduct an examination of the issue, including a qualitative review of how the existing criminal law is working, and monitor the progress of offences of coercive control and domestic abuse in other jurisdictions. The DVDRT noted at page 70 of its report:

A number of jurisdictions in Australia and elsewhere have sought to address non-physical forms of abuse and patterns of behaviour in their criminal law. For example, in Tasmania, emotional and economic abuse have been criminal offences since 2005. More recently, Scotland (2019) and England and Wales (2015) have introduced dedicated offences of domestic abuse and coercive control respectively. The Team understands, however, that despite these developments, there is some evidence that these jurisdictions continue to struggle to prosecute offences involving non-physical manifestations of violence. For example in Tasmania the two offences introduced in 2005 have rarely been used and challenges around enforcement have been identified. Similarly, in England and Wales, recent statistics indicate that while the offence of coercive control is increasingly being charged, research has revealed that at least in some police force areas, it is less likely to be charged or progressed when compared to other domestic violence offences. The Scottish offence has only been in place for a short period but has been carefully drafted and accompanied by a rollout of comprehensive training for responders, both of which are positive components of this change to policy and law resulting in promising early results.

The Team considers that while codifying non-physical forms of domestic violence may recognise the harm caused by this behaviour (and therefore also potentially improve public education around non-physical violence) this codification may have negative or unintended consequences where such offences remain less likely to be charged or prosecuted, or where victims may be misidentified as offenders. Rather than promoting awareness and understanding about non-physical manifestations of abuse, this may reinforce the misapprehension that such violence is not as "serious" or is different from, physical forms of abuse. A number of academics working in the area have sounded cautions about these new offences whilst others have been more positive. The Team will continue to monitor these new offences in the United Kingdom to assess how they are operating and whether similar offences should be codified in NSW.

I have asked the Department of Communities and Justice to act on the DVDRT's recommendation. The department will carefully consider how our existing laws protect victims from non-physical forms of domestic and family violence and monitor the experience of coercive control reforms in other jurisdictions; that is done with a view to considering law reform in New South Wales. The consideration of potential new criminal offences must be balanced, rely on authoritative evidence and be the subject of appropriate consultation. We have made clear our continued determination to tackle the scourge of domestic abuse. We are determined to find a way that places the needs of victims front and centre by providing additional protections, strengthening agencies' responses and amplifying the voice of victims.

Currently our laws and policies tend to target physical violence and treat these as single incidents. They tend to ignore or minimise the tactics abusers use to suppress their victims. We are examining whether there is an appropriate legislative response that takes into consideration the patterns of controlling behaviour which often typify forms of domestic abuse not accurately captured in current law and practice. Importantly, this could concurrently uphold the safety of victims while ensuring that perpetrators are held to account for their behaviour. I thank the member for Shellharbour for introducing this important motion and I look forward to continuing discussions with her and my Opposition counterpart on how this Parliament can tackle domestic and family violence in our community and save lives.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (13:10:05):** I support the fantastic member for Shellharbour and the motion she has moved today. Coercive control, as many people know but others do not, involves a pattern of behaviour rather than a one-off incident of domestic violence. It refers to a pattern of domination and intimidation that may include emotional or financial abuse, cyberstalking, sexual coercion, isolation and other forms of abuse but does not necessarily include explicit physical or sexual violence. For the record, it includes behaviours the aim of which is to isolate and disempower a woman such as controlling her contact with her family and friends, stopping her from obtaining employment or studying, deleting her contacts from her mobile phone, distributing revenge porn, and threatening to self-harm and/or harm her, her children or her pets should she wish to leave. These controlling behaviours collectively strip the other person of their autonomy and sense of self-worth.

The introduction of a coercive control offence in Australia has been examined by several domestic violence inquiries in the past decade. Mainland Australia has no laws that directly criminalise non-physical domestic abuse. In current New South Wales legislation most of the behaviour described as coercive control would not constitute an offence, unless there is an apprehended violence order already in place. It is often assumed that women and children murdered by the woman's partner or former partner have usually experienced a history of physical violence. However, with the current narrative around domestic and family violence we are learning that in many cases the first incidence of physical violence may actually be the occasion resulting in the woman's death. Current research suggests that dangerous patterns of coercive controlling behaviour are the best predictor of the risk of domestic homicide, better than assessing danger by physical assaults alone. The current situation in New South Wales places victims and their children in a perilous situation and presents a great challenge every minute of every day for police in their role in protecting women and children living with domestic and family violence.

**Debate interrupted.**

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

*Announcements*

#### **WINTER RECESS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome members to the last day of sitting before the winter recess. As the days get cooler and shorter many of you will soon travel back to your electorates and continue to do the great work that you do with your communities. I know the member for Albury will attend the winter solstice community event in his electorate this weekend together with our new Commissioner for Resilience NSW, Shane Fitzsimmons, to raise awareness on the silent issue of suicide. I wish all members well this midwinter and look forward to keeping things cool in question time today.

*Members*

#### **MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH**

#### **MEMBER FOR KIAMA**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the birthday of the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and member for Tamworth. I also acknowledge the birthday of the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services and member for Kiama.

*Announcements*

#### **INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENT DAY**

**The SPEAKER (14:17:30):** As I foreshadowed yesterday, International Parliament Day is on 30 June. The New South Wales Parliament and The Ethics Centre, together with the support of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, will present "Bare Pit". The online panel discussion, broadcast live from this Chamber, will see some of our most notable former colleagues return to this place for a frank and fearless discussion. Those participants will include former Premier Nick Greiner, former Premier Bob Carr, former Opposition Leader Kerry Chikarovski and former Minister Sandra Nori, together with *The Sydney Morning Herald* international and political editor Peter Hartcher and Sky News Australia *First Edition* host Laura Jayes.

The event is free and online. Everyone is invited to watch and participate in the thought leadership event, which has been developed as part of the Professional Development Program. Members in attendance will have the opportunity to pose questions from the live audience on the day. If members are keen to take part, please respond to the email alert just sent to members. In the meantime, I ask members to put it in their diaries: International Parliament Day, 30 June at 1.00 p.m., live from the Parliament's Facebook page. I emphasise that although the Parliament is shut, it is important on International Parliament Day that we reach out to the community to remind it of the great work that takes place in this building.

*Committees***JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT (RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS AND EQUALITY) BILL 2020****Establishment and Membership**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (14:19:42):** By leave: I move:

That:

- (1) A joint select committee, to be known as the Joint Select Committee on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020, be appointed.
- (2) That the committee inquire and report into the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020, including whether the objectives of the bill are valid and, if so, whether the terms of the bill are appropriate for securing its objectives.
- (3) That the committee, in undertaking paragraph (2), have regard to:
  - (a) existing rights and legal protections contained in the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW) and other relevant New South Wales and Commonwealth legislation;
  - (b) the recommendations relevant to New South Wales from the Expert Panel Report: Religious Freedom Review (2018);
  - (c) the interaction between Commonwealth and New South Wales anti-discrimination laws and the desirability of consistency between those laws, including consideration of:
    - (i) the draft Religious Discrimination Bill 2019 (Cth) which has been released for public consultation; and
    - (ii) the Australian Law Reform Commission's reference into the *Framework of Religious Exemptions in Anti-discrimination Legislation*.
- (4) The committee will consult with key stakeholders as required.
- (5) The committee to consist of:
  - (a) eight members of the Legislative Assembly as follows:
    - (i) three Government members, namely Gabrielle Upton, MP (as Chair), Robyn Preston, MP, and Gurmeh Singh, MP;
    - (ii) two Opposition members, namely Paul Lynch, MP (as Deputy Chair) and Tania Mihailuk, MP; and
    - (iii) three crossbench members, namely Alex Greenwich, MP, Jenny Leong, MP, and Joe McGirr, MP.
  - (b) six members of the Legislative Council, namely three Government members, two Opposition members and one crossbench member.
- (6) That at any meeting of the committee seven members, including at least one member of the Legislative Assembly and at least one member of the Legislative Council, shall constitute a quorum.
- (7) The committee has leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales.
- (8) The committee report by 31 March 2021.
- (9) A message be sent to the Legislative Council requesting the Legislative Council agree to the resolution, nominate six of its members to the proposed committee, and to fix a time and place for the first meeting.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (14:22:08):** I thank the House for my inclusion on this committee. I acknowledge there will be concern that the topics and bills outlined in the terms of reference of this inquiry may look like a potential attempt to water down some hard-fought protections for the LGBTI and other communities. As a member of the LGBTI community, I always subscribe to the view that it is better to be at the table than on the menu. So I will use my role in this committee not only to advocate for my community but also to advance further reforms. A number of items covered in the terms of reference are areas that I have discussed with the nominated chair, the member for Vacluse, when she was Attorney General. I look forward to working with her again.

I have previously introduced legislation to remove provisions in the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 that allow private education institutions to expel students and fire teachers because of their sexuality, including even if the institution is not religiously affiliated. This inquiry provides another opportunity to advocate for this much-needed reform. I have long held the view that the State's anti-discrimination Act is out of date and needs to be modernised. As the member who introduced the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019, I am also concerned about potential attempts to create barriers for women to access health care under the guise of religious freedoms. If the pandemic has shown us anything, it is that we must not limit people's access to health care.



I sincerely hope that the very diverse collection of members on this committee is able to work constructively together and improve, rather than remove, important protections.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Ministerial Statements*

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

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (14:24:24):** Prior to the lunch break today the House debated the Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work) Bill. The Temporary Speaker in the chair determined that a motion that the bill be read a second time was lost. The manager of Opposition business has foreshadowed a motion of dissent on that ruling. If he wishes to proceed, the Government consents to that being dealt with straight after question time in accordance with the standing orders. However, the Government invites the Opposition to avoid the circus, avoid the waste of time and have the House agree that the bill has been read a second time.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** The House will suspend standing orders and move to the third reading stage straight after question time to avoid the frolics, the antics and the circus. But if that is not acceptable to the Opposition, the Government will defend the Temporary Speaker's ruling by saying that the ruling was clearly correct. Let us avoid the waste of time. If the Opposition wants to treat the bill as having been read a second time, let us treat it as such and move to the third reading after question time. That is the open offer to the Opposition.

**The SPEAKER:** Is there a response to the ministerial statement?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:25:56):** The Opposition will move a dissent motion and is happy to divide on the third reading.

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** Are you going to waste the Parliament's time?

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Don't talk about wasting time.

#### *Committees*

### **STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** I table the interim report of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee entitled *Modernisation and reform of practices and procedures: ePetitions sessional orders*, report No. 3/57, dated June 2020.

I order that the report be printed.

#### *Rulings*

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

**The SPEAKER (14:27:33):** I have had the opportunity to review the footage of the division conducted earlier today on the Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work) Bill 2020. I am satisfied that the question on the second reading of the bill was passed on the voices, but note that there are different interpretations as to whether a division was duly called or whether the bill was passed at the second reading stage. I note that it is only once a question has been put and passed on the third reading of a bill that it is deemed to have passed the House. I will not make further comment. We will follow the standing orders and procedures of the House. In the meantime, I ask members to take the temperature down a touch because there are other matters before the House. I call the member for Swansea to order for the second time.

#### *Question Time*

### **MEDICAL GAS INSTALLATION**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:28:50):** My question is directed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation. Amelia Khan suffered severe brain damage after a medical gas mix-up at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital four years ago. Labor proposed a bill to ensure that it never happens again. The Minister let the bill through and then changed his mind. What does the Minister have to say to Amelia's father, Daniel, who is watching this farce unfold and is still here at Parliament House?

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:29:18):**

I acknowledge the intent of those opposite to address the serious and tragic loss, and the issues that have arisen in regard to the licensing and installation of medical gas. Earlier today I outlined a number of issues in the Opposition's bill that together would have meant the proposed licensing scheme would have failed to lift the standards of those doing that important work. On Tuesday I gave notice to introduce the Gas Legislation Amendment (Medical Gas Systems) Bill 2020. The Government will introduce a new licensing scheme by 1 November. In addition the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Amendment (Medical Gas Work) Regulation 2020 was approved by the Governor yesterday. The legislation will come forward in the next session of Parliament, will establish a licensing scheme that is robust and effective and will deliver on the Government's commitment to strengthen the regulation of medical gas work.

**M5 EAST**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (14:30:35):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Kylie Wilkinson lives in Picnic Point. She uses the M5 East to get to the city every day. Soon she will be \$3,300 a year worse off using the same motorway, which is toll-free. In the middle of a recession, why is the Minister putting a big, fat toll on the M5 East?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:31:05):** I thank the member for his question. It is important to acknowledge that all members in this House recognise that everybody is under cost-of-living pressures at this time. Ultimately, the infrastructure that has been built to support south-west Sydney, including the M5 East tunnel, will give substantial time benefits to people who travel from that part of town into the city. There is a half-hour improvement in travel time between Liverpool and southern Sydney due to the infrastructure, which has been built to free up the wider road network capacity so that people have those options as well. At the same time, the Government is investing massively in public transport in south-west Sydney. The Government recognises, and has recognised, the cost-of-living pressures on families. That is why the Premier and the Minister for Customer Service have introduced 70 cost-of-living measures through Service NSW to ease the financial burden on families, particularly families in south-west Sydney.

With the use of tolls, the Government has maintained the M5 cashback and introduced discounts to motor vehicle registrations on families with a free registration benefit. Tolling concessions exist to bring forward infrastructure generations ahead of time so that people have the benefit of new tunnels and motorways across Sydney. That is how they are financed. When Labor was in government, it built five or seven toll roads in the city. Two of them—the Cross City Tunnel and the Lane Cove Tunnel—went broke. We will let that be on one side. We are able to bring forward that infrastructure to benefit families, particularly in south-west Sydney. The Government will continue to provide cost-of-living rebates and supports to families. It recognises that and will take that approach.

**RURAL AND REGIONAL ROADS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (14:33:31):** My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. The Government has promised to take over 15,000 kilometres of rural and regional roads from local councils. Will the Minister rule out cutting roads maintenance grants from councils, which the Government's own documents show would leave councils up to \$150 million a year worse off?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:34:02):** I thank the member for her question. It has been a bad week for Labor. It has actually been a bad 12 months and a bad decade for Labor. Thank God the people of the State no longer have the reckless Labor Party in government. It does not know how to manage government. It does not think about the people of the State. Labor members care more about themselves than they do about the people of New South Wales. They have shown that time after time after time. They turn their back and forget that there are people in regional New South Wales.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** The member has a habit of asking questions and not wanting to listen. We have been upfront about the road reclassification. We have said that we intend to take up to 15,000 kilometres of road. This is fixing a wrong—a wrong that you guys left behind when councils handed these roads over when you were last in government.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question is very simple. The Minister just needs to rule it out. I ask that the Minister be directed to answer the question through the Chair.

**The SPEAKER:** I am satisfied that the Minister is speaking about regional roads and is being generally relevant. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. I call the member for Baulkham Hills to order for the first time.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** When the Labor Party was in government it commenced the road reclassification in about 2003 and it was not implemented until 2012. You know that it takes time. You know that it is a complex issue. You know that we have appointed an independent expert panel already. You know that the terms of reference are out there to see.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: The Minister should direct his comments through the Chair and make them relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** As I was saying, the member knows that we have the terms of reference out, the independent panel has been appointed already and we have indicated that the panel will start talking to stakeholders, councils and the community about the roads that are important to them. But this is about looking at the road network. This is about classifying roads that are relevant today. Over the past 10 years we have seen a shift in the way in which people move across our communities and a shift in the way suburbs have grown. We want to work with councils to do this.

The member for Maitland forgot to say that when Labor did this it did not give councils the support needed to maintain these roads. Labor handed them over and then handed them over again but forgot to support councils. What we are doing is fixing a wrong that Labor created. We are fixing a wrong that it left behind. We will go through the process independently and we will talk to those councils that need this. We want to talk to councils about making sure that we keep jobs in local communities. This goes on top of all the programs that we are delivering in this State, such as the Fixing Local Roads program, in which we have invested \$500 million.

It is exciting because over the next couple of weeks I am going to announce road projects that will create a big difference to regional communities—roads that are important to those communities. Those opposite may not think they are important but I tell them that they are important because these are the communities that want roads they can use, that they can repair and maintain, and that will seal in those local communities. Labor is good at branch stacking; it is not good at building roads. What we are good at is serving the people of New South Wales. We will continue to build the roads, to build the bridges and to build the infrastructure that is needed. It is important to do that to create the jobs in the communities that we represent. Labor turned its back on the people of this State. All Labor members care about are themselves.

#### **SOUTH EAST REGIONAL HOSPITAL**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (14:39:13):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. The Government is considering plans to cut 34 full-time jobs at South East Regional Hospital. Given the Bega community has already been through bushfires and the pandemic, will the Minister guarantee that not a single job will be lost?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:39:36):** I thank the member for her question. It is completely and absolutely not part of any government policy. If the member is suggesting that I have had some role in anything, it is, in fact, that we have increased health staff across the State. As the member well knows, if she has any particular concerns she should raise those issues with me and I will deal with them. I point out that in addition to NSW Health having more staff than ever before in history, particularly in regional areas, the Liberal-Nationals Government has put a focus on rebuilding hospitals across the State, particularly in regional areas that were largely ignored for 16 years under the former Labor Government.

In the Southern NSW Local Health District one of the magnificent new projects that we have is the new Eurobodalla hospital. When we build new hospitals we employ new staff—it is part and parcel of building a new hospital; we have to do that. The member for Bega and my ministerial colleague has been a great advocate for that area. He has managed to achieve from the Treasurer, not just \$150 million but now \$200 million to build the new Eurobodalla hospital. It has been a delight for me as health Minister to be able to work with colleagues on both sides to ensure that the people of the regions have far more opportunities for world-class health facilities than ever in the State's history. I am delighted that we are building a magnificent new facility right now in Maitland. I think the member for Maitland has seen that work going on.

The new Eurobodalla hospital and the Shoalhaven hospital are very much our focus and I will be speaking about that later. We have new hospitals being built everywhere—for example, Tamworth Hospital, and Tweed hospital is well underway. Only a few weeks ago we announced a further \$91.2 million in health funding. Treasurer Perrottet and Premier Berejiklian have been absolute advocates and stalwarts to ensure that we get more

money to build new hospitals. It is part and parcel of our jobs-on-the-ground strategy in this particularly difficult COVID-19 period to do even more. Whilst there are obvious fiscal challenges, as has been evidenced right across the world, as the Treasurer said in the House on Tuesday, the Liberal-Nationals Government is still committing hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars more to building new hospitals right across New South Wales, but particularly in our regional areas.

A lot of mischief has been caused by the Labor Party telling untruths. Yesterday the current temporary Leader of the Opposition spoke about the number of people who were in hospital at a certain percentile. I will send her a letter in due course and explain what that means. If people are in hospital for a number of hours—10¼ hours was mentioned yesterday—it means that they are getting the treatment they need; that is what happens. Obviously, if those opposite are not capable of understanding the statistics and how those percentiles work, and of understanding that it means that patients are being well cared for and well looked after in magnificent facilities with the magnificent health staff we have across this State, they should not ever be in government.

I can assure the member for Port Stephens that if she thinks there is a serious issue she can come and talk to me and I will certainly make inquiries at the local health district and find out whether it has a particular issue in a particular area. But I have no knowledge of the cutting of part-time jobs at the Eurobodalla hospital and the Government would certainly not endorse that. The member would know from Metford and other areas that local management has to make local decisions.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** There we go. That's your out, isn't it?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** God, you're stupid. You are seriously stupid.

*[A member interjected.]*

I am not talking to you. I am talking to your leader. I think you are very sensible. If there is an issue like that, let me know and I will certainly take it up and have a discussion. I will share it with you quite happily.

#### FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (14:44:50):** I direct my question to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Does the Minister agree with the department's advice on floodplain harvesting from January this year that if one does not have basic rights or a licence, there is no ability to legally take water? Given this advice, is floodplain harvesting in New South Wales illegal?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:45:28):** I thank the member for Murray for her question and for the opportunity to put some important facts on the table.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister for Health and Medical Research will come to order.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I am interested to know what the member for Barwon thinks of the question of the member for Murray and her attempts to inflame and divide irrigators and farmers across the State. Her actions this week have been disappointing on the basis that we need leadership to support irrigators and farmers to do their jobs. That is what we need.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. Will the Minister answer the question? I am trying to get some clarity about this.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Murray will resume her seat.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Clarity, please.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** You do not want clarity. You want to divide north and south. You want to divide the farmers. You want to let The Greens get in, and you voted with The Greens this week. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and the Labor Party were bad enough. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is not just in, lock, stock and barrel, with the Labor Party; it is lock, stock and barrel with The Greens in the upper House.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. Mr Speaker, would you ask the Minister to answer the question? It is "yes" or "no".

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the Minister to come to order very soon.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** The Shooters doing deals with The Greens in the upper House is a sight to behold. The member for Barwon is working hard on behalf of his constituents.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I will give the Minister a chance to return to the leave of the question. The member for Murray will resume her seat. The Minister will continue.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I am talking about the member for Barwon supporting floodplain harvesting and supporting his farmers with an activity that is completely legal. There is advice and information, but the member for Murray wants to tear farmers and communities apart—north versus south. While she does that she gives farmers and irrigators a bad name. My job is to ensure that we bring the farming communities together and I will work with the member for Barwon to achieve that. I will not rip communities apart like the member for Murray is doing.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** If the point of order relates to relevance, the Minister has come back to the question. What is the member's point of order?

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** My point of order relates to relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** I am satisfied that the Minister is being relevant. The member for Murray will resume her seat.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** I want clarity on the law.

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

**Ms Gladys Berejiklian:** She has just answered the question.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Thank you, Premier. It is a legal practice. For the member for Murray to be going from one corner of this State to another trying to tear communities apart and create conspiracy theories does her magnificent electorate a disservice. She represents an amazing group of people and producers, who contribute enormously to the New South Wales and the Australian economy, yet she embarrasses them every day. She embarrasses them with her negativity and with her poison.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 73.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is within the standing orders, but I ask her to be careful.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** We have The Greens with guns now and that is a shame. The Government will fight every day in our Parliament, our party room, our Cabinet and our joint party room for those magnificent communities that the member for Murray and the member for Barwon represent. We have one thing in common: We want to ensure the very best for these communities. We want people to be able to farm. We want people to be able to be productive. We do not want to set one community up against another, which is what the member for Murray does every day in this place.

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Report: Interim report into support for drought affected communities in NSW**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development, dated June 2020, entitled *Interim report into support for drought affected communities in NSW*. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Business of the House*

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: DISSENT**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the consideration of the notice of motion of dissent in the ruling of Temporary Speaker Wilson, given by the member for Keira, forthwith.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Presiding Officers***MEMBER FOR NORTH SHORE, TEMPORARY SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY****Dissent**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:54:38):** I move:

That this House dissents in the ruling of the Temporary Speaker, the member for North Shore, on the question of whether the Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work) Bill 2020 be read a second time, whereby the question was declared in the affirmative yet the member proceeded to call a division from the chair without a division being called from the floor.

I want everyone in this Chamber—perhaps everyone in this Parliament—to spend the next few seconds thinking about two people: Danial and Benish Khan. Danial and Benish are the parents—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: This motion is about dissent in the Chair's ruling and whether the ruling was correct or incorrect. It is not a motion about the substantive merits of the bill. We have had that debate. The member for Keira is out of order.

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear further from the member for Keira by way of introductory comments.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Danial was in the House today. He watched a fairly robust but respectful debate on an important piece of legislation. That debate was adjudicated by the member for North Shore. The legislation arose out of a tragedy that we are all aware of and that we hope will never have to be experienced by any family ever again. The bill we were debating in this place before lunch was designed to do just that. For a slim moment we thought—I certainly thought, having been present in the Chamber during the debate on this important bill—common sense had prevailed on the other side of the House.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: It is the same point of order. The member is speaking on the merits of the bill, not whether the ruling by the member for North Shore was correct.

**The SPEAKER:** I have allowed the member for Keira some introductory comments. I will ask him to come soon to the matter before the House, which is the motion of dissent.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I thought some common sense had prevailed when the question was put. I take members through exactly what occurred. I want members to listen to it while thinking about what Danial would be going through as he heard the ruling. The question was put. I was asked whether I wanted to reply. I made it clear, because I was across what I was doing on an important piece of legislation, that there would be no reply. There had been a respectful debate. We did not necessarily agree with everything the Government said in the debate, but it was a fairly respectful one. The question was put. I thought, "We may have support here." I thought that the families and what the Hon. Mark Buttigieg had done in working with the Parliament and the Government may have resulted in an outcome of which the House could be proud. I thought that Danial, who was sitting in the gallery, could think, wow! In an enormity of darkness, was it possible that a small ray of light on the oldest Parliament in this country had delivered for him and the Ghanem family an outcome so that no other family would have to experience this tragedy again? For a fleeting moment I was proud of this place. I was proud that we had come together. The question was put. There was no division.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** No call.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** There was no call.

**Ms Kate Washington:** There were no noes.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** There were no noes. It did not occur, Mr Speaker, and you know it did not occur. The Clerks know it did not occur. Government members know it did not occur, because we have watched the videotape.

**Ms Kate Washington:** That's right.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** We have seen it.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Time and again.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Time and again. But forget about what we have seen. Let us think about Danial for a moment and what he has seen. For a fleeting moment he saw representatives of his State in this place deliver a bill that would provide a smidgen of hope and a ray of light in the most incredibly dark period. That was immediately taken away from him, but not because it was a bad bill. That had nothing to do with it. If it were such a bad bill the Minister responsible could have, and should have, moved amendments. That did not happen. If it were such a bad bill it would not have taken four tragic, long years to get a two-page regulation from the Government. Let us think about Danial and what he saw. He had a glimmer of hope. No doubt Amelia, who turns

four on Saturday, was in the back of his mind. That hope was destroyed because the Government wanted to play petty politics.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: Again, the member for Keira is debating the merits of the bill that has already been debated and not whether the ruling—

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. I have given significant leeway to provide contextual comments. I ask the member for Keira to return directly to the substance of the motion.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** The member for North Shore demonstrated today that she did not understand the process of how the Parliament puts a question, how it is resolved, either in the affirmative or not. It is very clear that she is not up to running a debate and adjudicating at the level that is expected.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Keira will resume his seat.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order is under Standing Order 73. This debate is about whether or not the ruling is correct, whether it should be dissented from. There is now a breach of Standing Order 73, reflecting on a member, which is unnecessary to this debate.

**The SPEAKER:** In the context of the motion I am satisfied the member for Keira is not breaching Standing Order 73. I ask him to return to the substance of the motion, which is why dissent is being moved.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Dissent is being moved because her call was wrong. We know it, the Government knows it, and I am pretty sure Mr Speaker knows it. Labor acknowledges that, Mr Speaker, you have done a lot for the integrity of this place. I know that had you been sitting in the chair that call would not have been made, but it was made and it was the wrong call. Sometimes we as legislators make the wrong call. There was an opportunity for the member for North Shore to put up her hand and say that she got it wrong. Everyone knows she got it wrong. It was clear. She made a decision and made a call that was completely wrong on an important piece of legislation, arguably one of the most important pieces of legislation we have debated this year. The member for North Shore knows she got it wrong. Everyone in this place knows she got it wrong.

I have been a member in this place for a while and I have never seen a Speaker try to pre-empt a division, almost beg from the chair for a division, and then call for it when the question had been put and decided. That was wrong and it is not acceptable. This place relies on our Speakers to adjudicate as fairly as possible. We know we are in Opposition and that the majority of times the Speaker is a member appointed from the Government. We understand that and accept it. Today we were let down. The Parliament, the families and Danial not only were let down but also, most importantly, Amelia and John were let down by a member who is not up to performing the role of Temporary Speaker, by a Minister who is incompetent and by a government that does not care.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (15:04:45):** The member for North Shore got it right. Standing Order 174 sets out the procedure for calling a division. First, the Speaker must state an opinion after putting a question whether the ayes or the noes have it and, if unchallenged, declare the question accordingly. If there has been a voice for both the ayes and the noes, a division may then be called for. To call the division a member must have called against the Speaker's determination. Typically, at the end of a debate a Speaker will put the motion thus, "Those in favour say 'Aye'; those against say 'No'." Then the Presiding Officer will express an opinion, "I think the ayes have it" or "I think the noes have it", and then, leaving aside calls for a division at the moment, the Presiding Officer will then say, "The ayes have it" or "The noes have it", and declare the motion carried or lost as the case may be. Typically, there are three stages.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will listen to the debate in silence. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** If a Speaker says, "I think the ayes have it" or "I think the noes have it", he or she is stating an opinion.

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

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** But to call a division a member must have called against the Speaker's determination. I have described a three-stage process. Members might think the reference in Standing Order 174 is a reference to the second stage when a Presiding Officer says "The ayes have it" or "The noes have it", or it might be a reference to the third stage, "I declare the motion carried", or "I declare the motion lost". But whatever it is, it is clear that after the determination a member can call for a division. To say in a standing order that to call a division a member must have called against the Speaker's determination presupposes that the determination has been made. A member cannot call against a determination that has not been made. Whether we characterise the

words of the member for North Shore, "The ayes have it", as the final determination or some intermediate step, it was not too late for the member for Tamworth to call for a division.

**The SPEAKER:** I place the member for Swansea on three calls to order.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** That is what the member for Tamworth did.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will have the chance to speak in reply. Members should listen to the Attorney General and offer counterarguments later. Members will remain silent while the Attorney General is speaking.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** That is what the member for Tamworth and Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation did: He called for a division. It was not too late to call for a division when he did.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the third time. She was called to order twice earlier today.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** The ruling made by the member for North Shore clearly was correct. Instead of huffing and puffing and carrying on with theatrics, I invite Opposition members to read the standing orders. The ruling made by the Temporary Speaker was correct. But, in any event, what a waste of time debate on this dissent motion is. At the beginning of question time I offered Opposition members the chance to treat the bill as read for a second time. We do not have to go through this debate. Opposition members want to treat the bill as being read a second time. Opposition members say Danial Khan wants it treated as having been read a second time, so let us do that and get onto the bill being read a third time. But, no, Opposition members want to go through this charade and waste of time. Opposition members had ample opportunity to get what they want—an open offer—and they knocked it back. It is about time that an Opposition with no policies, no morality and no insight stopped wasting the time of this Parliament.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Wollongong to order for the first time. What is the member's point of order?

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** On several occasions the Attorney General asked that the member who was speaking return to the crux of the motion being debated. Mr Speaker, I ask you to advise him to do the same.

**The SPEAKER:** I will give the Attorney General the opportunity to provide contextual comments, just as I did for the member for Keira, but ultimately I also ask him to be more direct and confine his remarks to the leave of the motion. However, at the moment I am satisfied that the Attorney General's comments are in order.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** The ruling by the member for North Shore was correct. There was no need to have this debate because, if the Opposition wanted the bill to be treated as having been read a second time, the Government offered that to the Opposition, with the third reading of the bill to follow straightaway. This debate is a complete waste of time, a frolic, an antic and a circus. I move:

That the question be now put.

**The SPEAKER:** We must wait 30 minutes before moving that the question be now put, so I will give the call to the member for Port Stephens.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:10:03):** All kinds of precedents are set in this place, a place in which laws are made. There are clear rules around how laws are made because of the gravity and importance of the task that members have before them in this place. Today we have seen those rules thrown out the window and a very dangerous precedent has been set. Today in the oldest Parliament in Australia a precedent has been set whereby a Speaker or Temporary Speaker effectively can call a division. The role of a Presiding Officer is to maintain order in this place by applying the standing orders and sessional orders. As the Attorney General just told us and declared, on his reading of the standing orders the ruling made by the member for North Shore earlier today was correct. I will canvass the standing orders and suggest that that is entirely wrong and that on every count of the standing orders the member for North Shore has improperly applied those very orders.

Before I do that, I would like to revisit what happened today because I also was in the Chamber. The member for North Shore was playing the role of Temporary Speaker and the hapless Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and member for Tamworth was seated at the centre table, talking to the member for Terrigal who was beside him. The Minister had his back to the member for Cootamundra. On the Opposition side of the House was the member for Keira, the member for Fairfield, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Lakemba and me, all of who witnessed what happened in the House today. We all had been debating a very important bill, the Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work) Bill 2020.



Following debate, the Temporary Speaker then said, "The question is that this bill be now read a second time. All those in favour say 'Aye'." "Aye" came from the Opposition side of the Chamber. The Temporary Speaker then said, "Opposed, say 'Nay'." There were crickets. No noes were said, so quite rightly the Temporary Speaker then said, "The ayes have it? The ayes have it." That was accompanied by the Minister—it is shown on video if members want to check but Opposition members were in the Chamber and we saw it—nodding his head. That is why the member for Keira said there was glimmer of hope from the Opposition side of the House. There was glimmer of hope for Danial Khan in the lobby because we saw the Minister nod his head when the Temporary Speaker and member for North Shore said, "The ayes have it."

Opposition members all thought the bill had passed. Opposition members all thought that Government members finally had listened to their consciences. But instead then we hear the member for North Shore say, "Would you like to call a division? You need to call a division if you'd like to." At that point a division was miraculously called. No noes, no call for a division from the hapless Minister seated at the centre table. Standing Order 173 states:

To challenge the opinion of the Speaker a Member shall call for a division before the question is declared.

Did that happen? No, it did not. Standing Order 174 sets out the procedure for calling a division. The first section of Standing Order 174 states:

The Speaker must first state an opinion, after putting a question, as to whether the Ayes or the Noes have it and if unchallenged declare the question accordingly. Did Madam Temporary Speaker do that? Yes, she did. She put the question and when there were no voices for the noes, she said, "The ayes have it." Standing Order 174 (2) states:

If there has been a voice for both the Ayes and the Noes, a division may then be called for.

Was a division called for? No. Given that there were no voices for the noes, in any event, there could not have been one called for anyway. And Standing Order 174 (3) states:

To call a division a Member must have called against the Speaker's determination.

Did that happen?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** No.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** To be clear, no-one called a division before the question was declared. The footage shows that that is a fact; it is entirely undeniable. It is a complete absurdity to stand here and say that it was a correct decision. However, even if it were not case, the Temporary Speaker then incorrectly applied every element of Standing Order 174. All three elements were ignored. First, the Temporary Speaker put the question and stated the opinion that the ayes had it. Her opinion was unchallenged. She should have declared it accordingly and moved on; she did not. Standing Order 174 (1)—wrong. The Temporary Speaker declared the question and then sought to provoke a division after the fact. Secondly, there was no voice raised for the noes. The footage will show that. We all know it; you all know it: There was no voice for the noes. Therefore, under Standing Order 174, a division could not be called. Standing Order 174 (2)—wrong. Thirdly, Standing Order 174 (3)—even if a division could have been called, it was not. To call a division, the member wanting the division must have themselves called against the Speaker's determination. The member did not do so.

Apart from the fact that no-one called a division, no member was entitled to call a division; the conclusion being that those opposite have royally stuffed up. If the Minister intended to vote against the bill, he did not. If he intended to call a division, he did not. If the Minister now says he did do either of those things, he is not telling the truth. If the member for North Shore now says that the Minister did either of those things, she is not telling the truth. They are both entirely incompetent in their jobs and are trying to cover each other's inadequacies.

Worse than that, the bill before the House today was meant to be the final step in a heartbroken family's mission to make a difference. It is a bill that Government members should have supported for baby Amelia, who now lives her life with disability; for baby John, who lost his life; for the Khan family; for the Ghanem family; and every family in New South Wales that remains unnecessarily exposed to risks until the law changes. That law could have changed today. Those opposite decided that it was beyond them to support a bill from the New South Wales Labor Opposition. Today's mess is poetic justice. Chaos has intervened when their conscience failed them. Shame on you all. You have put saving lives second.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: It is the same territory as the member for Keira. We are now debating the merits of the bill, rather than the dissent motion.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Port Stephens will be mindful of the motion. She has been overwhelmingly speaking to the motion but she should stay on it.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** The Government today has exposed itself for not only being heartless and careless but also—

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

**The SPEAKER:** I have cautioned the member for Port Stephens to be careful. I ask her to now change tack.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** Alongside the heartlessness and carelessness is—what is at the substance of today's motion—absolute incompetency. In fact, it is worse than that; it is the willingness to pretend that it did not even happen. To come into this House and say that everything is fine here, that everything we can see on the video is not actually what happened, and that everything we all saw when we were in the Chamber today did not actually happen—the Attorney General of this State is telling us how the standing orders apply and somehow magically it makes everything okay. They were not applied correctly. He knows it, otherwise he would not have even made the offer he did today. He knows that this motion is exactly what needs to be brought to the House today because the member for North Shore in her role and the Minister were entirely incompetent. They need to be called out and that is exactly what this motion is today. They have done, as a combination act, this Parliament, the families and everyone in this State a huge disservice.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:19:54):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Yesterday this Parliament—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** I move that the question be put under Standing Order 86.

**The SPEAKER:** Thirty minutes has now expired. I will seek advice from the Clerk. The Clerk will set the clock to five minutes so we all know when 30 minutes has expired.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Swansea will resume her seat. I have advice from the Clerk that there are five minutes to go until 30 minutes. I am happy to hear further from the member for Cronulla if he wishes, but I clarify that the advice I have from the Clerk is that there are five more minutes. While Standing Order 95 uses the word "may", I am reading that as I should let the debate go for 30 minutes without truncating it.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** I am not relying on Standing Order 95. I am relying on Standing Order 86, which does not appear to require a 30-minute minimum.

**The SPEAKER:** I will take advice from the Clerk. Members will remain silent.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** I withdraw.

**The SPEAKER:** In the circumstances that the Leader of the House has withdrawn, the member for Swansea has five minutes before the debate might be truncated.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** What do you mean by that?

**The SPEAKER:** In other words, there may be a motion in five minutes. Then we move to a reply, unless there is no interruption, in which case—

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** It's just Rafferty's rules today, is it not, Mr Speaker?

**The SPEAKER:** No, it is not. We are applying the standing orders and the rules. The standing orders and the rules, as I am interpreting them, give the member for Swansea at least five minutes. After five minutes, we may get a truncation.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for that clarification. Yesterday this Parliament came to a very low point. Yesterday this Parliament was brought into disrepute, and nobody thought that we could go any lower. However, believe it or not, that has occurred today. This Parliament was a disgrace a few hours ago and I was embarrassed as I watched it unravel. I am shocked, surprised and disappointed that the member for Cronulla is trying to defend the indefensible. He is the Attorney General of our State, where the laws are made in this place. For the Attorney General to try to defend what is indefensible is quite shocking for the people of New South Wales. It disappoints me enormously.

Today legislation was passed in this House to stop the awful situation of gassing being used incorrectly in our public health system. It is a very important piece of legislation and I know that this Parliament believes it should happen. The position adopted today was a great thing. The member who was sitting in the chair called that the debate was in favour of the ayes. I was pleasantly surprised because I thought that we are doing what we are here to do. I have spoken many times in this place recently about working cooperatively with the crossbench and Government members to ensure that we achieve good outcomes for the people of New South Wales. We did that for a fleeting moment. You know that, Mr Speaker, because you have looked at the footage and you told us at the beginning of question time that that was the case: The decision was made in the affirmative for that debate today,

that the member for North Sydney clearly realised she had made a mistake and then set about seeking the assistance of the member for Tamworth in the mistake that he had also made.

From what I could see, the member for Tamworth appeared quite clueless; he was unsure and sought the counsel of the member for Terrigal. That was possibly his first mistake. The truth of the matter is before us all. We have seen what occurred today: that piece of legislation went through our Parliament. What is so concerning, and the member for Port Stephens has raised this issue, is that we are in the oldest Parliament of this country. We do not come here and hold chook raffles—although sometimes I think that would probably be more entertaining. This place matters. This is democracy at work. What the Liberal-Nationals Government has done today is remove democracy from the people of New South Wales. The Government has decided to make up the rules as it goes along. That is intolerable. I know that you, Mr Speaker, a man of the law, knows it is intolerable. And I definitely know the Attorney General knows it is intolerable, otherwise why would he be here?

We expect the highest of standards in this place; we are told that all the time. Yet the Temporary Speaker—the position that the member for North Sydney holds—misused the power of that incredible role in this great Parliament. She misused her power. She has done the wrong thing and the Attorney General should make her apologise to this Parliament. This Government is a disgrace.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Is the member for Tamworth taking a point of order?

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

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

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** No, I am responding.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. Members will remain silent while I seek the Clerk's advice on the timing.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** If it makes any difference to your ruling, Mr Speaker, we are content for the member for Swansea to finish her address.

**The SPEAKER:** That is consistent with what my ruling was going to be. The member for Swansea will be given five more minutes.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It has been entertaining, that is for sure. It would be entertaining if we were not talking about something so serious. This debate is not only about the democracy of our State and the behaviour in our great Parliament but also the bill earlier today relating to the safety of patients in our public health system. I want to go through what was viewed today by us all. There would be nothing better than to keep replaying it. We are very aware of the call that was made earlier by the member for North Sydney and then her decision to reject the will of this place which, after putting the call to this House, was decided in the affirmative. The Temporary Speaker then affirmed that that was the case and, unlike the description that was given by the Attorney General and the member for Cronulla, the Temporary Speaker then went on to say—and I was watching this very clearly—"that this bill be now read a third time", when the Clerk in the chair corrected the Temporary Speaker that it was the second reading.

It was very clear that it was not just the three steps that the Attorney General outlined earlier that had taken place; we went to the next step. It was very clear that the will of the House was that the bill would be agreed to in the affirmative. That occurred and, quite frankly, that should be the end of the matter. This is not a place where the Speaker in the chair is able to decide willy-nilly whether or not we have an outcome. It is not a place where if we do not like the umpire's call we get to choose the outcome. The umpire here was making the rules and she has now completely embarrassed herself, her party and the Parliament. That is what occurred and there is no way to get around that. The video footage has been shown across the country now, which is incredibly embarrassing for the New South Wales Parliament. However, it is more embarrassing that the Government is trying to defend the indefensible.

If we lose sight of why we are here and if we lose sight of the fact that this place is where democracy is at the heart of this State and the nation, we have to start looking at what it is we are doing here. If the Government is here to just muck about and make it up as it goes along then we have a problem. We cannot allow this to continue. We must make sure that we bring standards back to this Parliament. We must make sure that we hold this Parliament to the highest standard. When I first came to this Parliament there was a great introduction in my first session about making sure we familiarise ourselves with the standing orders. That was very good advice and I took it seriously. It is unfortunate that others did not, including the Temporary Speaker. It is very important that members of Parliament know the standing orders. It is that framework within which we are able to come in here

and have the confidence that what we are debating is being debated in good faith, within the rules and with the right outcomes—not making it up as we go along.

**The SPEAKER:** For the benefit of the House, I intend to allow the member for Tamworth to make a contribution and then I will call the member for Keira in reply. I ask members to distance themselves physically in the Chamber.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (15:35:02):** The ruling of the member for North Shore was correct. I was sitting at the table. When the Temporary Speaker stated, "The question is that this bill be now read a third time," she was corrected to the second time. My response was, "No." The Assistant Speaker said, "The ayes have it." My response was, "No. Division." Then a division was called.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Other members have been listened to in silence. There is an opportunity for a reply. The member for Tamworth will be heard in silence.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I clearly asked for a division. The Temporary Speaker then called a division and rang the bells.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:36:02):** In reply: Mr Speaker, thank you for your adjudication of this debate. It is refreshing. The member for Wollongong alerted me that the House has a very effective Speaker's panel. It has a number of people on it: the member for Lake Macquarie, the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Wallsend and the member for Heathcote. I know the final one, the member for Oatley, would not have engaged in this. He is very good. It is a strong Speaker's panel. The Opposition only gets one of them and it still thinks it is a strong Speaker's panel. But today the member for North Shore needs to be replaced.

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** You need to be replaced. That is disgraceful.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Even the member for South Coast, who I have had one or two disagreements with—

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** Because you breach the standing orders yourself every day.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for South Coast will come to order.

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** Don't tell me about the standing orders.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Even the member for South Coast would not have engaged in that because she knows, from her eight years as Speaker, that sometimes you get things right and sometimes you get things wrong. But she always said, "Fair enough, you will get a go next time," and moved on. That was always under difficulty, as Oppositions are. Today it is clear that a couple of things have occurred. The member for North Shore has clearly adjudicated inappropriately, and has not put up her hand and acknowledged it. It is very unusual for a Minister to come in here and do what the Minister just did, because he has just misled the House. That is a charge that in previous Parliaments has resulted in dismissal. I want to be very clear about this: In previous Parliaments that I have watched at close quarters, misleading this House has resulted in dismissal if the member did not come back into the House and correct it. Let us be really clear about this—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for South Coast will desist.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** You have raised a standard in this place. But if the Minister can demonstrate to us very clearly that what we allege is wrong, so be it. He will not be doing that. He has misled the House today. The Government has a Minister that is not up to it and a member of this place who should not be in the chair.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 73.

**The SPEAKER:** The motion before us does not relate to the Minister. I ask the member for Keira to contain his comments to the motion, not to an attack of the Minister.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** The member for North Shore should not be on the Speaker's panel. It is very clear what occurred today. Everyone can see it. Despite the fact that we have fewer numbers here, I know there are plenty of members opposite who know that what occurred today was not right. I know that because there are members opposite who are genuine in understanding that this is a vehicle for democracy. This is not a North Shore branch of the Liberal Party. This is the oldest Parliament in the country and the way it is adjudicated is important to our democracy. It makes people understand that there is fairness, and that legislation is passed in a way that is appropriate and is governed by the laws of this land and this Chamber.

This is not some quasi branch of the Liberal Party. This is serious. This is where laws are made and debated. If we cannot get a guarantee that it is going to be adjudicated in a way that you have set the standard for, we have

quite clearly slipped and we are not running this Parliament the way the community expects it to be run. What occurred today was wrong. The member for North Shore should be removed from the Speaker's list. I know that, Mr Speaker knows that and the Government knows that.

**The SPEAKER:** I am not going to reread the motion. Members are aware it is a motion of dissent in the ruling made by the member for North Shore earlier today. The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....38  
Noes .....43  
Majority.....5

**AYES**

Aitchison, J  
Barr, C  
Catley, Y  
Crakanthorp, T  
Doyle, T  
Harrison, J  
Kamper, S  
McDermott, H  
Mehan, D (teller)  
O'Neill, M  
Scully, P  
Voltz, L  
Watson, A (teller)

Atalla, E  
Butler, R  
Chanthivong, A  
Dalton, H  
Finn, J  
Haylen, J  
Leong, J  
McGirr, J  
Mihailuk, T  
Park, R  
Smith, T  
Warren, G  
Zangari, G

Bali, S  
Car, P  
Cotsis, S  
Dib, J  
Harris, D  
Hoenig, R  
Lynch, P  
McKay, J  
Minns, C  
Parker, J  
Tesch, L  
Washington, K

**NOES**

Anderson, K  
Berejiklian, G  
Constance, A  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Elliott, D  
Griffin, J  
Henskens, A  
Lee, G  
Pavey, M  
Preston, R  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G  
Stokes, R  
Tuckerman, W  
Wilson, F

Ayres, S  
Bromhead, S  
Cooke, S (teller)  
Davies, T  
Evans, L  
Gulaptis, C  
Johnsen, M  
Lindsay, W  
Perrottet, D  
Provest, G  
Sidgreaves, P  
Smith, N  
Taylor, M  
Upton, G

Barilaro, J  
Conolly, K  
Coure, M  
Dominello, V  
Gibbons, M  
Hancock, S  
Kean, M  
Marshall, A  
Petinos, E  
Roberts, A  
Sidoti, J  
Speakman, M  
Toole, P  
Williams, L

**PAIRS**

Daley, M  
Hornery, S  
Lalich, N  
Saffin, J

Clancy, J  
Hazzard, B  
Ward, G  
Williams, R

**Motion negated.**

*Committees*

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT (RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS AND EQUALITY) BILL 2020**

**Messages**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council agreeing with the Legislative Assembly's request.

*Private Members' Statements***SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:50:54):** My contribution to private members' statements is about the chronic lack of affordable social housing in New South Wales and the impact it has on the growing homelessness crisis, particularly in parts of western Sydney. A number of people in the community have raised this with me not only during the COVID-19 lockdown but also as we are on our way out of that period. The lack of affordable social housing is of great importance to me and a subject I spoke about in my inaugural speech. It is no shock to anyone in this place that homelessness is one of the biggest issues for this State and country. New South Wales has by far the largest increase in homelessness than any other State and Territory in the last reported census statistics.

We know that people of all ages including men, women—particularly older women—and young children are facing the horrible prospect of having to sleep rough or be without a home. Unless we have experienced this we cannot truly understand what it means to our lives. Between 2011 and 2016 in my electorate of Londonderry there has been a 43 per cent increase in homelessness. That is a shameful statistic. In my community it equates to 500 people. That is a lot of people who find themselves without a permanent place, and for many of them that also means for their children. The lack of safe, affordable housing has worsened due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has left many people in communities like the ones I represent without jobs to support themselves and their families and without funds to pay the rent or mortgage repayments they are left with the uncertainty of where they are going to rest their heads.

Homelessness will become a greater problem as banks slowly start to ask people to make good on their mortgage repayments, which many people will not be able to do in this environment of financial hardship. Sadly many people are experiencing financial hardship that they have never faced before and people are facing homelessness for the first time. The New South Wales Government must invest more in social and affordable housing. It is urgently needed. I spoke about that in my very first speech in this House and it is only becoming a greater problem in the communities I represent. The construction of more affordable housing not only will meet a growing need for people in the community who are experiencing hardship but also will provide necessary economic stimulus and create jobs in New South Wales. Surely there is no more pressing priorities for the Government of New South Wales than creating jobs and putting money into people's pockets so that they can provide for their families in these trying times.

This afternoon I must thank, in particular, the local St Marys chapter of the St Vincent de Paul Society, which is very active and has met with me on many occasions about this issue. Local society members do so very much to support the needy in our community. They are part of the St Vincent de Paul Society's Build Homes, Build Hope project, which is a plan for 5,000 additional social housing homes a year. I thank St Vinnies in my community and Caterina Tribbia, the social justice representative of St Vincent de Paul Society, Parramatta, for consistently keeping me up to date with that campaign and for ensuring that I am continually aware of what St Vinnies is asking for from the Government so that I can be an ally in its campaign. The pandemic has reminded us of our mutual obligations to care for each other as members of our community. The Government should look seriously at what Vinnies is suggesting—the creation of more social and affordable housing for those who need it in the community.

**BIG YELLOW UMBRELLA**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:55:30):** During the COVID-19 pandemic many people in our communities have been facing illness, financial insecurity, isolation and many more hardships that we do not know about. Amongst all of this, though, we have seen and heard of the wonderful support being provided to members of our community by individuals and organisations. As we look to recover from COVID-19, it has been so uplifting to hear how we have helped one another. Just one of the many organisations that is making a difference to the Camden community during this time is the Big Yellow Umbrella. Big Yellow Umbrella offers food relief, advice, information and referral for homelessness, domestic violence support, over-the-phone youth case management, over-the-phone crisis support, community welfare connection calls, over-the-phone parenting support and the Book BUS Program to ensure that children have access to early literature information.

Big Yellow Umbrella's food relief program has gone from 30 regular families per week to over 60 families needing support. It has met the challenge by partnering with OZHarvest for food. The Big Yellow Umbrella group is innovative and is meeting community demand as part of its strategic plan. The Big Yellow Umbrella vision is to build and support inclusive, cohesive and emerging communities across south-west Sydney and it is very proud of its work, as am I. The Big Yellow Umbrella has done our community extremely proud during this time. We cannot thank Big Yellow Umbrella enough for its contribution and efforts. Thank you to the hardworking staff, who include Kim Landouw, the operations manager; Jane McIvor, the strategic finance executive; Lyndell Scott,

bookkeeper; Aaron Frydmann, community worker; Leanne Haggart, community worker; Nicole Daley, community worker; Mackenzie Edgington, community worker; and Sharon Friere, administration and website.

Thank you also to Big Yellow Umbrella's invaluable volunteers who provide support where and whenever they can: Steve Irwin, Naji Nour, Alan Brooks, Rebecca Smith, John Smith, Ted Mericki, Belinda Cook, Kaye Hahn, Carmen Merecki, Anna Constantine, Noor Anton, Bryanka Singh and Doaa Mousa. If all that is not enough, Big Yellow Umbrella has supervised four students completing studies in this field—Seba Shmeisen, Kelly Kong, Admir Karajcic and Bryanna Rixon—who have all made valuable and meaningful contributions to Big Yellow Umbrella. That is much appreciated. Camden is a better place because of Big Yellow Umbrella. Big Yellow Umbrella plays such an important role in our community. I look forward to continuing to work with it in the future.

**Business interrupted.**

*Petitions*

**SYDNEY BUS SERVICES**

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

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:59:38):** I welcome this opportunity to again debate this very important issue. This discussion arises today because more than 10,000 people from the eastern suburbs have rejected the Government's plan to privatise the buses. The reality is, though, that more than 60,000 people across New South Wales have signed petitions to stop the privatisation of their buses. From Newcastle to North Shore, the inner west to Wakehurst, Manly to Maroubra, it does not matter which buses we are talking about; the public never wants them privatised. On 24 October the Minister for Transport and Roads announced the privatisation of regions 7, 8 and 9, which includes the eastern suburbs bus services, despite the Premier saying on 20 March 2019 that there would be no further privatisations. We know that she outright lied to the people of New South Wales. When asked about it during question time on 24 October 2019, her response was "Wakey-wakey, New South Wales. We have been doing it for eight years." The Premier's disdain for the people of New South Wales is palpable.

I take this opportunity to thank the tens of thousands of community members who have been fighting to save these vital bus services. I also thank and acknowledge the hard work of the Rail, Tram & Bus Union and Unions NSW, who are fighting for the jobs, families and communities that are all impacted by this decision—many of whom are protesting across Sydney today and many more of whom are watching over the live stream telecast. The reason the Opposition opposes the decision by the Government is that we know when public assets are privatised it always ends up worse for citizens. The privatisation of the last remaining public buses will be no different. It does not work in the public's favour. The Opposition knows that when public assets are privatised, profits come before people and shareholders trump passengers. We know that because it is embedded in the Corporations Act.

When it comes to privatisation, the Government continues to ignore the experts. In 2016 the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission chairman said outright that privatisation was damaging the economy. Selling public assets creates unregulated monopolies and, in turn, hurts production, reduces public service quality and damages the economy. Selling our buses is not aimed at improving the bus services provided in the eastern suburbs, northern beaches and north-western suburbs—to suggest so is an insult to the hardworking drivers of the State Transit Authority [STA]. The privatisation is an attempt to fill the fiscal chasm that this Government has created for itself—created in no small way by the fact that the Government keeps offloading revenue-generating assets. Some history that the Opposition would like to avoid is what happened after the sale of ports in this State.

In 2014 the Liberal Government sold the Port of Newcastle, which is the world's largest coal port. The new owners immediately started price gouging. That placed huge strain on the coal industry in the Hunter—which is a huge driver of the New South Wales economy. Despite that damaging evidence, the Government did it again with its joint sale of the ports of Botany and Port Kembla. This joint sale eliminated competition, entrenched monopoly and hurt the New South Wales economy. This Government refused to learn from its mistakes with the ports and it is making the very same mistakes again with our public transport. In the inner west and Newcastle we have seen services reduced, bus stops removed and worse outcomes for passengers. Even Conservative Boris Johnson is ending the United Kingdom's privatisation experiment. We all know that when public assets are privatised it always ends up worse for workers.

If we have learnt anything from this current crisis, when unemployment is expected to reach double digits we know that every job is essential and critical—especially when it comes to our public transport. But here we go again! As part of the tendering of our bus services, non-operational drops will not be guaranteed. The Government should be fighting to keep every job. Everybody should have their job guaranteed. The Government should not

be pitting workers against workers, which is exactly what the Government is doing. Every job matters. In addition, we have seen in other bus privatisations that real wages were reduced. At a time when our economic recovery will depend on people spending money in their local communities, losing up to a quarter of their wage will be crippling for workers and businesses they support. Yes, that is exactly what happened in the inner west when buses were privatised.

The people making these decisions clearly have no idea how people move about in the eastern suburbs and how important each and every bus service is to local people. If this Government understood how transport works in the eastern suburbs it would realise that any reduction in bus services will force more people to drive on our already congested local roads. More significant than this is that any reduction in services will isolate more vulnerable members of our community by cutting them off. We know that privatising buses will mean that people of the eastern suburbs are worse off. When will the Government learn? It has a responsibility to make things better for the people of New South Wales, not worse. But more importantly, when will the Government start to listen? Let it be clear: People do not want their buses privatised. More than 60,000 people have signed petitions to say so. The Government is elected on a lie and the people of New South Wales will remember it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There will be silence in the Chamber.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (16:05:13):** The antics of the Australian Labor Party are interesting when it comes to privatisation. In fact, it is actually boringly predictable. When zone 6 went through the same process, civilisation as we knew it was never meant to be the same again.

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

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** I sat in this very Chamber, hearing the same tedious arguments that there would be service cuts, that there would be job losses, et cetera.

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

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** The only thing that you can guarantee is that the unions will picket your office, they will use all the tactics in the world, they will put stickers all over your windows and they will make donations to the Labor Party.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on two calls to order. The member for Drummoyne will direct his comments through the Chair. The member for Newcastle will come to order.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** A few years later we have seen a highly professional outfit. Most mornings I catch the bus to Parliament, unlike members opposite. I appreciate the work bus drivers do and it does not go unnoticed. In essence, the decision will mean that there will be more work, contrary to what the member for Coogee said. We will need more drivers. All the safeguards will be in place. Prior to the awarding of the contract in zone 6, buses were not showing up and could not make the timetable. I had some of the most complained-about services—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on two calls to order.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** If you tried being a good local member—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Drummoyne will direct his comments through the Chair. The member for The Entrance will resume his seat.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** In this place I have learnt that if you do not get the results you want, you blame yourself. Unfortunately, when members opposite do not get the results they want, they blame everyone but themselves. They should get off their backsides, door-knock their electorates and they will get the results they need.

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

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** I recall vividly the transport Minister guaranteeing my services. If my memory serves me correctly, in 2017 he said, "I will gold-plate your services." That is exactly what he has done in zone 6. The savings were substantial. I had new services put on, there was better frequency and less waste. Even the on-demand services commenced in my area, which was welcomed.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Did you buy all the houses next to the bus stops?

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

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** Why don't you say it outside? You're a bit gutless, member for Swansea, and you always will be. Say it outside.



**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Swansea that she is on three calls to order. She will not argue with me.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** Say it outside.

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

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** Sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker. The member for Swansea is saying defamatory things in the Chamber.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Drummoyne will cease interrupting.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** Just a lowlife.

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

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** A lowlife.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will not hesitate to remove the member for Swansea from the Chamber if she continues to interject.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** An absolute lowlife. I say to members that if they are unsure about the changes, they have absolutely nothing to fear. I have gone through that process. In fact, the commuters in the member's electorates will be pleasantly surprised by the noticeable positive changes. I have the letters to prove it.

**Mr David Mehan:** I wonder if they are outside?

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** No, I do not listen to protesters; I listen to my constituents. Since 2017 it has been an overwhelming success. The Labor Party somehow thinks it was the king of anti-privatisation. The Labor Party has a history of supporting and franchising in New South Wales. Let us look at the Sydney Ferries Network, which is the first public transport service to be franchised in 2012. Nathan Rees originally called for expressions of interest to run Sydney Ferries in 2008.

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

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** He stood up to the faceless men and look what happened to him, unlike here, unlike members opposite.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** How's your gold-plated bank balance?

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

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** How's yours, you miserable so-and-so? The contract to operate Sydney Ferries services requires the operator to meet annual performance benchmarks. Members opposite think that they can preach on privatisation but in reality they do not care about their electorates. They get elected on the back of paper bags and donations and they will continue to do that as long as they are in this place.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:10:34):** I speak in support of the petition because the Charlestown community has seen firsthand the chaos caused by the privatisation of public transport. I will talk about the Newcastle experience today and why every person who has signed the petition is absolutely right in being terrified about what will happen if their buses are privatised. In 2017 when the Government made the decision to privatise Newcastle Buses, it claimed it would save public transport in Charlestown and surrounding electorates. I think the words it used was that it promised to deliver a world-class public transport experience.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Charlestown does not need any help from her colleagues.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** That is not what happened. At first the handover to a private provider was plagued with administrative stuff-ups. Workers were not paid properly. My office was flooded with complaints about buses running late or not showing up at all. There were even issues with staff uniforms. So much for a more efficient service from the private sector, and it only got worse.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Ku-ring-gai to order for the first time.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** The private provider overhauled the network, cutting routes and slashing services. No-one can get a bus in or out of my suburb after 6.30 p.m. It is outrageous.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Opposition members will remain silent.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** Commuters across Charlestown were left without adequate bus coverage. Community consultation was thin on the ground—if it can be called "community consultation." It was a sell job.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** Everybody who engaged with it felt that their concerns had not been heard or understood. The outrage in my local community was palpable. The member for Swansea, who is present in the Chamber, and I gathered 10,000 signatures on a petition calling on the Government to fix the bus system it had broken. Another 10,000 signatures were collected by my colleagues in Newcastle and Wallsend. A mass rally was held in Newcastle, calling on the Government to address those concerns; a massive community meeting was held in Belmont. People wrote letters and emails, made phone calls and reached out to me and my local colleagues over social media. Locals travelled to Parliament to watch the petition being debated in this very Chamber to ensure that their voices were heard. Still, the Government failed to listen.

The early franchising experiment in Charlestown, Newcastle, Swansea and Wallsend just did not work. There is no way that it can be considered a world-class public transport system. Opal data revealed a 2 per cent decrease in patronage in the months after the changeover. On-time running fell from 87 per cent to 52 per cent. We did not get the better and additional services that we were promised. The more efficient, integrated transport system that we were promised never materialised.

**Mr John Sidoti:** Lousy member.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** No, this Government does not listen, member for Drummoyne.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** Before the last election the Premier said there would be no more privatisations. Yet here we are; the Premier has betrayed Sydney commuters, just as she betrayed commuters in the Charlestown electorate. I am calling on the Premier, and everybody who has signed this petition is calling on the Premier and her Government to heed the lessons of the disastrous privatisation of Newcastle buses. Everybody who has signed this petition is absolutely right in not wanting their bus services privatised; it will end up a much worse service for them. I ask the Premier to reconsider this decision, to reconsider her myopic obsession with privatisation, to keep Sydney buses in public hands and to keep her promises.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:15:39):** Those opposite never let the truth get in the way of a good story.

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

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** Unlike the Opposition, the Government does not have an ideological obsession when it comes to the delivery of public transport services. Eleven of the 14 Sydney metropolitan bus service contracts are already operated by the private sector. All outer metropolitan and rural and regional bus services are operated by private bus companies. Is the Labor Party proposing that we nationalise bus services being operated by reputable companies like CDC, Busways and Transdev? If so, it should come clean and be upfront with the people of New South Wales and tell them how much it is going to cost—that is, if Labor can do the maths.

The lies and myths that are being perpetuated by Labor do nothing but scare commuters. The reality is that the Government has introduced over 35,000 extra bus services since coming to office. We have added hundreds of extra buses to the fleet, including introducing electric buses to the network. Bus patronage has increased by more than 40 per cent over the past six years. This rate of growth outstrips that of all other forms of public transport, and the Government is addressing this increasing demand as a matter of urgency. The New South Wales Government will invite the world's leading public transport operators, Australian and international, to bid for contracts for 13 of Sydney's bus contract regions over the next three years, between 2020 and 2022. This will include the three remaining regions currently operated by the State Transit Authority.

A competitive tender of Sydney metropolitan bus contracts will enable the New South Wales Government to reinvest more in delivering better services. Transport for NSW will engage with the private sector to transform the current one-size-fits-all model of service delivery into one with multiple service types, including high-capacity routes, local and on-demand travel and better environmental outcomes by transitioning to zero-emission buses—something one would think the Opposition would support. The New South Wales Government will continue to own State Transit buses and all other assets such as depots, to regulate routes and timetables, safety and service priorities, and to set fares as they are today, under the Opal system. This bus reform program will deliver more services, better services, more driver jobs and better innovation—not what the Opposition says, which is completely untrue.

We want to take bus services to a new level. There are dozens of large Australian and international bus operators that have perfected and refined bus operations over many decades and in many jurisdictions, carefully fine-tuning operations from the biggest cities in Europe to the smallest towns in outback Australia. Those operators can bring their experience to Sydney to ensure that our customers are getting the very best service, which everyone

has come to expect in a world-class city like Sydney. The greatest cities in the world, with some of the most loved and iconic transport networks, such as London, already use this model.

The Government does and will continue to retain control of routes, timetables and bus stop locations. We will continue to set standards and to monitor performance to ensure service quality. We are focused on working with customers and the community to understand their transport needs, and on creating the right framework to deliver these services. Franchising has become the standard approach for the delivery of contracted transport services across New South Wales. The New South Wales Government recognises the benefits that experienced, world-class private sector operators can bring to our transport networks and we are focused on ensuring that the community has the transport services that our cities and regions deserve.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:20:08):** What is it with the Tories that they clutch onto this privatisation agenda? It is like Donald Trump clutching onto Vladimir Putin. They really cannot get past this failed, reincarnated Margaret Thatcher philosophy that failed in the 1980s and the 1990s. It failed miserably in public transport and yet they keep doing it. They must know in their hearts that the public cannot stand them selling off the silverware. The member for Coojee hardly had to walk around the corner to get tens of thousands of people to sign a petition. If those opposite are not trembling in their boots for being a gumtree government I do not know what will frighten them. They have been in government for too long and they do not understand. They were worried enough before the 2019 elections to promise that there would be no privatisation and then they just ignored it, despite the fact that in 2015 the Auditor-General told them that there was no benefit to on-time running in privatising public transport. The Auditor-General told them in a written report tabled in this House. But it makes no difference because their philosophy overrides that of the Auditor-General.

Looking at their transport Minister, would anyone believe his costings? Just look at the light rail and their \$3.1 billion for something that Infrastructure NSW costed at \$1.2 billion in 2012. Privatising public transport services like this does not work. It did not work in region 6, when they had their last tranche of privatisations. The on-time running for region 6, which covers my electorate, has gone backward—just like the Auditor-General told them it would, but they did not listen because they have this philosophy of selling off everything that moves. But the worst part about their conduct is, first, they are doing it in the midst of a pandemic during one of the greatest crises this country has faced when, according to their leader, 221,000 people lost their jobs in April. In a country that is in recession, with no prospects of getting out of it, with a State budget that is in the sewer and at the most critical time in the State's history, they want to go to contract.

When no-one has any money, when people are out of work, when the economy is in the toilet, you want to let out a contract? That is the most ridiculous economic decision I have ever heard. But, worse than that, you have employees who are bus drivers and who are terrified as it is about putting food on their table. The one thing they have is a job. The one thing they thought they had was security. The one thing you do not want to do is to create even greater fear for people who not only have given loyal service to you, the government of the day, but also have been providing a service to the public and who are, measured against your mates from the private sector, even better than them. I know what your motive is.

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

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I know what the motive is of this gumtree government: It is to get as many people off the public sector payroll as it possibly can. That is the Government's motive: to reduce its current levels of revenue expenditure. And it is trying to hide it. The Government tried to put through this tranche of privatisation not all that long ago. Fortunately arch-conservative places like the People's Republic of Palm Beach were able to knock it over in Cabinet. Obviously the extreme Right and its gumtree government has decided it is going to put all these people's jobs at risk at a time of crisis. Privatisation did not work in the Government's first tranche. It did not work in the United Kingdom when Thatcher sold off public transport. It failed miserably in Melbourne when they sold off rail and trams when their services were cut. Those opposite should be ashamed of themselves.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Oatley will come to order. I remind the member for Balmain that his colleague is waiting to speak. The member for Newtown will be heard in silence.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:26:17):** By leave: I briefly contribute to this debate on behalf of The Greens and my colleague Jamie Parker, who is in the Chamber. We feel particularly passionate about the issue of bus privatisation because as members who represent the communities of the inner west, we know the impact that bus privatisation has had on our communities. It is important to put on record that while we cannot have our gallery packed, right now we can hear noises outside the Chamber. It is important to acknowledge when people are taking direct action outside the Chamber in support of the actions happening in this place. Car horns are blaring and people are shouting and yelling in support of what is happening in this Chamber.

They cannot be in the gallery today because of social distancing rules, but it is important to acknowledge the workers who are outside, who are part of our public transport system and who have been on the front line of taking people where they need to go in the middle of this crisis. Yet once again what we see from the Liberal-Nationals Government is the most outrageously cruel approach to rewarding those people that have been at the front line of our public service system during the pandemic. What we are seeing is not just an attempt to freeze pay but also an attempt to completely privatise whole levels of our public service system. Why is that important? It is important because of one simple fact: The people who live in this State want the buses and the trains to get them where they are going on time. They want the number one priority of the bus service that runs in their community to be providing the bus service.

The problem with privatising the system is that the number one priority of any private company running any service is to make profit for those who own the company. The primary purpose is not to run an efficient and effective bus service that is in the best interests of the community members. We saw endless examples in the transition in the inner west. Bus stops were missed because the new drivers were given targets about how they had to run on time, so people just stood at the bus stop as their bus drove past them. Members would well know the small backstreets and lanes of Newtown. In the backstreets others saw buses taking the wrong turn and cruising down the back of Station Street as though it was Enmore Road or King Street.

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

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** It is a disaster to see the impact in that community. I know the people driving those buses are trying as hard as they can, but I also know that there are questions about whether there were enough staff to be able to handle the transition and take it over. If we are committed to the idea of creating jobs and having a world-class public transport system in this State, we need to recognise the importance of keeping the system public. We must recognise that if we want to deal with the challenges that face us ahead, we need to do everything we can to create more public jobs and more jobs that are in the interests of serving our community members during this time. That is the best way we can do that. That is what we should be doing at this time.

I acknowledge the member for Coogee for bringing the petition to the House. I acknowledge many thousands of people who have signed the petition, and many petitions before it, opposing bus privatisation in this State. Once we see an end to this Liberal-Nationals Government, I hope to see the same level of commitment of current members on the Opposition benches to returning our buses to public hands and hope that we do not hide behind the fact that there are existing outsourcing arrangements. I hope that is a future that we have for this State, because public transport is what we need and making sure that we maintain public jobs is crucial.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:30:23):** In reply: I take this moment to thank the member for Charlestown, the member for Heffron and the member for Newtown for their contributions. The member for Charlestown and the member for Newtown know firsthand how devastating privatisation of buses can be for everyday people. The examples they have brought to this debate are exactly why the member for Heffron and I are fighting against this for our communities. I want to note something that the member for Newtown just said. She is correct that what the Government is doing is outrageous and cruel. The primary purpose of private companies is to return dividends to shareholders. It is not to provide services—it is to make money.

I note some things from the member for Drummoyne and the member for Miranda. Firstly, on-demand has also been trialled in the eastern suburbs and it was a complete and utter flop. It failed miserably. No-one wanted to use it. I note that the member for Miranda said there is an increase in demand. The Government is saying there is an increase in demand. Why on earth, then, is the Government set to cut 16 bus services across the eastern suburbs? It is doing this because it wants to force people onto the terrible light rail, which is the only piece of transport infrastructure that is under capacity. No-one wants to use it because it is such a joke. If there is such an increase in demand, why is the Government doing this?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** I hear this every day. I live in my community. I walk the streets. I go to the grocery stores. Every day people stop me in my community and they are appalled that the Government is doing this. People who traditionally have been Liberal Party voters will never vote for it again because the Government has turned its back on them. This is an absolute and utter joke. Does the Government wonder why I won in this electorate? It is because the Liberal Party has turned its back on the eastern suburbs. The people know it and I will absolutely hold the Government to account for it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind members that they should be social distancing. We are preaching to our communities about social distancing.

**Mr John Sidoti:** They're allowed. They are The Greens.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I am talking to the member for Drummoyne and to the member for Miranda. I do not think you are 1.5 metres apart. Members will comply with the social distancing rules or leave the Chamber.

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

**Petition noted.**

*Private Members' Statements*

**CLARENCE ELECTORATE NEWSPAPERS**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:33:48):** I acknowledge and pay tribute to the regional newspapers in my electorate that will unfortunately cease printing in the coming days, following a decision by their owners, News Corp, to transition to a digital-only news platform. The end of the print editions of *The Daily Examiner*, its smaller sister paper, *Coastal Views*, and the weekly edition of the *Richmond River Express Examiner*—little sister to *The Northern Star*, which is also going digital—was met with much sadness by many in the community. For decades those mastheads have delivered news and become a familiar face to communities across the Clarence and Richmond Valleys, the areas that I represent. It is disappointing and perhaps short-sighted that the corporate owners have pulled the plug at a time when the region is growing and becoming more prosperous despite the coronavirus crisis. *The Daily Examiner* has been a fearless fighter for the Clarence Valley since its inception as the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* in 1859.

Ironically, the man who founded it, Clark Irving, was a politician and served in this House as the member for Clarence from 1856 to 1864. The DEX—as locals know it—has a proud 161-year-old legacy and lays claim to being the oldest continuous regional masthead in Australia. Currently, under the editorship of Bill North, the DEX has been known over the years for its public campaigns—notably for a second Grafton bridge, an ambulance station and health clinic in Yamba, a speed camera at Ulmarra and improvements to the Pacific Highway, all of which The Nationals have been able to convince the Government to deliver, in no small measure because of the newspaper's loud and bold influence. It also ran a strong campaign in 2012 against the downsizing of the Grafton jail, led by Jenna Cairney, the editor at the time. Fast-forward to this day and Australia's largest prison will officially open next Thursday, thanks to a \$700 million investment by the New South Wales Government delivering 600 jobs and a \$560 million boost to the regional economy.

The DEX has had long associations with many Clarence Valley businesses and community organisations that go back decades—the Grafton July Racing Carnival and Grafton Jacaranda Festival are just two events that the newspaper has supported for almost a century. For a first in mainstream media, it published two editions of an all-Indigenous masthead edition of *The Deadly Examiner* celebrating the Clarence Valley's three Indigenous nations during Reconciliation Week. One of the masthead's longest-serving writers, Lesley Apps, who is leaving the DEX after 27 years' service, described the news in a recent column as "melancholy times" in the history of the masthead. Lesley went on to say:

*The Daily Examiner* is more than a business. It was a friend, and sometimes a foe, to many in the community, a product that also served as a record of life in the Clarence.

It was the familiar face that greeted one almost every day around workplaces, cafes and breakfast tables. It will be a particularly emotional time for the older, traditional readers who love their routines and way of life to find out there is a big change coming that will affect their routine. She is right—27 June will certainly be a melancholy day as the final print edition of the DEX hits the newsstands and front lawns. It was a trusted news source that readers looked forward to picking up each day. It will be the end of an era as, like it or not, we move towards a digital platform in a fast-paced world.

I also regret the demise of the *Richmond River Express Examiner*, a weekly, small town community newspaper that has provided vital home-delivered news to so many families across the Richmond Valley and Kyogle regions for almost 150 years. Founded in 1870 under the masthead of *The Richmond River Express and Tweed Advertiser*, it was Casino's first daily newspaper. After surviving a few name changes, a fire that destroyed the printing plant and a merger, it found its place in 1978 as a weekly masthead and has remained the *Richmond River Express Examiner* ever since. The newspaper is all about its community, which regional newspapers should be, and that has certainly been a trademark of current editor, Susanna Freymark and former editors Samantha Elley and Janelle McLennan, who both served in that role during my time as the local MP. Covering a small footprint of readers, they developed an extra special bond with the community primarily covering the local government areas of the Richmond Valley and Kyogle.

I know that those communities will miss their weekly dose of local, community-driven news when the last edition hits the stands next Wednesday, 24 June. In closing, I take the opportunity to extend to all those employees who have lost their jobs as a result of this decision my gratitude and that of the community for their passion and

loyal service over many years, and extend to them my best wishes for what the next chapter in their life might bring.

#### **TAFE NSW**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:38:36):** After nine long years of the Liberal Government in New South Wales, our publicly owned TAFE system is in dire straits. It does not help that in the midst of a global health and economic crisis the Government refuses to rule out further privatisation of this wonderful public education institution that should be at the forefront of our economic recovery. Since 2011 the New South Wales Liberal Government has engaged in a sustained campaign to privatise more and more of our TAFE sector and the cost, both economic and social, has been substantial. To date, we have lost 5,700 teachers and staff and 175,000 fewer students are enrolled than when the Liberals came to power nine years ago. Despite these failed privatisation projects, the Government refuses to rule out yet another.

During question time earlier this year the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education was asked to rule out further job cuts at TAFE and give a guarantee that fees will not rise following a departmental review. It is bad enough that this Government will not guarantee jobs or rule out fee rises in the midst of a skills shortage and an economic crisis, but to leave open the door to more privatisation in the TAFE sector demonstrates the Government's absolute recklessness. The Premier has gone on record stating her ambition to turn New South Wales into the manufacturing capital of Australia. But the only thing the Premier has been able to manufacture is a skills shortage and sending thousands of jobs overseas. The Premier is in fact the Minister for Overseas Jobs. The construction industry is being hit particularly hard by the skills shortage, with demand for construction trades nationally at 4.5 per cent while in New South Wales it is at 6.8 per cent according to the Workforce Skills Survey. But still the Minister has refused to rule out allowing the private sector to take over teaching on TAFE campuses, which would effectively expel hardworking TAFE teachers from their own classrooms. That is a disgrace.

We know where the path to privatisation leads in the TAFE sector: It leads to fewer teachers and staff, fewer courses and campuses, and higher fees. The Government must abandon its obsession with privatisation and instead repair the damage that it has already inflicted on this great educational institution, NSW TAFE. Since the Minister announced the departmental review I have been contacted by local TAFE teachers, students and their parents, all of whom are deeply concerned about the future of TAFE. Locally—and I have spoken of this many times—Belmont TAFE is located in the electorate of Swansea. It has had a significant drop in student enrolments under the New South Wales Liberal Government. Students, parents and teachers have all echoed the same sentiments, that the so-called Smart and Skilled program has negatively impacted course structures and education outcomes.

The last thing our community needs is our local TAFE being further degraded. What we need is an investment in TAFE and a promise that the Government will abandon its education privatisation agenda. It would be remiss of me not to mention that we have just had another debate on privatisation of our public transport. There is a real theme going on here, and that theme is negative for all our electorates and constituents. TAFE is a wonderful institution; that is something we all agree on. Let us fund it properly, make sure people have the skills they need to get the job that will take them into the future. Let us make sure we support NSW TAFE so that it can be great again.

#### **HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE TOURISM**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:43:19):** As COVID-19 restrictions ease and people look for holiday destinations domestically, perhaps those outside tooting their horns might want to come to downtown Hawkesbury as explorers considering we have such a beautiful area. The locals are always very welcoming. Like many electorates, Hawkesbury has had its share of tough times in recent months, with bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. We have remained resilient throughout and the locals are looking forward to welcoming back tourists to our stunning area. Hawkesbury is an area of beauty that is rich in history and heritage, and it does well to showcase it to the world. This is evident in the many visitors who frequently return to enjoy another Hawkesbury experience.

The Hawkesbury was settled in 1794 and was the third British settlement after Sydney and Parramatta following Governor Arthur Phillip's March 1788 expedition that explored the mouth of the Hawkesbury. Visitors are encouraged to travel to our historical town of Ebenezer—the home of the Ebenezer Uniting Church, originally a Presbyterian chapel and the oldest standing church building in Australia. Ebenezer was settled in 1803 and prior to the building of the church, the settlers worshipped under a gum tree. That gum tree is still there today and exists across the road from the church.

The Australiana Pioneer Village in Wilberforce is also a wonderful destination from which to view colonial life, with numerous colonial era cottages and shops available for visitors to enjoy. The 1811 Rose Cottage is the

oldest timber slab cottage in Australia and the 1862 Atkins Blacksmith Shop is still standing today and it functions very well in the village as a blacksmith's shop. The Sackville Aboriginal Reserve Monument commemorates the Aboriginal people of the Hawkesbury and I encourage people to pay that monument a visit. Many tourists and locals alike have long enjoyed the colonial and Aboriginal history that is on display at the Hawkesbury Regional Museum. This museum reopened on 10 June 2020, following closure due to COVID-19, with safe COVID-19 practices now in place. I encourage everyone to visit.

The Hawkesbury Historical Society does well in showcasing our history to visitors of the area. I recall attending the Peek into the Past event at Howe House in Thompson Square to celebrate the 2019 heritage festival. Those who love exploring nature should visit our amazing national parks. Those parks protect our Aboriginal cultural heritage, such as ceremonial sites and rock art. Almost 70 per cent of Hawkesbury is bushland. There is something for everybody, young and old, in Hawkesbury. I am thinking of the tooting horns of motorists who are heading out there right now. Visitors will not go hungry either, with great hotels, restaurants and cafes throughout the towns and villages that offer quality food and friendly, genuine service that only Hawkesbury hospitality can provide.

As restrictions ease I urge holidaymakers to visit a Hawkesbury destination. The locals are some of the most accommodating folk I know. From Kurrajong to Kenthurst, Windsor to Wisemans Ferry or Bilpin to Bligh Park, they will not be disappointed with Hawkesbury's hospitality and the saturation of its natural beauty. I make a special appeal to those living in the Sydney metropolitan catchment. Hawkesbury is a picture postcard right on your doorstep so come and visit and write your own story.

### **COVID-19**

#### **TRIBUTE TO PHIL ALMOND**

#### **TRIBUTE TO DR AMARJIT MORE**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:47:38):** In February this year COVID-19 was thought of as just another disease that was exclusively overseas. It was not until March that it really hit us quite hard. Very quickly, the fear, the emotion and of course the new rules became a part of our life. Colloquially we called it a lockdown and a hibernation that was to last for perhaps six months. In New South Wales a great balance was struck between protecting lives and liberties and protecting our economy. Many businesses faced the biggest possible challenge in a very long time. Many in our community also faced loneliness and isolation. Of course people farewelled loved ones. It was very difficult to pay tribute to their lives but they found their own ways in which to do that. This evening I pay tribute to two special people who passed away during this pandemic.

On 15 April Phil Almond was on a training ride in Central Bucca Road when he and his friend, Duncan Elliott, were struck by a vehicle. A few days after the accident unfortunately Phil succumbed to his injuries. He is survived by his wife, Vanessa, a loving extended family and many friends. Phil was one of the nicest people I ever met. He was always happy to have a chat and share a laugh, and he was an absolutely phenomenal cyclist. I met Phil through cycling and previously in this House I have congratulated him on his achievements. Phil was a true gentleman and he will be missed by everyone who ever had the pleasure of knowing him. May he rest in peace. I wish Duncan all the best for his recovery.

On Anzac Day this year the Woolgoolga communities were saddened by the loss of Dr Amarjit More, who had been a general practitioner in the town since 1980. Dr More moved to Australia with his parents in the mid-1960s as a 13-year-old and immediately made an impression on his teachers and fellow students. He was elected school captain the next year. After school he studied medicine at the University of Queensland and in 1980 opened his surgery in Nightingale Street, Woolgoolga, where it still stands today. Earlier this year his practice manager told me that Dr More had nearly 20,000 patients, such was his work ethic and love of the job. He was one of the old school GPs who was not afraid of stitching people up and he would work weekends and nights doing whatever it took to look after our community. Another one of my friends said you are not a true local until you have had stitches from Dr More.

Dr More and his family have lived as neighbours of ours for as long as I can remember. He was my GP all of my life as he was GP to four generations of my family and many other families like ours in the Woolgoolga community. Dr More was a community-minded man who gave his time and considerable intellect to many causes, most notably to the building of the new first Sikh temple building, which opened early last year. His funeral was held on 1 May. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the community was asked to pay their respects by lining the route of the funeral procession. It seemed like most of the townsfolk stood on their driveways or outside their businesses to pay their respects to a man who had such a profound effect on so many of their lives. The emotion on the faces of his former patients, who thought of him as more of a friend than a doctor, was obvious for all to see. Dr More was a man of routine. When I moved back home 10 years ago I would often see him on my morning

run. He enjoyed running and in those days he ran with his Rottweiler, Rex. Dr More is survived by his wife, four children and their partners and six grandchildren. He will be missed by them, his extended family and friends and his many former patients.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed so much about how we live our lives. After a dark period of a few months finally we are seeing an early spring as businesses reopen and lives slowly return to normal. There is no doubt that life will continue to be tough for many in our society, especially those in the tourism and hospitality sector. But I also have no doubt that we will all get through this together as a region, as a State and as a nation. If Queensland does not want our tourists, we will have them in Coffs Harbour. When I look at other parts of the world that have harsher lockdowns and worse medical outcomes, I again recognise that we live in the best part of the best State of Australia. I am incredibly proud to be an Australian and I would not have wanted to be anywhere else during this crisis.

### STATE ECONOMY

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (16:52:28):** Undoubtedly over the past three months we have seen an unprecedented change to the global economy. New South Wales has been hit hard too. The official data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] indicates that New South Wales has suffered a 1.5 per cent reduction in State final demand in just one quarter. In contrast to that, Western Australia's economy actually grew by nearly 1 per cent and Victoria's economy shrunk by 0.1 per cent. I have seen the terrible impact these economic challenges have had on businesses in St George in my electorate. I have walked through the streets of Hurstville and Kingsgrove and watched as shops shuttered almost directly in front of my eyes. I cannot imagine mums and dads explaining to their children in the St George region that while this business is gone, they do not need to worry. Both mum and dad are working hard to shoulder all of the anxiety so their kids will not see it, their kids will not feel it and so they do not stay up at night, worrying about where their next meal will come from.

Increasingly the response as we move from the health pandemic to the economic recovery phase has been: What will we as parliamentarians do about the biggest economic challenge facing Australia in 75 years? In short, what is our plan? On Tuesday during a speech to the New South Wales Parliament the Treasurer said, "The strength of our State is measured by the dreams of the members of our community." To be frank, that sounded like a lyric from a Celine Dion song—beautiful, but it did not seem quite right from the supposed hard-headed Treasurer of New South Wales. Seven days ago in *The Sydney Morning Herald* we got the truer picture. The Treasurer said in a blunt statement, "Piecemeal changes to one tax or another won't cut it. This requires a serious conversation about adjusting the GST in order to remove other taxes."

Notice the euphemistic word "adjust". I will let members in on a secret. He will not adjust it downwards. It will be lifted. The Treasurer is attempting to lift the value-added tax, goods and services tax and consumption tax in the middle of a global recession when our export trading partners' economies are being smashed, as is our own domestic economy. When something—anything—is required to get some growth and some internal demand in the economy, the Treasurer says he will pursue an increase in consumption taxes. At precisely the same time on the other side of the world, the conservative government in Germany is attempting to cut its consumption taxes to boost domestic spending. This week *The Economist*, in reference to Germany, reported:

This time the response has been quicker, bigger and better ... Benefit rises and cuts to value added tax aim to boost consumption ...

Germany is attempting to reduce its consumption tax from 7 per cent to 5 per cent. I ask members who they trust: the New South Wales Treasurer, a bloke who has embarked on a three-month talkfest on tax reform while supposedly being responsible for our economy that is burning down around his feet, or German Chancellor Angela Merkel who, at exactly the same period and facing nearly the same economic circumstances, is attempting to reduce consumption taxes to stimulate economic growth? We are going the exact opposite way.

I wonder whether the Treasurer whispered to that young mum whom he mentioned in his speech on Tuesday that his plan for economic recovery in the State was a wage cut, a land tax, a consumption tax and privatisation? They were warm words but his remedy for the ills that are facing the State are not right. I am not blaming him for COVID-19 but his plan for recovery. The fightback plan was cooked up before we even knew what a Wuhan wet market was. It was before COVID-19 hit our shores. It is a simple fact: The Treasurer says that when things are good, we need privatisation, and that when things are bad, we need privatisation. He says that when things are good, it is the perfect time to increase the GST, and then he says that when things are bad, we must increase the GST. It is the same old economic plan: to hit the weakest the hardest. We must think smart about this—no more inquiries, no more big conversations, just some help for the people who desperately need it.



## YEAR OF THE DISASTERS

### ENGADINE SERVICE NSW

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:57:31):** In years to come people will recall 2020 as the year of the disasters. Let us look at what all our communities have endured through 2019-20. First came the most severe drought in modern memory, which decimated parts of our State and the stored water within my electorate, affecting the Cordeaux, Avon, Cataract and Woronora dams. Since the rains started in February, levels of those dams have increased significantly. Currently, Cataract sits at 71 per cent, Cordeaux is at 75.0 per cent, Avon is at 85 per cent and Woronora is at 63.0 per cent. Bearing in mind that Woronora is a feeder dam for Prospect Dam in greater western Sydney, an increase in inflows is fantastic news.

While we were reeling from the drought, the fire season attacked with vengeance. Touch wood, my electorate was spared major incidents but, as always, the emergency services in Heathcote stepped up to lend a hand across the State. My thanks again go to the Rural Fire Service teams, with special mention of the Woronora RFS crew, who were tasked with protecting Warragamba Dam—the State Emergency Service; surf lifesaving clubs, who headed down into the firegrounds to assist with barbecues, first aid and comforting affected locals; and Sutherland area command police. I met up with Menai dog squad personnel in Batemans Bay, who had spent two weeks assisting people. I thank members of the Heathcote electorate clergy, who delivered pastoral care for those affected by fires. I know I have missed many more people who collected food and clothes and raised funds for fire relief. That is what a community does and that is why I am proud of my community.

While the fires were still raging, the rain started. Storms and wild weather hit—and hit hard. Trees fell, wires went down and flooding rains washed roads away, damaging homes and public infrastructure. Mother Nature was not finished yet. A virus originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan in, of all things, a wet market, where wild and rare animals were sold for meat. If there was a recipe for how to start a pandemic, that was it. The world had not seen anything like it since the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918, where it was first diagnosed in Kansas in the United States. The Spanish Flu was spread by sailors traveling overseas and reached our shore in 1918. As the current pandemic took lives in Australia, the Spanish Flu took many more lives across the world. The National Museum Australia website states:

The "Spanish flu" pandemic emerged at the end of the First World War, killing more than 50 million people worldwide.

Despite a swift quarantine response in October 1918, cases of Spanish flu began to appear in Australia in early 1919. About 40 per cent of the population fell ill and around 15,000 died as the virus spread through Australia.

As we consider that quote, we can reflect on the response of Australia and New South Wales to avoid the COVID pandemic getting out of control. I give special mention to Premier Gladys Berejiklian for how she has been a steady hand on the tiller, guiding the people of New South Wales through arguably the worst year in Australia's history. Whatever side of politics people are on, all must be impressed with our Premier. She was calm, clear and focused as she navigated a mire of issues dealing with the aftermath of the fires, floods and now a pandemic. Our economy is under major pressure, our community is exhausted, but our Premier has a road map to recovery. With the team backing her, we will get to the other side of this year of disasters. We will all stick together through adversity and we will be a stronger, better community.

Also I am very happy to confirm that Engadine will soon have a brand new Service NSW, where people can access 800 services offered to support families. I hope my community will book in as soon as possible to review the available offers for every household in Heathcote. I thank my community for enduring the hardship it has gone through and the continuing hardships it will face in the months ahead. I am confident we will all come through it and be a stronger community because that is what we are. We are all in it together, and together we will come through it.

## COVID-19 AND WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:02:27):** I never thought of my mum as a feminist until I was asked to speak at an International Women's Day event after she had passed. I got up on the stage and burst into tears. I cried about the life my mum lived during the hardship of abuse by my father, the separation from my dad and taking on a loan as a 50-year-old woman to try to get a roof over her head and the heads of my sister and me. Before she passed we paid off the last \$6,000 of her loan. Today I ask our Premier for additional support for the pink economic recovery. My mum and a lot of people out there have been scrounging for different forms of temporary work in hospitality, retail, and the arts and entertainment sector.

Women and young people, who make up a significant percentage of people in the sector, have been hard hit. Halving the gap between male and female workforce participation rates will increase the annual gross domestic product by \$60 billion over the next 20 years. Whilst we are seeing economic investment, New South Wales has the responsibility to balance out the COVID economic recovery and the Sydney-centric construction investment

that clearly favours blue-collar jobs. The truth is that women have borne the brunt of the crisis, but I feel that we are living in times gone by where men are planning for men and not considering women equally in our economic recovery.

In April 125,000 women in New South Wales lost their jobs, compared with 97,000 men. In May 24,000 additional women left the workforce. For every hour of work lost by a man, a woman has lost nearly an hour and a half. Tonight I also thank the women who have borne the brunt of homeschooling. We now need some sort of pink economic stimulus. Where is the stimulus for female-run businesses, including home-based businesses and micro businesses? What are we doing to get women back to work in New South Wales? We need an expansion of free TAFE courses. We saw very clearly the massive need for free courses when there was a fantastic uptake by people across New South Wales when the courses became free. We need free courses for skills shortages in nursing, early childhood learning and aged care.

We need to improve access to early childhood learning in New South Wales. For every \$1 the Government spends, \$2 flows into the economy. It is a no-brainer: early childhood education and child care are some of the Government's biggest levers for women and the potential benefits are enormous. Labor has already called on the Berejiklian Government to keep funding free community preschools and to continue to support the 260 council-run childcare centres until at least the end of 2020. This will be great not only for the early childhood sector but also for the female workforce. It is also fantastic for parents and especially those females in a parental role who want to return to work.

At the same time, the New South Wales Government wants to cut the pay of 400,000 workers, when economists across New South Wales say that is a bad decision. Sixty-five per cent of our public sector workforce are women and we on the Central Coast are absolutely outraged as this clearly means there is less spending in regional economies across New South Wales. That hurts local businesses, small businesses and destroys jobs. As international tourism and education and trade are in the doldrums, there is no greater priority than to get our people spending, especially in the regions, like on the Central Coast. At the same time, the Government has racked up more than \$35 billion in blowouts in construction and wants to move the Powerhouse Museum. I feel that in 2020 we are living in some historic time, but I do not feel that we are in a place without systemic discrimination. Systemic decision-making by men does not benefit women. Women need to be heard by the people who are making decisions about economic recovery. We need an additional economic stimulus that benefits women—the 50 per cent of the population in the State that has been the hardest hit by COVID-19.

### COVID-19 AND HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:07:22):** Today I speak about how the Holsworthy electorate came together as a community in many different ways to support each other during this unprecedented time, in an effort to try to alleviate some of the stresses throughout the isolation due to COVID-19. Turbans 4 Australia, a local organisation I have spoken about previously, has again provided essential and necessary support across the State, with fresh cooked meals, grocery hampers and relief centres. Recipients of those hampers include international students who are struggling during this time because they are unable to find work or receive JobSeeker. The support that Turbans 4 Australia has given to those students has been incredible and much-needed.

I also acknowledge the Shepherd Centre in Casula for its dedication to supporting children with hearing difficulties during COVID-19. The Shepherd Centre is a support service for children who suffer hearing impairment or are deaf. During this difficult time of lockdowns and restrictions their usual classes and early intervention activities had to be moved online, meaning that the children still were able to access this important support. The Shepherd Centre has made the online classes smaller in size to ensure that all children are fully supported through online learning. The Shepherd Centre's feedback is that the staff have transitioned to online learning with ease, making it seamless for the children. I commend the Shepherd Centre for its dedication and commitment to supporting children with hearing problems, and for ensuring that they still receive the quality support they need during this time.

I thank the Minister for Community Services for meeting with Turbans 4 Australia and the Shepherd Centre via Zoom with me. It was so important that while we were unable to meet face to face, we were still able to keep in touch with each other. I recognise all our local schools in the electorate that adapted beautifully to the COVID-19 restrictions and provided quality services and much-needed support. As we are all aware, Anzac Day was a little different this year. With strict restrictions enforced, we were unable to do what we would normally do and attend face-to-face dawn services. Wattle Grove Public School offered a live driveway dawn service that it filmed and shared on its school's Facebook page. Staff and students were involved and participated in the filming of the dawn service video, allowing the school community to commemorate together. The school also encouraged students to do artworks to be displayed in their homes or on their driveways during the dawn service. The school

encouraged me to do my own, so I joined in too. I love that they found a safe and unique way to honour our diggers on Anzac Day.

I recognise Moorebank High School year 12 student, Elaina, whose artwork appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper on 4 May 2020. Elaina's artwork was one of many published that reflected thoughts about the effect that COVID-19 has had on students. I congratulate Elaina on having her artwork chosen to be published and wish her the best of luck with her studies. Our schools utilised their Facebook pages to keep parents in the loop and to keep the students feeling valued and supported. I particularly loved seeing the videos they made, their online awards assemblies, and the heart-warming welcomes they gave to the kids when they went back to school, with signs, balloons and huge smiles.

I also acknowledge June Young, OAM, and the Rotary Club of Liverpool Greenway, who have again—as they always do—stepped up during this time to support our health workers on the front line. They made hundreds of headbands for hardworking Liverpool Hospital staff, designed with buttons on each side to provide an anchor for surgical mask elastic strings. This was to help prevent the rubbing skin and stinging ears that come with wearing surgical masks for many hours of work. I take this opportunity to thank all the people I met with, either by phone or in a videoconference. Although we worked from home or with a skeleton office staff for many weeks, everyone was so understanding of the changes needed.

I thank my staff, especially Daniel Nicholls, Clayton Hopper, Sophie Carlton and Faith Perryman, for adapting to the changes and for keeping everything running pretty seamlessly. I would love to have more time to thank everyone—our businesses that have done it so tough but have kept their smiles; our charities, that were already struggling financially after the need to support the fire-impacted areas, and now they have been hit again; and to everyone who has been a caring neighbour or who joined my Holsworthy Bear Hunt Facebook page and popped a bear in their window to help brighten the day of our confused kids.

Once again I express how fantastic it has been to see our local community come together in many different ways to assist each other and to also provide some joy during this trying time. Harriet Warner, who is seven years old, sent me her very first email from her email account. She offered to provide hot cross buns, toilet paper and cards at Easter to our elderly. What a sweet girl and what a lovely thing to offer. It shows just how willing members of the community are to support one another when we need it most and how they can come together to ease stress in such a time.

### TRUEGAIN SITE REMEDIATION

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:12:26):** This Government must immediately remediate the former Truegain site in the Rutherford Industrial Estate. I recognise the member for Port Stephens, the shadow Minister for the environment in the Chamber today and I thank her for her support on this issue. I also acknowledge the Minister for Energy and Environment, who is in the Chamber. On every occasion this Government has failed to act quickly or appropriately to protect my community from pollution from PFAS and other toxic chemicals. Former member for Maitland and environment Minister, the Hon. Robyn Parker, failed to stop the "Rutherford stink" emanating from this site. On her watch, workers at nearby shops and factories were hospitalised due to fumes overcoming them. The Environment Protection Authority [EPA] labelled Ramona Cocco, who has campaigned on this issue for nearly three decades, as having "overly sensitive olfactory senses", saying, "she should have worked in a perfumery as her nose is so sensitive". How disrespectful.

Minister Speakman also failed, despite evidence from my 2015 community survey and despite many EPA breaches because the owners were, according to the EPA, particularly "litigious" and also missed a few deadlines. The site was shut down by Hunter Water only for releasing PFAS into the sewer. The Deputy Premier attacked me in this place over the company being forced to shut down, despite one worker almost losing his sight and leaving him with lifelong skin problems. For the Deputy Premier it is always polluters before people. Under Minister Upton, the EPA put out a media release saying that it had again warned residents of a toxic spillage of PFAS from the site onto local waterways that feed local farms and fisheries.

Former *Maitland Mercury* journalists Nick Beilby and Perry Duffin and I doorknocked and called local residents. They told us they had never received any warnings. Even the so-called second warning was just a media release. I am sick of the lies, the obfuscations, the avoidance of responsibility and the failure of the Government to act. It appears that the irresponsible and lackadaisical approach by the EPA has continued on this Minister's watch. In April 2020 the Minister replied to my question on notice that Cleanaway had not yet provided the EPA with a report on the detailed site investigation into PFAS. The Minister's answer noted:

The EPA is actively engaged with the owner of the former Truegain site and is currently assessing his capacity to complete clean-up works. The EPA is also investigating alternative options for clean-up and remediation of the site in case the site owner fails to do so.

Well, he has. The EPA website notes that the last batch of water and soil samples from the Truegain site was only undertaken in February 2019. In May 2018 the Government promised that it would step in to clean up the site so it was contained and made safe. Nearly two years on no real action has been taken by this Government. It is clear to everyone that we are sitting on a time bomb with this site.

I thank Donna Page and Nick Bielby from *The Newcastle Herald* for their relentless and thorough investigations into this site that exposed the dirty deeds of Truegain and the Government's failure to stop them. Millions of litres of toxic waste, stored both above and beneath the ground in ageing, rusting metal tanks will be released if immediate action is not taken. This site will be the "Orica moment" for the environment Minister if he fails to act immediately. What has happened to the 1.7 million litres of PFAS-contaminated water that has been treated and removed from the site? Where was it disposed of? In March 2019 the former National Textiles site in the Rutherford Industrial Estate, now owned by Cleanaway, was identified as potentially leaching PFAS into nearby waterways. I will not stand by and let my community be the dumping ground for PFAS and other toxic chemicals in this State.

Some four years after the closure of the site the New South Wales Government is still no closer to stopping this imminent environmental disaster. The cost of that will be incalculable. I recently wrote to the environment Minister and I met with him yesterday. He promised to come to Maitland tomorrow to meet with community representatives Ramona Cocco and Steve Jordan, two members of the Rutherford Air Quality Liaison Committee. I want him to see the disgusting state of the plant with his own eyes, and to smell the disgusting, acrid smell Ramona and I smelled last week. I want him to understand what families living around Maitland are facing on a daily basis. We have one more chance before it is too late. Words are cheap. Action is harder, but we need it now.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (17:17:46):** I thank the member for Maitland for bringing this matter directly to my attention yesterday. I appreciate the opportunity to engage with it. I can firmly say that I apologise for what has happened in the past. It is not good enough. No business should be profiteering at the expense of the community, let alone doing so in a way that puts people's health at risk. That seems to be exactly the case at Truegain. My very strong message to the director of Truegain and those involved is this: If the Government finds that you have done the wrong thing, you will be held responsible and it will throw the book at you. I intend to go after you like a rabid dog. It is not acceptable that the community pays the price for the negligence of businesses and polluters. If this should be the case, the Government will hold them to account. I am going up there tomorrow. I apologise to the member for Maitland that I cannot be there at the same time as her, but I appreciate the briefing. I will meet with local residents and I will work with the member for Maitland to ensure that the EPA does its job, holds this entity to account and makes the right people pay.

#### **HORNSBY ELECTORATE RURAL FIRE SERVICE UNITS**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (17:18:59):** I extend my gratitude to every Rural Fire Service volunteer and salaried officer within the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai communities. My electorate, fondly referred to as the bushland shire, was fortunate to not be majorly impacted by the bushfires last summer. However, this did not stop our local firefighters from playing a pivotal role throughout our State and our country. Members will recall that the unprecedented fire season commenced in early August and resulted in the tragic loss of life and countless properties.

On 12 November 2019 the fire rating was moved to catastrophic and our local brigades united to protect the community. This was the first time that this fire rating had ever been declared in the Greater Sydney region. Despite the challenges ahead, all of the volunteers and staff were ready and equipped for the battle, whilst understanding the heightened risk to the loss of life. In December Hornsby shire was placed under threat by the Gaspers Mountain fire, but through the hard work of multiple agencies and the camaraderie shown by our local brigades, the crews were able to significantly minimise the risk.

As the fires continued to spread, our local RFS heroes were transported by road and air to battle various fire fronts across the nation. Many missed out on Christmas and holidays with family and friends. Our crews were deployed far afield in Queensland; northern New South Wales, including Glen Innes, Kempsey, Coffs Harbour, Armidale and the mid North Coast; the Central Coast and Hawkesbury; southern New South Wales, including Batemans Bay, Cooma, Bega and Jindabyne; and northern Victoria. This was an international firefighting effort on a scale we had never seen before.

Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai Rural Fire Service has over 1,200 registered volunteers across 20 brigades, including three support brigades. I make special mention of local brigade captains David Byrne from Arcadia brigade, Craig Woon from Berowra brigade, Jason Plumridge—a great man who we call Plummo—from Berowra Waters brigade, Timothy O'Mahony from Brooklyn brigade and Grahame Horne from Cowan brigade, who has a lot to answer for because he helped train me when I joined the RFS. I thank you, Grahame. I note Rochman Reese from Dangar Island brigade, Jarryd Barton from Dural brigade, David Simpson from Galston brigade and my own

captain Theo Klich from Hornsby brigade. Stewart English from Hornsby Heights brigade has been doing it tough recently, so I am sending my thoughts to him. I note David Williams from Milsons Passage brigade, Scott Jones from Mt Kuring-gai brigade, Gordon Morgan from Muogamarra brigade, Daniel Sokolnikoff from Westleigh brigade, John Tibbitts from Catering brigade, Stuart Clarke from Communications brigade and Ben De Leon from Support brigade.

I sincerely thank them for their expertise in coordinating and organising the volunteer members within their brigades. I also thank the group captains in the district. These are our highest ranked volunteers, who provided exceptional leadership and support across all brigades. I thank group captains Grant Wargren, Bill Lea, Andy Cameron and Mark Fullagar and Deputy Group Captain Peter Robinson. The district office team played an integral role in the coordination of the brigades. I thank district manager Superintendent Mark Sugden, Patsy Marshall and the entire Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai district team for their professional support. The recent bushfire season devastated many communities throughout the country. We are so thankful that our local RFS crews were there to assist at such a desperate time. Their bravery is an inspiration to us all. On behalf of the Hornsby community I say well done and I thank them for their efforts. I wish them all the best for the upcoming fire season.

### **SYDNEY FISH MARKET REDEVELOPMENT**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:22:33):** COVID-19 has made it abundantly clear that accessible public space is a key ingredient in a healthy and livable community. One of the best things about living in my electorate is its proximity to Blackwattle Bay and much of the beautiful harbour foreshore. We are lucky to have access to a continuous waterfront promenade that stretches throughout much of the community. That was in large part as a result of the community taking on the State Government, working collaboratively in some instances, but also taking to the streets and marching to make sure that much of this public land was kept in public hands. In this climate, increasing public access to the foreshore should be a top planning priority for the Bays Precinct. It is sad that the Government seems to be going in the wrong direction.

Yesterday the Government announced final approval for the Sydney Fish Market redevelopment, which is a positive step forward. We believe the fish market redevelopment is long overdue. The question is what to do with the existing site. The fish market is moving to the other side of the harbour, being built over the water. There is an enormous amount of land—8.4 hectares—between Bank Street and Blackwattle Bay, incorporating the new Sydney Fish Market site at the head of Blackwattle Bay. Given everything we have learned over many years about how the livability of our city is important to the success of our community, the obvious answer would be to replicate the success of the Glebe foreshore parks—Jubilee, Federal, Blackwattle Bay and Bicentennial—that have been won over many decades.

It is sad that the Government has continued to focus on this prime piece of publicly owned waterfront land as a way to generate revenue, rather than as a way to make it available to the people of Sydney. One model proposes up to 1,700 apartments, 45-storey residential towers, which will be built higher than the Anzac Bridge pylons and will monster the bay. The scale and design mirrors development patterns in the largest areas of the CBD, rather than being inspired by architecture and density in Glebe or Pyrmont. It is not a plan to revitalise Blackwattle Bay. It will fail to enhance any of the local landscape or provide any support for the much-needed community facilities.

The Government has rolled out a series of documents to try to sell this to people in my community. But anyone who examines the detail will know that what is actually being proposed is a plan that will sell the vast majority of the site for the private use of residents, offices and shops. The remaining area, which is claimed to be 40 per cent, includes walkways and roads and a small portion of green space under the Western Distributor in the shade. While residents may be able to walk along the foreshore on a narrow 10-metre wide path under this proposal, this walk will not look anything like the existing naturalised Glebe foreshore. The waterfront will be transformed into a glorified shopping precinct, with private restaurants and businesses given prime foreshore positioning at the expense of public access. This is publicly owned waterfront land that should be redeveloped so that everyone can enjoy it, not just those who are wealthy enough to buy a waterfront apartment.

The Government is well aware that this proposal will cause problems. We know that because yesterday internal documents about how the spin machine went into overdrive to try to sell this proposal were released. It is clear that the Government is trying to separate the development of the fish markets and this redevelopment. We know that the cost, which has blown out from initially being only \$250 million to \$750 million, needs to be paid for somehow. One can see the scale and density that has been proposed for what will be the former site of the fish markets in order to help pay this astronomical bill. The impacts of this decision will be felt by the people of Sydney who will be locked out of this space, which is owned almost exclusively by the Government. Residential development at this scale will put overwhelming pressure on local schools, parks and basic infrastructure, which are already at capacity.

This proposal also fails to address the critical need for social and affordable housing in our community. There is a huge lack of sporting and recreational facilities. There is no traffic modelling and there is no plan for major additional public transport. Remarkably, the Government has said that visitors to the site can connect with the planned Sydney Metro stop at White Bay. That is on the other side of the Anzac Bridge, well over 30 minutes' walk away. I have met with Infrastructure NSW to present the case against this development. Already my office has generated over 400 submissions against it.

I call on the Government to listen closely to all the feedback it has received. Across the world, governments are reclaiming sites like these waterfront areas for public use. I encourage the Government to take a more visionary approach to planning that aims to make our city a better, more livable place, not a developers' playground. The proposal it put forward in its so-called jobs model is absolute overkill and would require a metro stop at Pyrmont, which quite frankly does not look like it will happen. The Government needs to review this proposal to make sure the people of Sydney are prioritised and that land is made available for the use of the public.

### **COWRA HOSPITAL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:27:34):** Cowra Hospital serves the 12,000 residents of Cowra and surrounding towns and communities. It is an imposing building on a hill overlooking much of the surrounding township and dates back to 1958. Modern medical technology and modes of care have outgrown the facility. An upgrade to bring this hospital up to the standards of modern medicine and better meet the needs of the community it serves has been my top priority since coming into this role at the end of 2017. After 16 months of relentlessly pursuing a commitment I gave to the people of Cowra, I was extremely proud to have Minister Hazzard join me in February 2018 to announce a \$70.2 million redevelopment of this important facility.

The 2019 New South Wales budget locked in the allocation of \$70.2 million from the NSW Health budget, with construction to commence prior to 2023. There is so much planning and consultation that needs to take place before construction can kick off. Whether the new build will be in the current location or on a new site is still to be determined. The planning phase in redeveloping the hospital is critical and it is important that there is time for proper, detailed consultation and planning to make sure that when we cut the ribbon on the new hospital it is the best possible facility to meet the needs of the community in the future. A refresh of the Cowra Clinical Services Plan is the first step of the three key phases in the redevelopment of hospitals and the Western NSW Local Health District has commenced this work.

The clinical services planning process considers future health needs of the community, relationships with other health facilities and clinical networks, and the models of care to meet health needs. The first step was a community survey led by the Cowra Health Advisory Council at the start of the year to give an insight into the future health needs of the community. The Cowra Health Advisory Council is working with the local health district to inform planning for the Cowra Clinical Services Plan. Hospital staff and health professionals are also encouraged to have input. The initial survey found that members of the Cowra community considered their top five health priorities to be emergency services, cancer services, maternity services, mental health services and access to diagnostics—that is, pathology and medical imaging. Further consultation will continue over the coming months. Over the next two months this will include targeted consultation with groups in the Cowra community. Design and delivery will follow the planning phase.

The Cowra Hospital redevelopment is a fantastic opportunity for the Cowra community and is an example of the Government's commitment to better health services in the bush. Not only does the Cowra Hospital redevelopment present an opportunity for better health services but also it will be an economic boost for local businesses. Opportunities for local businesses to be involved range from accommodation, civil works, concrete, cafes, trade supplies, labour, Indigenous participation and possible apprenticeship opportunities from TAFE. Once the build itself commences the successful contractor will approach the local business community to offer opportunities to work on the project, with flow-on effects to other businesses. I am proud of our achievements in this space to date and I am looking forward to seeing the progress.

### **COVID-19 AND SMALL BUSINESS**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:31:59):** As the member for Bankstown, I have been heartbroken by the devastating loss of so many jobs and the tragic impact that COVID-19 restrictions have had on local businesses, clubs, sporting groups and community organisations. I have been particularly concerned for the many small business operators in my electorate of Bankstown, which are more susceptible to the effects of an economic downturn. The viability of many new businesses, as well as well-established businesses, has been very much affected by the COVID-19 restrictions. I have had the opportunity to meet with a number of business operators who have understandably been devastated and are seeking support. I think about a new business, Dough Boss, a cafe established in Bankstown that was placed in a very difficult position.

This is a new business at the start of establishing its reputation in Bankstown. It was hit with the reality that it needed to shut down as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The business owner, Mr Charlie Tawk, was forced to make the difficult financial decision of keeping his business open, despite a fall in turnover of 80 per cent. He needed to for his reputation and for his employees. Many well-established and well-known local small businesses in Bankstown have also been significantly impacted by the pandemic. These include businesses such as Olympic Continental Delicatessen, one of Sydney's longest-running delicatessens. I remember as a child going to the deli with my mother. It has been operating since 1956. Current Olympic Continental Delicatessen owner, Ms Joanna Karpouzis, has felt the impact of COVID-19 on her business, which relies heavily on elderly customers and has suffered a 40 per cent downturn in trade since restrictions were imposed.

We have also seen many business operators being reliant on their clubs, pubs and commercial centres. When the centres, clubs and pubs closed, their businesses also closed and were equally impacted. I think about the hair salons, the beauty massage parlours, the childcare centres, fitness centres, gyms—of which we have so many in Bankstown—and dance studios that have all been impacted. It is pleasing to see that trade has resumed but no doubt business operators will continue to feel the pinch for many years to come. It is absolutely vital that we continue to provide them with long-term vision and support.

I have grave concerns that much of the stimulus package that has been presented by the Federal and State governments will be short-lived. I fear that in September businesses will have to face the reality that some very tough decisions will need to be made for them to survive in the future. I acknowledge a cafe called Chinchilla Xpress in the Bankstown electorate that for many years has had two different locations: a sit-down cafe and a coffee express cafe closer to the railway station. The business owners had to make the heartbreaking and tough decision to shut down the sit-down cafe they have had for a number of years to focus entirely on their express cafe location to provide morning coffee. That typifies the tough decisions that many businesses have had to make. I know that that is occurring not only in the Bankstown electorate but also throughout the entire State. It is incredibly important that we support small businesses during this very difficult period.

I pay tribute to Mr Wally Mehanna, who is the CEO of the Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce Inc. He has assisted many businesses navigate through the coronavirus pandemic and I thank him in particular for that. Over a number of years he established the chamber of commerce as a wonderful networking opportunity and it indeed has supported many new and emerging businesses in the Bankstown electorate. In conclusion, I add that it is very important to have a long-term vision and to provide necessary support for our businesses. We need small business to thrive across our State for the purposes of providing jobs and opportunities.

### COVID-19 AND SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:37:15):** COVID-19 has caused a major global economic downturn affecting trade, investment and employment. Our world looks very different to the world of only a few months ago and in these uncertain times one thing is clear: Every business has been impacted in some way. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and as someone who was self-employed for over 20 years, I understand the anxieties that are being felt. The restrictions put in place as a consequence of the pandemic in New South Wales were severe but necessary to protect our family, friends and loved ones. Without hesitation, business owners and managers either closed their doors temporarily or adapted their business models to comply with the public health orders. It has been an extremely stressful time and while the challenges remain I bring to the attention of this House a local initiative I put together to support the small businesses in my electorate.

All businesses, regardless of their size, have had to make tough decisions to keep their enterprise afloat during the pandemic. There has been major loss in trade, staff have had to be let go and many have experienced financial hardship. Wages and rents are probably the two highest costs for most small businesses. When I started to see the stress of restrictions on the face of my local business owners, I decided to conduct face-to-face wellbeing check-ins around the Wahroonga shopping village to hear directly about the impact caused to their businesses. As I expected, many business owners were so overwhelmed that they were not aware of the government support available—from fee and licence relief to JobKeeper, wage subsidies, payroll tax relief and much more. Importantly, the New South Wales Government's \$10,000 small business COVID-19 support grant has been extended until 30 June.

When we confront unexpected change, it can be difficult to cope with. I saw an opportunity to ensure that local businesses were aware of the help available by breaking down and simplifying the government information for owners and operators alike. Along with a group of volunteers, I next delivered over the course of a week information bundles to the small businesses in the commercial and retail hubs of Ku-ring-gai. The packs I produced provided key information on rent renegotiation, mediation services, interpreter services as well as State and Federal government grants made available during the pandemic. Every relationship between a landlord and tenant is different. From the feedback I received during my initial wellbeing check-ins it seems that many landlords had held off entering into rent reduction negotiations. This uncertainty was a major issue for small

businesses. Therefore the pack included a copy of the *National Cabinet Mandatory Code of Conduct—SME Commercial Leasing Principles During COVID-19* and an example letter for tenants who needed to negotiate rent relief with their landlords.

Additionally, I put a general post about the packs on my social media feeds to which I received numerous inquiries to my office asking for more information. As one volunteer said, "Meeting owners and hearing their stories, their struggles as they were endeavouring to keep their businesses viable and open, was encouraging. Knowing that we could pass on information which gave them hope and support was important." I thank Steve White, Councillor Christine Kay, Chris Williamson, Margie Raymond, Luke Hicks, Sarah Glassie, Andrew Fitcher, Sarah Fernando, Helen Clarke, Ian Krimmer, Christine McDonell, Adrian Batterby, Margaret Selby, Nicholas Trobec and Michelle Kim who volunteered their time to assist with this local initiative. Beyond providing information about financial assistance, I hope we were able to give our local small businesses some moral support.

The Government is focused on doing everything it can to protect the community from COVID-19 and as we move into an economic environment unlike anything before, now more than ever is the time to support our local small businesses throughout the recovery process. With the continuous yet cautious easing of COVID-19 restrictions in New South Wales, let us all go to our local hairdresser or barber to get a haircut, drop off some dry-cleaning that has been sitting in our wardrobes and buy a coffee, pastry or have a meal at one of our local restaurants. It is time to think national but to act local to support our small businesses.

### WATER MANAGEMENT

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (17:42:22):** I draw to the attention of the House the magic government trick that kills all bad news stories—the parliamentary inquiry. Announcing an inquiry, commissioning a report or appointing a new commissioner are silver bullets for a government in deep, deep trouble. This is the time-honoured strategy that seems to always work. Governments create a scandal. They give millions to their mates. They pork-barrel marginal seats. They cut costs in hospitals, resulting in people dying unnecessarily. The media starts to probe, asking painful questions. So what does the Government do? It announces an inquiry. For example, why did you let your mates pump water during low flows? "Oh, we are having an inquiry", the Government says. How come your response to the bushfires was so slow? There is another inquiry into that. Why did you let all those infected passengers off the *Ruby Princess* without any checks? "Stop asking us that, we have announced two inquiries into that", the Government says. "We do not want to pre-empt the results of those inquiries", the Government will say to the journalists who want answers.

If one inquiry does not stop the media questions, the Government can always announce another one. Water is an issue where inquiries flow freer than the Darling River. My friend Jan Beer has counted 118 different reports, reviews and inquiries on the Murray-Darling Basin since the plan came into operation in 2012. That is right, 118: Northern Basin Review, Southern Basin Review, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission water-trading inquiry, the Inspector General report, the Productivity Commission review, the Department of Primary Industries probe, the Natural Resources Access Regulator audit and the lists go on and on.

Taxpayers' money is poured into one of the 28 bureaucracies involved in the water space. The Government creates a new bureaucracy to conduct the inquiry. But what happens months or years down the track when we do not hear anything from the inquiry? The issue recedes from the newspapers as the media jumps onto the next scandal. People simply stop asking questions. In July 2017, following serious allegations of water corruption, two Nationals water Ministers and senior bureaucrats were referred to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. There were allegations of allowing mates to pump during embargos and officials de-badging information and giving it to lobbyists.

It was a huge scandal when it happened. It was the sort of corruption that may be contributing to devastation on the Lower Darling. It was front-page news and the subject of a *Four Corners* investigation. A few weeks later everything was forgotten. The Government told the reporters that ICAC was handling it, no more questions. Three years later, or more than 1,000 days since this inquiry, we have not heard a thing, no report, no findings and not even an update on the website confirming that the inquiry exists. Water corruption has continued. Each time the Government just announces a new inquiry. There must have been at least 20 since then. The Government will generally move on to the next inquiry even before the previous one is finished and the Minister gets a nice, cushy job well away from the spotlight and scrutiny.

But what happens when an inquiry actually gets finalised and the Government releases a report and recommendations? Usually by the time an inquiry is finalised the heat has gone out of the issue and there is no pressure to act. The Government usually does not implement the recommendations. The report sits on an office shelf somewhere gathering dust. We, the people, must say enough is enough. We should not fall for the inquiry



deflection. We should not accept the massive waste of taxpayer money and resources. The next time a government calls for an inquiry let us tell it to stop outsourcing its scandals and problems and start delivering for the people.

### **LONG BAY GAOL RIOT**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (17:47:03):** I congratulate a group of brave Corrective Services officers who faced a hostage situation in 13 Wing of the Metropolitan Remand Centre, Long Bay Gaol, on 23 October 1986 and who have been fighting for recognition for many years now. The seriously dangerous event begun as up to 70 inmates who were armed with makeshift weapons took several corrections officers hostage and took control of the third level of the centre. With the desire to wreak as much havoc as they possibly could, the inmates had no intent to negotiate as the disaster begun to unfurl. The inmates took several junior officers who had been on the job for only six weeks, six months and two years as hostages. They could do nothing other than to wait for help to arrive as their captors wrought further havoc within the facility.

The Malabar Emergency Unit assault team moved into the facility to free the corrections officers while attempting to restore order to the centre. Upon entry the team was attacked by inmates and several team members sustained injuries from the assault. The rescue team worked through the facility with tear gas, shields and batons. However, much of the confrontation resulted in hand-to-hand combat as officers kept inmates at bay while rescuing the hostages. The traumatic event has been regarded as the worst prison riot in Australia's history. That event alone led to major prison reform for the benefit of the safety and wellbeing of corrections officers as well as that of the inmates.

Over the years many books and transcripts have been written and dedicated to the brave officers who rescued their mates during the riot. I am proud to have had the privilege to meet several of the team members over the past few years in my capacity as the former shadow corrections Minister. I am always in awe of their humility and resolve. I commend the following prison officers for their bravery during the hostage and riot situation, which occurred at 13 Wing of the Metropolitan Remand Centre, Long Bay Gaol, on 23 October 1986: Dave Farrell, John Screen, Steve D'Silva, Mark Russo, Garry Clarke, Steve Wright, Dave Golledge, Wayne Wadsworth, Wayne Carmody, Garry Lockhart, Bill Dodson, Dominic Pezzano, Robert Menzies and Kenneth Newberry.

The team received letters of congratulations and accolades from their peers and were informed that formal recognition would follow suit. However, that never happened. Despite their numerous attempts to seek recognition, their efforts were shut down as they were informed that Corrective Services could not award bravery awards retrospectively. After lodging their request through the Australian Bravery Decorations Council in Canberra, I am pleased to inform the House that on 30 March 2020 the Office of the Governor-General announced that the 11 surviving officers, who fought for many years for recognition, would receive a Group Bravery Citation for their bravery and efforts. The recognition and commendation is long overdue but warranted for the prison officers who risked their lives on that harrowing evening. I am thrilled that the brave men are finally being bestowed the greatest honour by the Governor-General of Australia. Every one of those brave men risked life and limb for their fellow man. I commend all of them for finally receiving the recognition they so rightfully deserve.

### **SYLVANIA HEIGHTS COMMUNITY AND YOUTH CLUB**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:51:29):** I acknowledge Sylvania Heights Community and Youth Club. I am delighted that the fantastic organisation is the successful recipient of \$1.79 million under the New South Wales Government's Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund. Sylvania Heights Community and Youth Club is a volunteer-managed not-for-profit organisation at the heart of our local community. Founded in 1958, the club estimates that its reach has involved over 4,500 members of the local community through its activities. Sports offered through the club include football, cricket and netball and there are a range of indoor activities including martial arts, physical culture and dance. Over 1,400 individual participants are registered across those activities, with 70 per cent of the club's members under the age of 18 and females comprising 25 per cent of football participants and 40 per cent of those undertaking individual pursuits. The numbers demonstrate just how important a role the club plays in keeping our local youth healthy, active and connected.

Like Sylvania Heights Community and Youth Club, the New South Wales Government recognises the critical role that local sport infrastructure plays in keeping communities healthy, active and connected. That is why we have committed \$100 million to the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund, which will create spaces and facilities that enable communities to enjoy and take part in sport. The overall objectives of the program are to increase the number and type of sport facilities, improve the standard of existing sport facilities and increase participation in sport. I am incredibly pleased that the Miranda electorate will benefit from the initiative, with Sylvania Heights Community and Youth Club spearheading the renovation of the popular playing fields and spectator facilities at Box Road Reserve in Sylvania.

The facilities at Box Road Reserve are also utilised by other groups, including the Sutherland zone Primary Schools Sports Association [PSSA] and Sutherland Shire Football Association. Sutherland zone PSSA hosts its weekly football competition at the reserve, which typically sees up to 100 local students utilising the fields for 16 weeks of the year, whilst students participating in the PSSA's weekly cricket competition rely on the facilities during the summer season. Sylvania Heights Community and Youth Club's affiliation with Sutherland Shire Football Association also means that Box Road Reserve hosts football training, development and competition games year to year. With 19,000 registered players and 26 affiliated member clubs in the association, teams from across the shire play at Box Road Reserve when coming up against the home team, the Sylvania Heights Football Club.

Renovations will transform the existing multi-use facility at Box Road Reserve into a modern, high-quality sporting precinct to be enjoyed by all. The project will include the full reconstruction and rebuild of two rectangular natural turf playing fields; the removal of the existing split-level configuration and the creation of two adjacent and level playing surfaces; the installation of a new cricket pitch; the installation of drainage and irrigation on both fields; smart-control floodlighting; equitable pathways and access points to all areas of the park; and new fencing, park furniture and spectator seating.

Renovating Box Road Reserve will ensure a number of positive outcomes for our community. Transforming existing facilities will not only result in a higher carrying capacity for all sports, including increased capacity for junior cricket matches, but also provide players, coaches, referees and community members with a safer, high-quality, natural turf playing space. In providing safe and universal access to the reserve and adjoining community facilities, Box Road Reserve will be guaranteed to be a safe and welcoming place where all community members can experience autumn recreation either as participants, officials or spectators. Furthermore, improvements to Box Road Reserve will align with Sylvania Heights Community and Youth Club's strategic goal of increasing female participation across multiple sports and activities.

In improving existing facilities, the organisation hopes to leverage its existing female membership base to increase female participation across multiple sports and activities. An enhanced playing surface will contribute to building confidence in local women playing sport, reducing the likelihood of surface-related injuries and also maintaining fitness and health objectives. I congratulate the executive committee of Sylvania Heights Community and Youth Club and recognise the voluntary hours that this hardworking team dedicate to our local community. I acknowledge president Trent Jordan, vice-president Peter Barker, secretary Jenny Buchanan and treasurer Tony Robins.

I commend the efforts of sponsorship and grants committee member Chris Plakias, who played an instrumental role in the organisation's application and in ensuring that funds were secured for this vital project. I also acknowledge life members John and Kathy Allingham, who have both contributed their time and efforts to the club over many years. Sport is at the heart of who we are in the shire and I am thrilled that such great improvements are around the corner for the Miranda community. I congratulate Sylvania Heights Community and Youth Club on its success. I cannot wait to observe the benefits of this project for our local residents.

### COVID-19 AND RACISM

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:56:24):** Racism is a destructive infestation that crawls under the surface of Australia's image of a "multicultural" society. It only takes a spark to reignite the deep festering racism that we are so reluctant to face. That is how Sydney University Media Student Lucy Xu begins her recent article on COVID-19-related racism against Asian-Australians. As a matter of protocol and as a mark of respect, I acknowledge that we are standing on Gadigal land and pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging. The electorate of Newtown, which I represent, is also on Gadigal land. That land was never ceded—it was stolen. There is no pride in genocide; there can be no equality without justice; and saying sorry means that one does not do it again.

Tonight I speak about racism—not racism in the United States of America, where the Black Lives Matter movement is growing stronger and winning changes in the face of an extremist President, and not racism in Palestine, but right here, in this city and across this State and, indeed, across this country. In a political landscape that seeks to divide us, our collective response to being anti-racist—to calling out white privilege and white fragility, to highlighting the institutional discrimination and systemic racism that exist and the failures of mechanisms to hold those who inflict it on our communities to account—can unify us, and it must.

One of the first steps to addressing racism is acknowledging that it is a problem. Here now, in this place, I want to put some uncomfortable truths, facts and experiences on the table that make it undeniably clear that we have a serious racism problem in our society that needs urgent action and response. The time for denial is well and truly over. *The Guardian* reported that Indigenous deaths in custody worsened in the 12 months since it began its Deaths Inside project with the Jumbunna Institute. Justice reinvestment, which works to reduce the number of

Aboriginal people being imprisoned by putting resources into building stronger communities instead, shows that in New South Wales over half the children in jail are Aboriginal and that this costs more than \$1,200 per child per day. Imagine the kind of care, education and support we could offer those kids if we spent that kind of money on the things that kids actually need to thrive and survive in life.

According to the Aboriginal Legal Service, which opened its doors in Redfern in 1970, despite only making up 3 per cent of the Australian population, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 28 per cent of the adult prison population. These statistics, these facts, these things make it clear that there is a systemic problem, that the toxic reach of racism continues to infect our so-called justice system and to have far-reaching and traumatic impacts on Aboriginal communities and our whole society. We need urgent action to address the systemic racism in the NSW Police Force.

Racism is never okay, and this global pandemic has shown that anti-Chinese racism is also on the rise. A community survey conducted as a collaboration between the Asian Australian Alliance and Osmond Chiu, research fellow at Per Capita, and with supporting partners Democracy in Colour and Diversity Arts Australia, has found some very concerning results about COVID-related racism. I offer my personal thanks to them for doing this work and I make special mention of Erin Chew, who has worked tirelessly as an anti-racism campaigner.

Since 2 April they have received over 404 reports, with over 65 per cent of respondents being female, and 15 per cent being international students, with the largest number of cases coming from New South Wales. Almost half of the respondents indicated that they had Chinese heritage; 40 per cent of racist attacks happened on public streets and 24 per cent happened in supermarkets. Sixty per cent of respondents stated that the racism they experienced was in the form of a racial slur or name calling, such as "Go back to China", "coronavirus" or "chink". Ninety per cent of respondents stated that they did not report the incident to the police. I will read a few comments quoted in that report:

My friend and I were in the supermarket, he first stared at us and then came close to us whispering "Chingchong". When we were paying for our groceries he saw us at the registers and came close to us again as we were walking out. That time he whispered "Go back to where you came from", "you brought the disease here", "Fuckwit".

The old lady shouted that the news informed her that Chinese people are "filthy animals who eat bats". She spat at me and told me that the Chinese government and Chinese people are taking over Australia because the news reporters told her so.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Member for Newtown—

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** I am about to finish, Mr Speaker. Finally, I thank the leaders who started the UnityOverFear campaign, in which 87,363 people have signed a petition to show that we can be united against racism. We cannot be quiet about this, we cannot be silent about this. I appreciate everybody who is standing up and being anti-racist in these current times.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I remind the member for Newtown that in any context swearing in the Chamber is unruly and unparliamentary.

### **CESSNOCK DISTRICT HOSPITAL**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:01:57):** Today I speak about an issue that is facing my community and a number of people in my community through no choice of their own. I speak of our wonderful Cessnock hospital and our Cessnock Correctional Centre that houses inmates who have come from all parts of our State. At times inmates in the correctional centre have an injury, an illness or have had an accident that requires hospital attention and they need to be taken to Cessnock hospital. They get the best care in the world at the hospital. But the reality is that when an inmate goes into a public hospital environment, as they often do right across the State, one of the requirements is that they are accompanied by two correctional centre officers who are armed, which I believe is very reasonable. However, it is quite unsettling for the rest of the general public and the workforce, who are faced with what is a pretty confronting situation.

There is an inmate, often in chains or in handcuffs; there are officers who are armed; and generally people feel quite unsafe. Everyone is doing their absolute best and I am not having a go at any of the players in this game, but the reality is that four years ago, when the decision was made to expand the Cessnock jail from 800 inmates to 1,800 inmates, the biggest jail in the Southern Hemisphere, I put to this House and to the then various Ministers that Cessnock hospital would require a special treatment room—at least one room, if not two—where inmates could be housed securely. If we think of what they would need there, essentially they need a prison cell attached to the side of the hospital or built inside the hospital because, in reality, I do not think it is fair for those correctional staff to be exposed to the very real threat presented if an inmate tried to escape. In reality I do not think it is fair for the general public, who are in the hospital either visiting or getting medical treatment, to be exposed to that very real threat.

In all fairness, I do not think it is fair for the staff working at Cessnock hospital to be exposed to that very real threat. Fundamentally I am talking about health infrastructure. I am talking about the reality that inmates from Cessnock jail need to go to Cessnock hospital for their treatment. I am talking about the reality that this has to be done in the safest possible way. Because we have not actually built the necessary facilities, I will share some of the things that have happened. In one instance, while the officers guarding an inmate were doing their very best to stay still and quiet so as not to disturb the rest of the hospital, an inmate took the opportunity to attempt an escape. Fortunately, that was thwarted.

In another instance, officers guarding an inmate were doing their very best to stay awake by having a conversation and watching television. Unfortunately, they were on a shared ward, so they also kept the public patients awake. I am not having a go at the officers; they are doing what they need to do and they are doing their best to serve our community. But we should have a separate facility for these inmates. When an inmate goes to Cessnock hospital they need access to the public toilets. In the worst case scenario, unfortunately, a drug drop is placed inside the toilet prior to the arrival of the inmate, which is quite conniving. When the inmate goes to the public toilet inside of a public hospital, they know where to find the drugs. They then conceal the drugs, return to the jail and the drugs are imported into the jail. This is not fair on our corrections services, our hospitals or our general public. I plead with Health to provide the purpose-built facilities for these inmates when they get much-needed medical attention at Cessnock hospital.

### WAGE THEFT

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:06:52):** Wage theft in New South Wales is almost an art form. Every type of scam has been tried. Workers have received no payslips or cash payments, they have been incorrectly classified under an award or an agreement, they have been subject to sham contracting, intimidation, unpaid trial employment and the list goes on. One State in Australia, Victoria, has made wage theft a criminal offence, while other States and the Commonwealth are considering their position on the issue. The Victorian law was brought about by pressure from unions and from workers. For many young and not-so-young people, the intricate employment laws, awards and agreements are difficult to navigate. Many employees accept that their employer is doing the right thing when in many cases this could not be further from the truth. A whopping 725 workers have been back paid more than a combined \$330,000 after a series of Fair Work Ombudsman raids identified worrying levels of wage theft in regional Victoria and New South Wales.

Less than three weeks after recovering \$580,000 in stolen wages from regional businesses across Australia's eastern seaboard, the Fair Work Ombudsman unveiled the results of another series of inspections in Albury-Wodonga, Ballarat, Wollongong and Shellharbour. It found nearly half, or 47 per cent, of the 489 businesses that received surprise doorknocks were in breach of workplace laws, including retail outlets, takeaway shops, cafes and bars. Over a third, or 35 per cent, of audited businesses were found to be underpaying workers their minimum hourly rates, while 12 per cent were not paying the correct penalty rates. These findings are just the latest in a long line of Fair Work Ombudsman audits that have identified widespread wage theft and noncompliance with Australia's workplace laws, particularly in regional areas.

Many well-recognised industrial brands have been caught stealing from their employees. An Australian Council of Trade Unions report found that 7-Eleven was underpaying its staff, Pizza Hut was using sham contracts, Red Rooster was paying its migrant workers as little as \$8 an hour and Made Establishment was underpaying staff to the tune of \$2.6 million. The employees who were awarded this money for underpayments were later required to pay back their bosses from their own bank accounts. Caltex failed to provide employees with their entitlements too, and the list goes on and on. The interesting thing about this kind of theft is that, though the recovery of underpayment money is enforceable, it is not a criminal offence—except in Victoria. The perpetrators of these underpayments almost always argue that the underpayment was an accounting error, but these mistakes sometimes amount to millions of dollars. To say that these underpayments were a mistake seems to be an acceptable defence.

The interesting thing about wage underpayment mistakes is that they always seem to go one way: in favour of the boss. God forbid if it ever goes the other way—the employer will quickly get a garnishee order on their employee's wages. When wage theft is discovered by an employee and is reported, the employer is always quick to go on the front foot. Wage theft is now a crime in Victoria because workers, with the backing of the union movement, told their stories and put the issue firmly in the public consciousness and on the Government's agenda. Victorian law now provides three wage theft offences: the theft of employee entitlements—that is, dishonest withholding; the falsification of an employee's record; and the failure to keep employee entitlement records. Companies will be vicariously liable for the actions taken by officers, directors, associates and agents within their scope of employment or engagement, and there will be an implied authority. The Queensland, Western Australian and Commonwealth governments are considering a criminal wage theft offence. It is about time this occurs in New South Wales.

*Bills***STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 2020****Returned**

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

**DIGITAL RESTART FUND BILL 2019****Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments be set down as an order of the day for a future day.

*Community Recognition Statements***COFFS HARBOUR LAPIDARY CLUB**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:12:37):** Tucked away in a quiet corner of the Coffs Harbour Showground, creativity and camaraderie can be found in abundance at a local club. The Coffs Harbour Lapidary Club—lapidary is the art of cutting and polishing rocks and gemstones—is celebrating an \$11,500 Community Building Partnership grant to provide new energy efficient clubhouse lighting and two new cabbing machines. The club's 50-plus members, who use the clubhouse each week, are deserving beneficiaries of these important upgrades. Their hardworking leadership team comprises president Errol Hagelstein, vice-president John Eggleston, secretary Jenny Snow, treasurer Pam Hull, committee members Vaughn Hagelstein, John Young, Selwyn Davis and Fran Brewster, public relations officer Terry Wall and maintenance officer Don Stewart.

**BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:13:32):** On Saturday 6 June more than 400 people turned out in Wyong to show solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, which has swept across Australia and the globe. A peaceful march on Darkinjung country in Wyong was organised by the Barang Regional Alliance. Participants remembered and honoured the 432 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have died in custody since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody ended in 1991. Organisers gave a big shout-out to the local police, because the rally was pulled together in a short time and the police really did support them. There was important involvement from Aboriginal youth in the lead-up to the march. Their contribution was significant. Organisers commented that it was lovely to see that our young people cared so much about their community. Special care was taken to follow the COVID health rules, and the Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Service provided masks and hand sanitiser. The crowd started from the Wyong Neighbourhood Centre and marched in groups of 20 to the courthouse, where Aboriginal Elders gave speeches.

**HAWKESBURY CRICKET CLUB**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:14:54):** I thank the New South Wales Government for providing \$7,500 for sightscreens for Hawkesbury Cricket Club through the Local Sport Grant Program. The club was in desperate need of new screens so the recent funding announcement was very well received. A sightscreen goes behind the arm of the bowler so that the batsman can get a good look at the ball upon release—I learnt that when I went out to the club. Cricket has been played in the Hawkesbury since the early 1800s. Hawkesbury Cricket Club has been at Owen Earl Oval, Richmond, since 1985 when it entered the Sydney cricket competition. I hope these sightscreens give an additional level of confidence to the club's performance in the seasons ahead and I congratulate Hawkesbury Cricket Club on achieving this grant.

**WENDY NAYLOR, OAM**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:15:47):** It gives me great pleasure to honour the contributions of Ms Wendy Naylor to the local community and congratulate her on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia as part of the Queen's Birthday 2020 Honours List. Ms Naylor has been a member of the Partners of Veterans Association NSW Branch, serving as both president and vice-president of the Central Coast Sub-Branch, and was made a life member in 2011. As well as being a member of the Partners of Veterans Association, Ms Naylor was also a member of the RAAF Women's Association of NSW and served as vice-president in 1970. She was also a volunteer for the Emergency Housekeeping Service, now the Home Care Service of NSW. I thank Ms Naylor for her dedication and service to our local community.

**AQUINAS HOLY FAMILY COLTS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (18:16:52):** I acknowledge Aquinas Holy Family Colts Junior Rugby League Club, which is the recipient of \$4,385 from the New South Wales Government's 2020 Local Sport Grant Program. Founded in 1992, the Colts comprise over 400 members from around our shire. The secured funding will be used to purchase and install a new storage container alongside the clubhouse, ensuring that the visitors change rooms and shower facilities will no longer be cluttered with game-day equipment and subsequently be made available to opposition players throughout the season.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the hardworking volunteers behind the Colts who work tirelessly throughout the rugby league season. I particularly acknowledge president Darren Elliot, secretary Peter Kingham, treasurer Brett O'Farrell, vice-president seniors Shane Canavan, vice-president juniors Andrew Matheson and grants committee member Marian Matheson. I thank Aquinas Holy Family Colts Junior Rugby League Club for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and extend my best wishes for the resumption of the rugby league season.

**JOHN LETBY**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (18:17:56):** I commend John Letby on his outstanding commitment and service to the people of Warragamba and Silverdale. John is the president of the local soccer club. He is the driving force behind the bringing together a number of the sporting clubs in the Warragamba area and has set up a working party to do that. The aim is for all the clubs to cooperate and pool their resources for the provision of upgraded facilities for the local community. The working party has been in discussions with Wollondilly Shire Council to ensure that a master plan for the Warragamba Recreation Reserve area will cater for the needs of all the different sporting clubs. This master plan will deliver high-quality facilities to the area and will enable the netball club to host regional tournaments. John is also a hardworking member of the local RFS. Thank you, John, for all that you are doing for the Warragamba and Silverdale communities.

**WOY WOY LEAGUES CLUB**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:18:50):** Tonight in the Parliament of New South Wales I formally say goodbye to the Woy Woy Leagues Club. It is a very sad day for all of us on the peninsula and to all of those who have been involved in building this club from the grassroots level—the dads, the mums, the grandparents who built this club. It was built by the community for the community. Generations of locals have great memories of the Woy Woy Leagues Club—myself included—after footy, discos, nightclubs, Central Coast Pride dances, Anzac Day two-up, meat raffles, grand final celebrations, functions, presentations and leadership events. It is absolutely fantastic and I thank every single person who has ever worked at the Woy Woy Leagues Club for being members of our families and the way they provided a home away from home. I also thank Joe Kelly and the board at Easts for all the work that they have done looking after the people of the peninsula and for trying so hard. I know it is with a heavy heart and deep regret that they say goodbye. We will miss them. Good luck to everybody on their return to footy.

**TRIBUTE TO DIANE QUADE**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:19:55):** The education fraternity in Dubbo lost one of its greatest champions in late May when St Johns College year 12 coordinator Diane Quade sadly lost her battle with cancer. Diane joined the school 26 years ago and from 2000 through to her passing she was the person to guide the school's most senior students through their HSC year. She had a deep love of helping young men and women do their best at school and transition to the next stage of their lives, whether it was university, vocational training or straight into the workforce. My daughter, Georgie, graduated from year 12 at the school just last year so I have firsthand experience of the love and guidance Diane was able to provide. As well as her commitment to the students, she has been pivotal in helping countless teachers progress their own careers inside the college. Diane leaves behind a loving family, most notably her husband, Michael, and daughter, Georgie, as well as a wide circle of friends who have been saddened by her loss. Our community is certainly poorer for her passing. Vale, Diane Quade.

**WESTERN SYDNEY WANDERERS**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (18:21:02):** I congratulate the Western Sydney Wanderers on successfully securing a \$5 million grant under the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund for the further development of their western Sydney football park. This funding will go a long way towards creating an inclusive open hub for the wider western Sydney community, which is poised to offer a plethora of services, including health, fitness and community-building activities catering to participants of all ages. As many members will be aware, the Western Sydney Wanderers have played an integral role throughout west and south-west Sydney since the club's inception and have been involved in most major multicultural events throughout Sydney, promoting football, fitness and

multiculturalism in the region. I look forward to seeing the new facilities once they are up and running. I have no doubt they will be of tremendous benefit to our region for many years to come. Congratulations.

**ANDREW BLACK**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:22:00):** I bring to the attention of the House the selfless bravery of Andrew Black. Mr Black, from Narrandera in the Cootamundra electorate, swerved to avoid a fatal collision between a truck and a sedan near Invergordon in Victoria on 26 October 2015. Mr Black rushed to the car involved in the incident and helped two injured passengers from the vehicle, physically pulling a trapped man from the back of the car before the wreckage was totally engulfed in flames. The driver of the vehicle was sadly unable to be rescued and died at the scene. In recognition of his actions, the Governor-General of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Retd), is today presenting Mr Andrew Black with the Royal Humane Society of Australasia's annual award for the most outstanding act of bravery. This is an incredibly well-deserved award for Drew Black. Congratulations on receiving the 2019 Clarke Silver Medal and on being an example to us all.

**NSW WOMEN IN MINING AWARDS**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:23:00):** In a special online broadcast ceremony earlier this week the mining industry in New South Wales recognised a number of outstanding women for their contribution to mining. I add my congratulations to everyone who was nominated and to the recipients of the 2020 NSW Women in Mining Awards. The award recipients included: Exceptional Young Woman in Mining, Leah Miller; Gender Diversity Champion, Kate Swain; Excellence in Diversity Programs and Performance, WIMnet NSW Mentoring Program; Outstanding Tradeswoman/Operator or Technician, Peita Heffernan; and Exceptional Woman in Mining, Renata Roberts. Each of those women should be incredibly proud of their efforts, as should everyone who was nominated. The Women in Mining Awards are another reminder of the contribution that women make to this traditionally male-dominated industry and the diverse range of roles that women fill in the resources sector. It is also a reminder to mining companies that gender diversity benefits mining businesses and of the need to continue to strive for increased workforce diversity.

**JOHN VIPOND**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:24:00):** There are few people within an organisation today who can attest to having been recognised with an incredible 40 accolades over a period of 50 years. Yet this is precisely what Mr John Vipond has achieved since he joined the Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club in 1970. Described as the backbone and lifeblood of our local surf club in the Camden Haven, John Vipond has literally built the organisation from the ground up, from setting up patrols in earlier years to campaigning for funds that eventually saw the construction of the clubhouse we see today at North Haven Beach.

Acknowledging the enormity of John's contribution, the committee and its members recently celebrated his contribution with a naming ceremony at the surf club as the newly purchased all-terrain vehicle was unveiled. Today I recognise the numerous awards and tributes bestowed on John over the extensive time he has been involved in the surf life saving movement, including life membership, 25, 50 and 60 year long service awards, 50 Year National Patrol Service Award, silver medallion IRB driver—and the list goes on. John is still an active member of Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club and is often labelled as the irreplaceable workhorse who continues to inspire the next generation of volunteer lifeguards.

**ST GEORGE TAFE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:25:05):** On 12 February I joined the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education and my good friend Geoff Lee at the St George TAFE teachers' forum. Teachers work incredibly hard at all levels of education. Our TAFE teachers are fantastic and provide high-quality tertiary education for a wide variety of courses—from finance to media and trades to tourism. TAFE is critically important in supporting those who wish to pursue a vocational education, and the St George TAFE is a great provider for those who live in my electorate of Oatley and in the Sutherland shire. The teachers' forum provided Minister Lee and I with the opportunity to hear directly from the teaching staff at TAFE to understand more about how the Government can continue to support TAFE as best it can. The ability to have an open dialogue with staff provided us both with valuable insight about the needs and improvements that can be made to the TAFE system. I look forward to working with Minister Lee to implement positive changes, particularly at St George TAFE. I thank St George TAFE for hosting the forum and Minister Lee for joining me.

### CANTERBURY HOSPITAL

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:26:16):** I thank and acknowledge the Friends of Canterbury Hospital for starting a charge.org petition that calls on the Government to fund a full Canterbury Hospital upgrade. I was heartened to read some of the comments on the petition. Canterbury local Michael said:

I live in the local area, and considering this is a critical service that has the capability to cater for up to 100K local and surrounding area residents, it is vital this funding is provided especially in light of the recent pandemic plus ongoing health care requirements.

Lakemba local Mahmuda said:

My daughter was born in this hospital. It needs more resources and facilities. The govt should spread its hand to redevelop the facility of this hospital because a very big community is dependent on this hospital.

Local Hamdi said:

That's where all beautiful babies were born!

Maria said:

As a Public hospital, this hospital should be fully funded for its upgrade by the State Government.

There was a number of similar comments. I urge the Government to fund Canterbury Hospital.

### ASPECT SCHOOL

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:27:24):** The students and dedicated staff of Aspect School at Coffs Harbour are excited about their playground project, which is about to take shape. A \$15,500 Community Building Partnership grant will result in soft fall installation and new play units. This project provides a safe and appropriate environment for children with autism to develop the skills needed to participate in community-based sporting and recreational activities. Aspect School co-ordinator Nicki Gregorovic leads an outstanding team of caring professionals: teachers Jessica Maynard, Hayley Crawford, Nerine Carter and Barbara Nance; and teacher aides Tania Plumb, Kacie Campos and Katherine Morrell. Autism Spectrum Australia is extremely proud of what is being achieved at Coffs Harbour.

### TRIBUTE TO NELSON ALLEN, OAM

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:28:09):** I recognise Nelson Allen, OAM, of West Wallsend, and the incredible contribution that he made to the West Wallsend and Lake Macquarie communities over many decades and in many forms. Nelson passed away in April this year after a short illness, leaving behind his wife, Marlene, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Unfortunately, because of COVID-19 when Nelson passed away he was only allowed to have one visitor—not one visitor at a time, but one visitor. During his last weeks his beautiful wife, Marlene, was at his side, but unfortunately his children and grandchildren were unable to visit him.

Nelson received his Order of Australia the way people should: for significant contributions to the community. He mentored junior sporting teams, including soccer, and was a referee. Nelson was a volunteer with the Swansea Coast Guard and a member of West Wallsend Combined Pensioners Association, where he served as vice-president. Nelson was a long-serving Justice of the Peace and was on the board of directors of West Wallsend Workers Club for 50 years, including 19 years as president. Nelson dedicated much of his life to his community, with the assistance and blessing of Marlene. His family and community have lost an outstanding gentleman.

### GEORGES RIVER FOOTBALL CLUB

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (18:29:19):** I acknowledge Georges River Football Club, which is the recipient of \$5,000 from the New South Wales Government's 2020 Local Sport Grant Program. Originally founded in 1960 when three teams entered into the 1961 local shire competition, Georges River Football Club has grown over the past 60 years to welcome teams from every age group and at all levels of competition to Oyster Bay Oval. The funding will facilitate new goals and nets for mini roo and junior competitions, providing modern equipment to support the development of young players. Of course, none of this would be possible without the dedicated volunteers behind Georges River Football Club who work tirelessly to support players throughout the football season. I acknowledge the executive committee, including president Dale Graham, vice-president Matthew Shaw, secretary Debbie Kearns, treasurer Laura Croxson and registrar Melissa Gassman. I thank Georges River Football Club for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and extend my best wishes for the upcoming football season.



**SALVATION ARMY FAIRFIELD CITY CORPS**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (18:30:10):** I recognise the tremendous efforts of Pastor David Delaney and the dedicated volunteers from Salvation Army Fairfield City Corps and thank them for their enduring efforts to support and assist those in need throughout the broader Fairfield community. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the Salvation Army Fairfield City Corps diligently sourced and collected essential items and distributed care packages to the most vulnerable individuals throughout our community to ensure families were not forced to go without. On behalf of the Fairfield electorate I extend my sincerest appreciation and commendations to Pastor David Delaney and the staff and volunteers at the Salvation Army Fairfield for the provision of frontline emergency support and assistance during a time of great difficulty and turmoil throughout our nation. Their continued service is invaluable to our region and we will be forever grateful for everything they have done for families throughout our community.

**COLLEEN NASH**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:31:11):** I recognise Moree community member Colleen Nash for her committed trips to the isolated farms where drought is still a reality. After a day working in Moree, Colleen will travel hundreds of kilometres on her own at her own cost to bring essential vouchers and goods to people who would not think to turn to town for charity, yet are very much in need. Their incomes do not allow for anything other than the bare necessities and Colleen's visits bring a bit of cheer to their otherwise difficult lives. Colleen works extra jobs and uses the money to buy a special something for children and tired wives. A bit of conversation is most welcome. As much as it saddens her to see the poverty on those farms, the reception she receives from the farmers makes it all worthwhile. Very few people in Moree know of Colleen's trips and she probably would not be comfortable me sharing them in this place. But it is important to acknowledge her because she is an unsung hero, a community champion and a selfless individual who deserves to be acknowledged and congratulated.

**CHARMHAVEN TENNIS CLUB**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:32:22):** Charmhaven Tennis Club has a new state-of-the-art 120 square metre environmentally friendly and sustainable clubhouse, built by the team Custom Creations. The team at Custom Creations, a great local Central Coast company, has delivered a fantastic building that was funded through members and government grants. The new clubhouse features a fully stocked pro shop with a range of products available for sale. The new lounged area houses a 65 inch high-definition TV and free high-speed internet. There is a large 25 square metre undercover deck and, very importantly, a coffee machine, fresh juice or even soft drink. Charmhaven Tennis Club has been working hard to upgrade its courts and landscaping while supporting some great tennis. Social tennis occurs five days a week and great coaches provide quality tennis lessons six days a week. The Charmhaven Tennis Club community are very proud of their new clubhouse and tennis centre. Well done to Brett and the committee for their belief and drive in pursuing this outstanding project.

**ABBEY ROWLAND-JONES**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:33:29):** I recognise Abbey Rowland-Jones, a fantastic young dancer from the mid-western area who has shined brightly on stage prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Abbey is only 11 years old but has been dancing for nine years. She travels from Pyramul to Mudgee each week to practice. In January 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 fantastic reward for all the hard work put in by Abbey and her supportive family. I congratulate Abbey and wish her good luck for the future.

**GOSFORD HOSPITAL**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:34:30):** Tonight I say a sincere thankyou to every single staff member at Gosford Hospital for their efforts and contribution to our community during these difficult times. We can all only begin to comprehend the fear and trepidation with which they entered this challenging period and conducted their work with incredible integrity, despite the fact that their lives were at risk. We appreciate the major adjustments that they made not only in their workplace but also in their home and community environments to protect and ensure that all of us were safe. Thank you to all those people in leadership for their extensive planning and their thorough communications in what had to happen within our hospital. To every single person who works in Gosford Hospital, you had already made an amazing adjustment during disruptions as a result of our renovations. Thank you for the speed and agility with which you managed the change. On behalf of the community

of the Central Coast, I once again thank every single person for the work they did supporting all of us and keeping us safe during the COVID crisis.

#### **CAMDEN HAVEN GIFT CARD**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:35:38):** It is in times of economic hardship and adversity that true community spirit shines through to help those facing life's challenges—whether it be in small business, unemployment, mental illness or homelessness. I saw this spirit firsthand after the devastating bushfires as our local Hastings Rotaract club partnered with local businesses in the Camden Haven to hold a free Family Fun Day at the Kendall showground to support community health and wellness. Once again we have the Camden Haven community banding together over a common goal to support our local small businesses doing it tough from the recent COVID-19 restrictions, which decimated our tourism sector on the mid North Coast.

Seeing a need to stimulate the small business sector, the Camden Haven Chamber of Commerce has designed a gift card for the public to encourage the community to shop local. Named the Camden Haven Gift Card, it is used as an EFTPOS transaction card for the public to spend at participating businesses across the Camden Haven in the hope the initiative will provide that much-needed shot in the arm to encourage spending in the Camden Haven region. I commend sponsors Kew Corner Store, Laurieton Residential Resort and the Laurieton United Services Club for proudly supporting this awesome campaign designed by the chamber to support local business.

#### **COVID-19 AND CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:36:44):** I congratulate every single resident of the Central Coast for the amazing adjustments and sacrifices they have made each and every day during the COVID crisis to keep our community safe. I thank every single business across the coast, large and small, tradies and home businesses for the significant changes they have made, the majority of which had negative economic impacts on their business. I thank them and congratulate them on their agility and dignity. I also encourage them to contact my office so that I can direct them to any assistance possibly available and also be their voice in the New South Wales Parliament for further support they need. To all the families who adjusted to support their kids in education at home, I thank you. I say to the coasties that we survived. We loved being able to continue to exercise during the crisis. We love the coast and we look forward to continuing to buy local and to support our local community.

#### **TEMORA LIBRARY**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:37:48):** Last week I was delighted to join the Temora Shire Council mayor, Councillor Rick Firman, and branch librarian Wendy Manning to announce that the Temora Library will be getting a \$189,014, upgrade thanks to funding from the New South Wales Government's Public Library Infrastructure Grant program. This funding will improve access to the library for the entire community with new accessible toilets, wheelchair-accessible ramps and an outdoor reading and activity space. The library team is very excited that everyone, no matter their mobility level, can access the fantastic services the library has to offer. I acknowledge the excellent service provided to the community by the library team. It has created an engaging and stimulating environment for reading and learning.

#### **COVID-19 AND CESSNOCK ELECTORATE**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:38:40):** I give a shout-out to the wonderful community of Cessnock. I am talking specifically about the Cessnock local government area [LGA]—my electorate goes beyond that. In the first three weeks of the COVID virus there were 24 identified infected persons within the Cessnock LGA. Most of those persons had come back from international travel. There were a small number of hospitality workers infected by visiting people who had come for wine tastings or dinners at the vineyards. The net consequence was that all of the infected people and their families right across the Cessnock LGA did absolutely the right thing and a wonderful job: They stayed inside and away from others and self-isolated. As a result, within two weeks we were basically COVID free. That is an incredible effort for a place that in the short term was a hotspot in the State. I thank the people of Cessnock.

#### **ST GEORGE HOSPITAL BIRTHING UNIT**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:39:40):** Today I speak on another development at St George Hospital, a new world-class birthing unit. On 3 February this year I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the birthing unit, along with Minister Hazzard and my Sutherland shire colleagues: the member for Miranda and the member for Holsworthy. The new \$11.5 million unit is twice the size of the previous facility, carefully designed with the very latest technology and equipment for maternity care. The upgrade provides eight new birthing rooms with deep baths for women in labour, two acute observation rooms and a new neonatal monitoring technology. Given my two sons were born at St George Hospital, I know firsthand just how valuable this upgrade will be for our

local community. Put simply, local women will now be provided with the best maternity care on offer. This Government has transformed the St George Hospital—particularly the birthing unit—and this Government is transforming hospitals right across the State. I am incredibly proud to be a member of the best Government for health in the history of New South Wales.

#### **RICHMOND AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:40:45):** In December 2019 the New South Wales education Minister announced the establishment of Richmond Agricultural College, a two-campus model incorporating Richmond High School and the Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Education on the Western Sydney University Hawkesbury campus, and a new agricultural speciality stream at Richmond High School. Enrolments for year 7 students in 2021 have commenced for the agricultural speciality class. The collaboration with Minister Mitchell, the Hawkesbury campus, the Department of Education and local school experts has been outstanding. I look forward to this important development in agricultural education.

#### **BENJAMIN CUDMORE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:41:33):** I recognise local mental health advocate Benjamin Cudmore for sharing his personal story of hardship and adversity in the *Happy Days* podcast for Men's Health Week from 15 June to 21 June 2020. Mental illness can affect any one of us at any given time as we face the many challenges life throws at us. For Ben Cudmore, his personal journey with depression, drug addiction and financial hardship has encouraged him to speak out about mental illness in the *Happy Days* podcast and to give hope to others who may be going through their own mental health battles. At the height of his career Ben was travelling around the world running a successful business and married with two beautiful children, Lucy and Poppy, before a temporary curve in the road changed his direction in 2017.

After hitting rock bottom and seeking help, Ben is now publicly reflecting on his own experiences to encourage others to speak up and reach out when it comes to their mental health. The *Happy Days* podcast is based on giving hope and sharing stories of vulnerability, personal strength and survival. This Men's Health Week we come together to shine a spotlight on mental illness amongst men and to raise awareness to better improve health outcomes in our communities. I congratulate Ben Cudmore for his unique initiative to raise awareness on mental health and thereby supporting others in our community.

#### **GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—**I take this opportunity to commend Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia, Archbishop Makarios, who joined in calling for the restrictions on places of worship to be eased. This has been a trying time for religious organisations, whose contribution towards efforts to combat the virus by applying social distancing rules have required changes to many of their significant practices and traditions. I acknowledge His Eminence Archbishop Makarios and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and commend their efforts for 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 Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and thank them for their tremendous contribution to our community.

#### **CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—**I take this opportunity to commend the Archbishop of Sydney the Most Rev Anthony C Fisher, OP, of the Catholic Archdiocese 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 Rev. Archbishop Fisher and the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney and commend their efforts for 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 Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney and thank them for their tremendous contribution to our community.

#### **KARLIE SCHARFENBERG**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—**Congratulations to Glenmore park resident, Karlie Scharfenberg, for being recognised in the FBAA (Finance Brokers Association of Australia) 20 Brokers to Watch in 2020 List. Financial broker and business owner Karlie, began her business named 'The Loans Suite' in 2016 and has seen exponential growth coming into 2020. To keep up with the number of enquiries and leads the business is receiving,

Karlie has brought on a partner to assist in expanding the business in multiple areas. Currently, 'The Loans Suite' has teams in Brisbane, Bowral, Macarthur and a satellite office in Merimbula. Along with these widespread teams, Karlie has plans to bring on more brokers to assist their growing number of clients. Congratulations Karlie on being named as one of the top 20 financial brokers for 2020. I wish you all the best and look forward to hearing of how your business continues to grow throughout this year.

**JAMES PATERSON**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I wish to congratulate 17-year-old Glenmore Park resident, James Paterson, for being named the February recipient of the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation Senior Sports Star Award for his success in BMX riding. James started his BMX career in 2011 at only eight-years-old and has gone from strength to strength through his dedication to training and love for the sport. He is a dedicated member of the Penrith BMX Club and has participated in many competitions, both nationally and internationally. Coached by ex-Olympian and BMX Australia coach Luke Madill, James has had an outstanding few years on the track. Last year, James had the opportunity to compete in the BMX Junior Pro category and whilst he is still developing in this new category, made up of strong elite athletes, he finished 19th out of 49 athletes in the NSW State Series for Junior Pro Men. He also competed at the State Series, finishing third overall in the 17-24 Men's Cruiser Division. Well done James! I wish you all the best for your future in BMX riding.

**RAINE AND HORNE YAMBA**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)**—I offer my congratulations to the licensee of Raine and Horne Yamba, Denise Quick, who earlier this year was awarded a Chairman's Club Award in recognition of her personal sales success at the Raine and Horne State Awards Night. Denise's achievement identifies her as one of the elite and top producing real estate agents in Queensland and Northern NSW. Also recognised on the night was Tegan Willits who was nominated for Office Administrator of the Year. It is wonderful to see regional businesses within the Clarence Electorate shining on the bigger stage, well done to you both.

**RONALD CUSSEN, OAM**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—I highlight the contribution of, and congratulate, Mr Ronald Cussen OAM of Cronulla who received the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours list for service to the community, and to the building and construction industry. Mr Cussen has made significant contributions to the community through construction works such as completing civil works including Gynea Community Centre, Taren Point Animal Shelter and several fire stations. Mr Cussen is a former President and 60-year member of the Master Builders Association Southern Division and has also received the association's Gold Medal. Over his career, Mr Cussen has witnessed the development of the Shire through the construction of villas, unit blocks and family homes. Mr Cussen was awarded the Advanced Toastmaster Bronze by Port Hacking Toastmasters for his voluntary work. He has also given presentations for the National Heart Association and was the leader of 2nd Caringbah Scout Group for 18 years.

**CHRISTOPHER BULMER, OAM**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—I highlight the contribution of, and congratulate, Mr Christopher Bulmer OAM of Burraneer who received the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours list for service to the building and construction industry. Mr Bulmer is the Managing Partner of Greenwich Advisory, a business strategy and corporate real estate advisory service to a number of national and international businesses, as well as the New South Wales State Government. He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management and The Australian Institute of Building, an Associate of the Australian Property Institute, and a member of Australian Institute of Project Management. Mr Bulmer is actively involved in Indigenous business engagement. He has collaborated to create a national Indigenous facilities management business called Evolve FM. In 2014, Mr Bulmer founded a mentoring program called "ibuild our future", which connects senior industry executives in construction, property economics & development, to students at universities across NSW.

**PEGGY MAHY**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—After 6 years leading The Scots School Albury, Principal Peggy Mahy will step down from her role on July 3. Under her leadership, the Scots School has received numerous accolades including most recently under the Australian Education Awards. Ms Mahy steered the long-established school to develop its students into "world ready citizens", following the school's educational model of Life, Learning and Leading. Ms Mahy introduced International Baccalaureate primary years program in the junior school which aims to develop intellectual, emotional personal & social skills in students. I wish Peggy all the best and thank her for

her dedication to her students, staff and to furthering a role for the school in the cultural enrichment of the border community.

#### **OLD BAR LIONS CLUB**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I congratulate the Old Bar Lions Club on their initiative with their recent donation of two Buddy Benches to Old Bar Primary School. The buddy bench is a safe place where students who are feeling shy, lonely or having difficulty making friends sit. Students, ensure that those utilising the benches are included in activities to make them feel a part of the school. Secretary of the Old Bar Lions Club, Robyn Robinson said "our youth are very important and enhancing their wellbeing is a very worthwhile project." Deputy Principal at Old Bar Primary School, Fran Duperi said the benches are being very well utilised by the students. I would like to also thank the NSW Government, in particular Minister Sarah Mitchell for the recent \$9 million upgrade to the school with the construction of eight new classrooms. The donation of the buddy benches will ensure that those at the school are supported at a time when they think that they don't belong. Again, I thank the Old Bar Lions Club for providing a very worthwhile facility to the school.

#### **TUNCURRY STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I congratulate the Tuncurry State Emergency Service on successfully completing the construction of a new facility in Tuncurry. The construction was made possible with a funding grant of \$162,058 from the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Program Round 2. I was pleased to recently visit the completed project and meet with the Unit Commander, Greg Dodd to see firsthand the very impressive structure. Greg and his team very proudly hosted my visit. I would like to thank and congratulate the NSW Government for supporting Regional NSW with the Stronger Country Communities Program that has helped the Tuncurry State Emergency Service build and fit out the purpose built facility as well as providing further funding of \$5.53 million under the program to assist another 17 community projects in the Myall Lakes in this round of the program. The organisations that will receive the funding for their projects 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.

#### **LOMANDRA SCHOOL**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—Time and time again the teachers and staff at Lomandra School go well and truly beyond what it required or expected. The school's community pantry is the perfect example. More than 10 years ago the school – which caters for students with specific needs – established a hamper and breakfast club program. The initiative was known as the Lomandra Grow Together Program. However, the concept proved such a success that it began to supply hampers for more than 17 local schools, not just its own students' families. In 2018 the school opened up a community pantry in Leumeah to meet the ever-increasing demand. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic recently, the school and those working in the pantry were busier than normal. More families and local residents were in need of some extra help and like usual, the community pantry staff answered the call. While those who work at the pantry are happy to go about their work quietly and without fuss, it would be reminiscent of me not to acknowledge their contribution. Thank you to every person at Lomandra School's Community Pantry for your tireless efforts – particularly of late. It is truly appreciated by many in the Campbelltown community.

#### **MYALL CREEK MASSACRE**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I recognise that 182 years ago on 10 June at least 28 unarmed Aboriginal people were killed in the Myall Creek Massacre near to present day Bingara. There is usually a memorial ceremony held at the Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial site on the June long weekend which I've now attended for many years. This year that event could obviously not be held. That of course is no reason not to remember the event and note the importance of reconciliation. The massacre was followed by a trial of some of the perpetrators, one of the rare occasions in which killing of Aboriginals by Europeans resulted in legal proceedings. It is a sombre reminder that massacres were an inescapable part of the history of this land. Remembering frontier conflict and massacres is not to wear the black arm band but to tell the truth. Failing to do so is to wear a white blindfold.

#### **LEETON-NARRANDERA AUSTRALIAN AIR LEAGUE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to acknowledge the dedication of Captain Bob Manning and First Officer Craig Day at the Leeton-Narrandera branch of the Australian Air League. Captain Manning and First Officer Day both gave wonderful presentations at the RAAF World War 2 training rooms located within the Narrandera Airport recently, after we had the pleasure of presenting the crew with \$7,971 to improve their facilities with new flooring and a reverse cycle air-conditioner. Instructing Pilot Day informed me that the Training Hall is the only hall in Australia that was built for training cadets during World War 2, that is

still currently used for training young cadets, from 11 to 18 years of age. They have even home-built a simulator for training purposes, a more modern version of what they had during the Second World War. This basic aviation training is more than just about teaching students how to become pilots, it also instils many essential life lessons for these young people. The Air League rely on community fund raising and donations for survival and I personally hope this inspirational story does continue for many more years to come.

#### **NANCY MCGREGOR**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—It is with pleasure that I bring attention to the recognition of Mrs Nancy McGregor of Young who has been included in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours list as a recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia. I have known Nancy for a number of years and she is an integral member of the Young community and has worked tirelessly over the years in a number of different community groups, including: Patron of the Young and District Hospital Auxiliary; Patron of the Young Amateur Swimming Club; executive roles within the Young Ladies Golf Club; executive roles within the Girl Guides, Young; executive roles within the Young and District Netball Association; and member of the Local Health Advisory Committee of the Southern Slopes Area Health Council. Nancy's commitment to town of Young is evident in the roles she has taken on over the years and I am so pleased she has received this much deserved award.

#### **PORT HACKING LITTLE ATHLETICS CENTRE**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Port Hacking Little Athletics Centre who are the recipients of \$2,000 from the NSW Government's 2020 Local Sport Grant Program. Based at Sylvania Waters Athletics Track, Port Hacking Little Athletics Centre welcomes young athletes from around our Shire and beyond. The secured funding will be used to facilitate a field equipment upgrade project, replacing the well-used and worn existing field equipment. This will improve the quality and standard of equipment used by our local kids, including high jump mats and stands, javelins, shots and discuses, and allow more events to be run simultaneously on competition days. Of course none of this is possible without the hard-working volunteers behind Port Hacking Little Athletics Centre who work tirelessly throughout the competition season. I particularly acknowledge the 2019/20 season executive committee, including President Mark Laverance, Vice President Abe Yavala, Secretary Rachelle Harrington, Treasurer Cameron Burne, Equipment Manager Darren Bauer, Liz Wever, Sharon Potts, Heather Mitchell, Jenny Blanch, Ray Russell, David Chernich and Ron Impey. I thank Port Hacking Little Athletics Centre for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and extend my best wishes for their 43rd season.

#### **SYLVANIA BOWLING CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Sylvania Bowling Club who are the recipients of \$6,000 from the NSW Government's 2020 Local Sport Grant Program. Now in its 65th year of operation, Sylvania Bowling Club caters for both competitive and social bowlers seeking to stay active and engaged in our local community. The secured funding will facilitate the installation of 20 new sun shade shelters which will ensure that bowls participants have respite from the sun, particularly in the hotter months when the sport is played. Of course none of this is possible without the dedicated volunteers behind Sylvania Bowling Club who work tirelessly to serve our local community. I particularly acknowledge President Peter Sprotte, Vice President Andrew Jones, Secretary Keith Howell, Treasurer Tony Robins, Bowls Secretary Reg Harris and Directors Anthony Wiles and Robyn Mackenzie. I thank Sylvania Bowling Club for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and extend my best wishes for the resumption of typical club operations as COVID-19 restrictions continue to ease.

#### **HUNTER WETLANDS**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—When a deliberately-set fire ripped through the Hunter Wetlands Centre, an important local institution in the Wallsend Electorate, the local community rallied around. The Wetlands Centre received 131 donation and membership enquiries, and a 106 new memberships. The Hunter Wetlands Centre plays an important role in protecting the local ecosystem, educating about and advocating for this important part of the environment. I would like to acknowledge Ken Bayliss, CEO of the Wetlands Centre, and David Crofts, board chair, for their leadership during this trying time. Local residents and businesses from around the Wallsend Electorate and surrounding suburbs have chipped in with donations of cash, goods and services, helping to rebuild what was lost in the fire. The Wetlands Centre tell me that the public response is still coming in and is very generous. As the picture becomes clearer about what they'll need, they'll reach out to those who have offered to help.

#### **LIFELINE**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—Across Australia, every 30 seconds, Lifeline receives a call from someone in need. The number of calls per day have swollen by 50%. Lifeline Newcastle, is a 24 hour crisis support centre and will soon become a centralised hub for video counselling services thanks to a substantial donation from

NRMA Insurance and RACV going directly into Newcastle. The funds will go towards providing an extra 10 full time counsellors at Lifeline Newcastle. They will help provide online counselling across 16 different regions as well as running the local service. Regional Manager of Lifeline Hunter Central Coast, Robert Sams, advises that Lifeline is needed now, more than ever, with individuals and communities coping with drought, bushfires, COVID-19, soon having to pay full mortgages again, and the Jobkeeper subsidy coming to an end. A lot of people are struggling. Thank you to NRMA Insurance and RACV for the much needed funding boost to Lifeline, and thank you to Robert Sams and your team, for all the hard work that you do.

#### **KELLYVILLE ROUSE HILL MAGPIES AFL CLUB**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Kellyville Rouse Hill Magpies AFL Club, who have successfully brought the game of AFL to the people of the Hills. The club found great success last year, winning 3 premierships, and having 4 more teams playing finals footy. There's nothing more Australian than a barbecue at a local footy match, and so it was recently my pleasure to announce \$3,699 worth of funding to the club for a new barbecue installation, as well as the procurement of relevant software. 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 would like to congratulate and thank all committee members for their hard work in the running of the club, namely, Leisa and Jason Greasby, Steve Stewart, Kerry Jackson, Shane Sweep, Adrian Sutton, Andrew Green, Richard Basladynski, Craig Town, Scott and Susan Davis, Daniel Singleton, Lisa Cummins, Jo Stewart and Alex Hendry.

#### **EAST COAST EAGLES AFL CLUB**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the East Coast Eagles, who play in the Premier Division of AFL Sydney, and have been the premier competitive football club in the Hills for decades. In 2017, the club branched into women's football for the first time, and has achieved great success in both men's and women's football, having won 5 premierships since 2009. It was recently my pleasure to announce \$5,000 worth of funding to the club, to assist in the subsidisation of registration fees. This was part of the State's \$4.6 million Local Sport Grants Program, of which Castle Hill was the beneficiary of \$50,000. The club has been a stalwart of elite sport within my electorate for many years, and I would like to thank and congratulate its current committee of David Arndt, Jon Gawley, Bronwyn Bailey, Paul Eastman and Bethan Arndt.

#### **REFUGEE WEEK**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—I draw the attention of this Parliament to the fact that this week is Refugee Week and thanks the wonderful organisations working to support refugees and asylum seekers in NSW. This Refugee Week I am participating in the Social Outfit's Wear the Change 2020 challenge. The Social Outfit, located in the electorate of Newtown, employs people from refugee and new migrant backgrounds in ethical clothing production, retail and design. Wear the Change 2020 is an ethical fashion styling challenge to raise funds for The Social Outfit's non-profit community programs. I also wish to acknowledge the incredible work of the Asylum Seeker Centre, also located in Newtown. The Asylum Seeker Centre is a place of welcome for those in the community who are seeking asylum. They assist people by connecting them to support services, engaging the community in providing support and advocating for asylum seekers and by influencing policy and legal change. Finally, I wish to thank the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) for their incredible work providing psychological treatment and assistance to help refugees and asylum seekers heal from past trauma and rebuild their life in Australia.

#### **ARTEXPRESS**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—I would like to congratulate Ben Tavita, from Lurnea High School, for having his HSC major work selected for the virtual exhibition at ARTEXPRESS. Ben is among fifty students whose artworks were chosen from last year's HSC Visual Art examinations. The artworks are all displayed online, allowing the public to view the artworks through a virtual reality exhibition, like they are wandering through a real life gallery. With COVID-19 preventing a traditional ARTEXPRESS, it is amazing to see organisers coming up with an innovative way for everyone to still be able to experience the special artworks safely. It is great that the student's hard work is still being recognised during this time. Once again I'd like to congratulate Ben Tavita for this great achievement – and wish him the best of luck in the future. Thank you.

#### **MACARTHUR COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—I would acknowledge Macarthur Community College, who received funding from the NSW Government to assist them during this COVID-19 pandemic. The College is receiving an additional \$52,327 grant, to help retain staff and enhance the development of their online learning, as students had to learn from home. I would also like to thank the Hon. Geoff Lee, Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, for providing this funding, as it recognises the important role that Macarthur Community College in

the local community. Macarthur Community College are worthy recipients of this grant, as they strive to help vulnerable members of the local community gain the necessary skills and preparation they need to eventually enter the workforce. Once again I thank the Hon. Geoff Lee MP for this generous grant to Macarthur Community College, and I commend the College for continuing to provide support to local vulnerable students. Thank you.

### COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I want to draw the attention of the house to one of the community organisations that has stepped up in our local area during the COVID-19 pandemic – the Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre. I had the pleasure to meet the amazing team of volunteers and staff at the Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre who have been assisting of 200 people with weekly support during this crisis. Their team of 100 volunteers have provided over 1,000 hours of support. I want to acknowledge the ongoing work of the staff including Lisa Smajlov, Susan Hawkeswood, Steven Lowrie, Yulika Silva and Maddison Ramadge as well as some of the volunteers including Gina Morris, Kevin Parker, Vicki Ditcham, Rachel White, Jadie Bastow, Craig McAinsh, Jane Orr, Amy O’Toole, Yasmin Sadikot and Deb Ward. I also want to acknowledge everyone in the community who has supported the Peninsula Caring initiative via Facebook and beyond. This group of staff, volunteers and community members have been a vital lifeline for the families who have lost work, faced a reduction in income or just struggled to deal with the stress of the pandemic. Thank you so much.

### ALSTONVILLE CROQUET CLUB

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I formally congratulate Alstonville Croquet Club on the completion of phase one of the construction of their new dedicated clubhouse. Club President Bob Jemison and members of the Alstonville Croquet club have worked tirelessly over many years to see the new clubhouse come to fruition. With members aged 40 – 97 years old the Alstonville Croquet Club is a truly representative sporting group and holds a special place in the heart of Alstonville. The club is an important hub for many elderly members of the community and it is a beautiful and peaceful haven for competition, banter and connection amongst members. I wish the club all the best for many years to come and congratulate all members on this achievement.

### JAN OLLEY – BIRDLIFE AUSTRALIA AWARD

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I acknowledge Jan Olley of Ocean Shores who recently received a BirdLife Australia Distinguished Service award. This award is a formal acknowledgement of the enormous contribution to BirdLife Australia and its predecessor organisations made by voluntary members. I understand that through her work with Cooloolo Coastcare and Byron Bird Buddies, in association with BirdLife Northern NSW that Jan has been instrumental in protecting local shorebird nests and nesting habitats. Jan has instituted regular monitoring of nests as well as erecting protective fencing and signs to warn beachgoers of nests or chicks in the vicinity. In addition, she has also produced birdwatching brochures to assist with educating the community. Jan has long been an advocate for the protection birds and conservation of their habitat in our region and I am grateful for her work and pleased that it is being recognised formally.

### MOREE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise the commitment the members of the Moree and District Historical Society Inc. have demonstrated in the preservation and exhibition of the history of the Moree Plains in northwest New South Wales. All members have actively contributed to publications about the Moree Anzacs, the history found in local cemeteries, stories about indigenous families and early settlers including the unforgettable display and celebrations for the Sesquicentenary of Moree in 2012. At present the Society is in the process of establishing the historical museum in the former Moree Lands Office Building, a historical asset in itself which will become another point of interest and tourist attraction. I congratulate president Stephen Ritchie, vice president James Pritchard, Secretary Jenny Pritchard, Treasurer Jeff Greenaway and members George and Gwen Boland, Jeni and John Bruno, Sue Carter, Paul Covell, Barbara du Boulay, Sue Fitzgerald, Sue Greenaway, Betty Humphries, Julie Ireland, Allan and Denise Jenkins, Lewis Macey, Michael McNamara, Bruce Menzies, Dick O’Connor, Connie Potts, Jane Rohde, Kath Rummery, Marilyn Shearer, Loretta Silver, Marie Tattam, Cheryl Timmins, Lauren Winkley, Bette Montgomery, and Helen King. I commend the members for their meticulous work and the hours of their own time committed to the important preservation of history.

### MARTY VAN VEGCHEL

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Marty Van Vegchel of Moree on being awarded an Australian Corrections Medal (ACM) as a part of the 2020 Queen’s Birthday Honour List. Marty Van Vegchel has been an Officer with Corrective Services NSW since 2002 where he reported for duty at Moree immediately after completing his Primary Training. He has progressed to the rank of Senior Correctional Officer and shares his operational oversight of his work location



with a number of other Senior Correctional Officers. I congratulate Marty Van Vegchel on his prestigious award and contribution to the community. He is an example for all people on the values of working hard and achieving great success.

### **QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS 2020**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I congratulate four people in my Electorate of Lismore who were honoured in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours list – Lismore trio Dr Austin Curtin, Lyn Larsen and Chief Inspector Nicole Bruce, and Murwillumbah's Hugh Small. Lyn Larsen was awarded a member (AM) in the Order of Australia general division for her services to the game of cricket. Lyn captained Australia to a World Cup victory in 1988 and also captained New South Wales before serving as Australian team manager and working with the International Women's Cricket Council. Dr Austin Curtin received an OAM for his significant service to medicine, and to health outcomes in regional communities. The highly skilled surgeon has served with distinction on many health boards. Chief Inspector Nicole Bruce, a highly respected officer within the Richmond Local Area Command, was recognised with an Australian Police Medal. Nicole is currently district inspector in the Nimbin sector, the first woman to reach this rank in the Northern Region. Mr Hugh Small received an OAM for service to surf lifesaving and athletics. A stalwart of the Cudgen Headland SLSC, he has been a driving force behind the Murwillumbah Running Club and the Murwillumbah Swimming Club.

### **SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY GRADUATE LEADS THE WAY AGAINST COVID-19**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to congratulate Mr. Craig Burke, Chief Executive of Patienteer and his team for developing real-time analytics software that is used to improve patient care in NSW and the UK and now in the fight against Covid-19, with the development of the Patienteer Covid-19 module. Mr Burke used his experience as a nurse clinician and a process analyst to create software to better manage the flow of patients through the hospital system, from admission to discharge. Patienteer can save lives by providing critical real-time accurate information to clinicians about each patient's condition and available resources allowing them to act with precision. Recently, Mr Burke and I had the most interesting telephone conversation. We talked about here of course, his family, his company, plans for the future and his passion to better patient health outcomes. Born and raised in Grafton, Mr. Burke is an SCU Nursing Graduate (1998), who did a placement at Lismore Base Hospital. Mr Burke is a shining example of someone who grew up in regional NSW, attended our regional university, SCU, doing extraordinary things on the global stage. On behalf of our community I thank Mr Burke.

### **COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS DURING COVID-19**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I commend and congratulate many of the unsung heroes who helped keep our community intact, well supplied and supported throughout the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we would all recall, one of the largest and most contentious issues discussed during COVID-19 was the supply and provision of the bare household essentials. Turmoil erupted throughout the nation as misinformation and greed resulted in continued panic buying and mass-procurement of day-to-day essential items, disrupting the supply chain throughout our communities. Despite the chaos and uncertainty throughout this time, the hardworking and diligent staff from our local mixed businesses and supermarket supply chains went above and beyond each and every day, putting themselves in harm's way in order to support their local community while doing their best to keep us all safe. On behalf of a very grateful electorate, to each and every person who braved uncertainty and continued working at essential businesses and providing essential services, I extend our sincerest appreciation and admiration for your contributions throughout such an uncertain time and for any sacrifices you had to make in order to support of our local community throughout the pandemic.

### **CONGRATULATIONS BROTHER NICHOLAS HARSAS**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—Today I rise to commend and congratulate Brother Nicholas Harsas who was recently awarded an Order of Australia Medal as part of the Queen's Birthday honours for his unwavering dedication to education and the Catholic Church of Australia. Brother Nicholas Harsas, OAM has been teaching for more than 30 years and he has made a tremendous impact on schools and local communities throughout our region. The realisation that one has been teaching for a long time is never more apparent than when one is suddenly teaching the children of former students, which has happened numerous times to Brother Nicholas. As a former educator and the State Member for Fairfield, I have seen first-hand the enormous impact Brother Nicholas has had on so many lives around him. His passion, kindness, compassion and advocacy for students and their families has had such a positive impact on so many lives and for that, our community will be eternally grateful. We are all incredibly proud of Brother Nicholas and all he has achieved over the years as teacher, principal, mentor and Patrician Brother of St Patrick. On behalf of the Fairfield Electorate, thank you and congratulations Brother Nicholas.

**THOMAS SIMMONS – GREY WOLF BADGE**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Last weekend I had the honour of visiting the 1st Dubbo Scout Group and presenting Thomas Simmons with the Grey Wolf Badge. As someone who was a Cub myself, I know the value of the Scout movement and it was a privilege to be invited along, albeit in the COVID-19 environment the ceremony was a bit smaller than it may usually have been. Thomas is 11 years of age and started as a Joey Scout in 2015 and earned all badges, including the Joey Promise. He did this as part of a small cohort that started Joeys back up after it had been closed down for many years. He moved up to Cubs in late 2016 at the age of 8 and he has developed significant leadership skills. To earn the Grey Wolf, a person needs to show commitment to the cause and accumulate a series of badges over the course of their time in Cubs. Thomas has done just that, and he has done it with wonderful enthusiasm. He will move up from Cubs to Scouts next term and I wish him, and his very proud family, all the best for the future.

**RALPH HENESS OAM**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the impressive 63 years of charity work undertaken by Mr Ralph Heness of Peakhurst. Last year, Mr Heness was awarded an OAM for service to the community of Auburn. He was the founding member of the Community Pride Group of Auburn City Council, and a Citizen of the Year in 2006. Ralph was also the organiser of the Auburn Lidcombe Lions Club, and heads up the annual charity golf day. Additionally, he was also the recipient of seven district governor awards, and is extremely proud of his contributions to the Cash-A-Can recycling program. Another facet to his career was working in breakfast community radio as a volunteer broadcaster from 2008-2011. More impressively, Mr Heness also worked for NSW Bridges in fire service for over 40 years. Through his charitable endeavours Ralph has raised thousands of dollars over the years. I congratulate Mr Heness on his many years of service.

**NADIA AND ALF TAYLOR**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I inform the House of two local heroes of the Oatley electorate, Mr Alf and Mrs Nadia Taylor. Thousands of disadvantaged children around the world have been able to achieve an education and better living conditions because of the generosity and hard work of these Lugarno grandparents. Both Nadia and Alf have spent millions of dollars of their own money in building schools and factories to help communities in Africa, India and Latin America. For their efforts, Mr and Mrs Taylor were previously appointed Members of the Order of Australia for significant service to the community through philanthropic initiatives. They have been trustees of the Nadia and Alf Taylor Foundation since 2002 and professionally, they are co-founders and managing directors of food packaging and processing company, TNA Packaging Solutions. While on a business trip to Johannesburg the couple saw children being taught in shipping containers. This just was not on. I congratulate them both on this well-deserved honour.

**HAYMARKET FOUNDATION**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I congratulate the Haymarket Foundation on their innovative responses to the changing needs of people who are homeless. Haymarket adapted to focus on meeting individual needs on a pathway out of homelessness when their research showed many people were in an endless cycle of rough sleeping and emergency help. Instead of standard packages, they assess what is effective and adapt to get better outcomes. Only about one third of their clients have access to a GP, so Haymarket used the COVID-19 pandemic disruption to improve health access to vulnerable people using Telehealth. This will get early attention to health needs rather than worsening health needing costlier crisis treatment in hospital emergency departments and is vital help for chronic conditions like diabetes, asthma and heart problems. Staff help clients negotiate phone consultations and onsite nurses help with clinical assessment. Telehealth adds to the alcohol/drug counselling and psychology services Haymarket already provides. Resources for vulnerable people are always stretched and I commend Haymarket for their search to use their resources as effectively as possible to get better outcomes for people who need a home and support to get back on their feet.

**ROD MURPHY**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—On 24 March this year, Hunter business—and the Charlestown Electorate community—lost a titan. Mr Rod Murphy, who founded a fabrication business in Gateshead called R&R Murphy, passed away suddenly. Rod leaves behind a bright legacy. R&R Murphy, which has won business awards on the local and national stage, is considered to be a trailblazer in innovation. Rod, who emigrated to Australia from England, was a pioneer in his field, a man with a community-focused mind and an entrepreneurial spirit. Rod worked at Hunter companies before he and his wife Rosemarie partnered with another couple to start their business on a dirt factory floor. The company initially made Cleanaway bins and road tanker bodies before moving into mining and Defence contracting work when, to combat a business downturn, they expanded their business. I met with Rod on several occasions at functions and at his factory, and was always energised by our

conversation. His enthusiasm, vision and energy was remarkable and infectious. Hunter industry is all the better for his input, and is saddened by his passing. My condolences to Rosemarie and their children, Grant and Zoe, for their loss.

#### **DIANE QUADE**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—The education fraternity in Dubbo lost one of its greatest champions in late May when St Johns College Year 12 coordinator Diane Quade lost her battle with cancer at the age of just 55. Diane joined the school 26 years ago, and from the year 2000 through to her passing she was the person to guide the school's most senior students through their HSC year. She had a deep love of helping young men and women do their best at school and transition to the next stage of their lives - be it university, vocational training or straight into the workforce. My daughter Georgie graduated from Year 12 at the school just last year, so I have firsthand experience of the love and guidance Diane was able to provide. As well as her commitment to the students, she has been pivotal in helping countless teachers progress their own careers inside the college. Diane leaves behind a loving family, most notably her husband Michael and daughter Georgie, as well as a wide circle of friends who have been saddened by her loss. Our community is poorer for her passing. Vale Diane Quade.

#### **SOUTH COAST TEACHERS**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—I have been incredibly impressed with the skilful and thoughtful way teachers have continued to educate through the COVID-19 pandemic. Temporarily closing schools was a difficult decision, but necessary to ensure the health and safety of students, teachers, staff and their families. During this time the education of our children couldn't be put on hold indefinitely, and teachers across NSW rose to the challenge to provide classes online for their students. Not all parents were able keep their children home, and I also thank the teachers who continued to educate face to face on school grounds, providing a safe place for their students during difficult circumstances, threatened by the risk of the pandemic at its peak. I also want to thank the parents who were able to keep their children home during this time. Many were also working from home themselves, and their efforts are also worthy of praise. The education of our children is one of the highest priorities we have, and I'm grateful to the efforts of the Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Health, who alongside so many teachers were able to ensure that learning was able to continue these past few months.

#### **SOUTH COAST BUSINESSES**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—Small business is the lifeblood of the South Coast economy. It was heartbreaking to turn visitors away during the catastrophic bushfires. But we all knew it was the right thing to do; people's lives were more important, and we would have to make do. The restrictions necessary to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve the results that our state is now benefiting from added to that hurt. But those on the south coast are innovative and many were able to adapt to ensure limited trade continued. With many restrictions eased ahead of the Queen's Birthday Long Weekend it was a joy to once again see so many shops, cafes, restaurants, clubs and pubs with queues out the door. I thank the Premier, Treasurer, and Minister for Finance and Small Business for the financial assistance and guidance they have provided businesses across the state during this time, it has undoubtedly been a saviour for many. I am grateful to all businesses on the South Coast for the patience at this time, and am thankful for the work they do to support and serve locals and visitors alike.

#### **ST GEORGE DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale)**—St George District Netball Association are a fantastic organisation in my electorate operating netball competitions among local clubs in the St George and Sutherland Shire, servicing thousands and thousands of local players every year. The dedicated volunteers of the Association do an absolutely incredible job, and while I can't thank them all individually, I would like to personally acknowledge the Association executive, Peter Crawford, Margaret Bensley, Lucy Smith, Lara Mina and Sallianne Faulkner. The work of these people, and the many volunteers who support them in keeping the Association running keeps thousands of local residents, particularly young women, active and engaged. I can't thank them enough for all they do for our community. Although netball has been a high participation sport for many years, unfortunately funding commitments and support have not always been at the same level as those provided to other mass participation sports.

#### **GOLD LETTERS CLUB**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—The Golden Letters Club in Marrickville is an online community pen-pal service reaching out to people in need of support. In Australia, one in four seniors live alone and one in five experience social isolation. During this pandemic, as we physically isolate, social connection has never been more important. Community groups like Golden Letters are providing essential social links to vulnerable people

self-isolating due to age, disability and underlying health conditions. The group has over 200 members from across the inner west, who write to Marrickville residents in need of emotional support or a just a pen pal to help them through these challenging times. Community groups like Golden Letters aim to bring a little joy and connection during isolation and beyond. The group connects volunteers and has been the source of many great friendships. Thank you to all those inner westies who have taken the time to put pen to paper and write a letter to someone in need. Your letters have brought a smile to so many people when they needed it most.

### INNER WEST NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—COVID 19 has had a devastating impact on the Inner West's night time economy, with hundreds out of work and venues struggling to keep their heads above water. This has been particularly true for the small bars and live music venues that make the inner west such an eclectic, exciting place to live and work, but businesses have quickly adapted. The Sausage Factory has become a hub for local products and produce. Small bars like Temperance Society and Titus Jones have delivered inner westies with cocktails right to our door, pubs and restaurants have provided our favourite meals. The Red Rattler Theatre, Butchers Brew and Lazybones have streamed live performances right to our living rooms, giving local artists and musicians a space to play. With restrictions now lifting, our local night time economy needs even greater investment and support to help get these much-loved businesses back on their feet. Thank you to all the inner west businesses, hospitality workers, artists and delivery drivers for all your hard work during this pandemic.

### QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans)**—I wish to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of constituents of the Drummoyne electorate who have been recognised in the Queen's Birthday 2020 Honours List. I would like to congratulate the following constituents:

- Ms Bess Rosen AM of Abbotsford for significant service to women's sport, particularly hockey, to business, and to the community
- Mr Michael John Bailey OAM of Breakfast Point for service to rugby league, and to the community
- Mr Keith Mervyn Cowen OAM of Concord for service to arts administration
- Mr Paul John Zammit OAM of Concord for service to the parliaments of Australia and New South Wales, and to the community.

I am proud of the inspiring work of these individuals. I extend my congratulations to all of this year's Queen's Birthday Honours recipients, thank you for making a difference in the community.

### MR KINH TRAN

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta)**—I wish to acknowledge Mr Kinh Tran, who is a well-known individual in my community for his generosity in his charity work. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr Tran reached out to my office and wanted to donate Personal Protective Equipment to vulnerable organisations that were low in stock. Thanks to the generosity of Mr Tran, aged care facilities such as SummitCare in Canley Vale and the Cardinal Stepanic Aged Care facility received the much needed supplies. Without the generosity of individuals like Mr Tran, our communities would be in a much more vulnerable spot. Like I've mentioned in my previous speeches, adversity really brings the very best out of people. I wish Mr Tran well in his endeavours and look forward to supporting him in his future charitable causes.

### PAL SCHOOL

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta)**—I recognise students of Pal School, a school in which I've supported since it's early days. Recently, Naplan results were released and Pal School ranked 1st out of all schools in the Fairfield Local Government Area. Being the only Buddhist School in Australia, Pal School performed extremely well with an average score of 591.6 across literacy and numeracy tests. These results are a testament to the hard work that these students have put in over the past few months and demonstrate the hard work in which their teachers have put into educating them. I take this opportunity to also recognise all teachers in my electorate and beyond for their tremendous work over the past few weeks in supporting our students through this pandemic. I wish them all god speed as we navigate through the recovery period of this public health crisis, and also wish all HSC students well in completing their final exams over the coming months.

### SUTHERLAND SHIRE SQUADRON AUSTRALIAN AIR LEAGUE

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—The Australian Air League, Sutherland Shire Squadron based in Sutherland has long been recognised as a well respected community group which continues to grow. Recent regulatory changes now enable them to open their doors to budding female aviators in the shire. Traditionally in

NSW male and female participants had to operate separate male and female squadrons. However, with the changes, Sutherland Shire Squadron President Matthew Campbell conveyed to me the squadron's excitement to open their membership to female aviators in the local community for the first time in the Australian Air League's 86-year history. I commend the Sutherland Shire Squadron Australian Air League on this great opportunity for local women.

#### **HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI WOMEN'S SHELTER**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—I recognise the work of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter in my electorate of Davidson. They provide safe, temporary accommodation for up to 10 vulnerable women at a time. The COVID -19 restrictions have been difficult for all, but the situation for people forced into isolation with their abuser is especially poignant. The shelter does not have a permanent home, and the lease for the current location runs out in three months. This critical service wants to establish a safe and permanent home and has a bold fundraising plan. In conjunction with local branches of the Bendigo Bank, they aim to raise \$200,000 in ten days. Since opening in 2015, the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter has housed 331 women fleeing domestic violence and abuse. Last Year, 58 women found a Safe Place at the shelter. A further 46 women were helped by an outreach program, but 105 women couldn't be helped due to a shortage of resources. I commend the work of all involved in the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter and wish them success raising funds for a new permanent safe haven.

#### **DR MULAVANA PARVATHY OAM**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—Congratulations to Dr Mulavana Parvathy, who was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours with a Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to medicine and medical education. Dr Parvathy has committed over 35 years of her life to medicine and 20 to education in the region, starting her work with the Hunter New England Local Health District in 1985 as a GP and then taking on a senior lecturer role at the University of Newcastle in 2000. She has also served as a director for the International Medical Graduates Program, which assists overseas-trained doctors, and the Hospital Skills Program, which mentors and supports doctors. In addition Dr Parvathy is involved in the governance of the Workplace Based Assessment Program, which provides alternate routes for international doctors who wish to practice in Australia. Dr Parvathy has continued to practice as a GP while undertaking those extra roles demonstrating a profound commitment to the field of medicine, both in treating patients and supporting those around her. Dr Parvathy's work has undoubtedly contributed to building a stronger medical community, which benefits everyone. This recognition is much deserved.

#### **AARON KEARNEY, OAM**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—Congratulations to Aaron Kearney, who have has been recognised with a Medal of the Order Australia for his service to broadcast media as a radio presenter. Aaron has been a very familiar face and voice in the Hunter for over 20 years, most notably through his varied and award-winning work as an ABC broadcaster as a program host, sports commentator and emergency coverage, receiving numerous awards for this work. A highlight for many was the introduction of the Story Box, a segment which saw over 1000 locals tell their stories on radio. As well as being interesting, Story Box importantly showcased the Hunter's diversity and valued individual contributions to our community. Aaron has gone to develop a pioneering sports commentary development program for Australian Indigenous and Pacific Island communities, creating greater accessibility to sports and technology, and increasing opportunities for people in more remote regions. While Aaron's enormous contribution to radio could be quantified in years and awards, his commitment to innovation, inclusiveness and information cannot be assigned a number. Thank you, Aaron, for being a voice and person we can trust.

#### **NEIL LANGSTAFF**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise Port Macquarie's court registrar Neil Langstaff for reaching a remarkable milestone of 35 years of service in the NSW legal justice system. Respected and admired by his work colleagues, Neil's career as a registrar has literally taken him across the state, serving in a total of ninety courthouses with the longest assignments notably in Kiama and Port Macquarie. Neil has seen many changes to the justice system since he commenced his registrar role in 1985 in Kiama, from typewriters and old-style telephones to police stations with interlinked and advanced audio-visual network communications installed across the State. Neil has witnessed the gamut of society enter courthouses, often sadly many reoffending and with crimes evolving over time as police work was complemented with community awareness and engagement. In his downtime, Neil is heavily involved in Toastmasters as the regional director of five clubs and is passionately an advocate for domestic violence awareness, serving as an ambassador for White Ribbon Day since 2007. Recognised as a stalwart in his profession and a community leader by all accounts, Neil's 35-year career has ensured justice and accountability is upheld, while respect and integrity is maintained.

**PAUL HARRIS FELLOW JACK WILSON**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise Hastings Rotaract member and incoming President Jack Wilson for recently being recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow on Saturday the 13th June 2020 for his instrumental contribution to all things Rotary. To serve as a Rotarian in your community is a privilege and honour which requires a vision and commitment to supporting humanity, traits that I know Jack Wilson displays in his work ethic for Hastings Rotaract and the District 9650 RYLA program. Jack first became active in Rotary in 2016 after signing up to the 9650 RYLA program aimed at building leadership and communication skills amongst our youth. It made such a difference to Jack that in 2017 he help lead the program. A secondary maths teacher by trade, Jack is described as an administration workhorse for Rotaract as he ensures governance and compliance is maintained across all aspect of the Club. As a Charter Member of Hastings Rotaract, Jack was instrumental in founding the organisation and establishing operations for Hastings Rotaract. I am proud to acknowledge Jack as a fellow Rotarian who always strives to put “Service Above Self” in everything he does.

**QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I acknowledge the recipients of the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours in my electorate of North Shore. I would like to congratulate Mrs Gladys Wilmot of Mosman who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her significant service to sailing, and to dance education. I would also like to congratulate Dr William Trinh of Mosman who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to international humanitarian medical programs, and to optometry. And lastly I would like to congratulate Mr Mark Dobson of Wollstonecraft who was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal after his many years of service with Fire and Rescue New South Wales and for the distinguished work he has undertaken for first responders' mental health. Congratulations to all our local recipients in North Shore who have made our community proud for their outstanding contributions.

**CAMELOT HOMES AUSTRALIA**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I would like to congratulate Tom Bazdaric and his team at Camelot Homes for winning the 2020 HIA Australian Spec Home award. I note that Tom designed an outstanding home that showcased a mix of luxurious finishes and reclaimed materials. I also acknowledge that the prestigious HIA awards program is the ultimate platform to showcase those who excel in building exceptional homes, kitchens and bathrooms, and continues to offer members the opportunity to receive public recognition for their hard work.

**KRUZE RAPAEA**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I would like to congratulate Kruze Rapaea on his enormous generosity after he donated cupcakes to essential workers and other groups within the Camden community. I note that Kruze has been baking cupcakes with his mother, Tepaea O'Brien, since the age of 3 and currently runs Kucakes by Kruze on Instagram. I recognise the positive impact of Kruze's generosity has had on the local community in the Macarthur area.

**DR REBECCA NICOLE JOHNSON**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)**—As part of the Queen's Birthday Honours announcements I was so glad to hear that Dr Rebecca Johnson received an Order of Australia medal for significant service to wildlife forensic science and to young women scientists. Dr Johnson is a remarkable Australian and so deserving of this honour. As a conservation geneticist, she previously served as the former Chief Scientist of the Australian Museum and was director of the Australian Museum Research Institute from April 2015 until February 2020 this year. She currently serves as Chief Scientist of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC – the world's largest museum and research complex. I worked with Rebecca on issues when I was Environment Minister particularly in relation to the Koala genome project. This was a vital project and an Australian-first. She is an adjunct Professor of the University of Sydney and holds an Alumni Award for Professional Achievement. She has also been recognised as one of the 2016 Westpac 100 Women of Influence in Australia for her work. Congratulations Rebecca, you so deserve it!

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:45  
until Tuesday 28 July at 12:00.**