



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday, 29 July 2020**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday, 29 July 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 first two notices of motions that were given took 45 seconds and 50 seconds respectively. I am putting members on notice that there now is a firm requirement that the giving of notices of motions stay within the 30-second limit. If they do not, some members will miss out on giving notice of their motions; members may miss out today.

*Later,*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Murray will stop. I sit the member down.

*Later,*

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the member for Oatley to remain silent.

## *Bills*

### **DEFAMATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Mark Speakman, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (09:45:45):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Defamation Amendment Bill 2020. It has been 15 years since the New South Wales Defamation Act 2005 was passed. That Act implemented the model defamation provisions [MDPs], which were agreed to by the former Standing Committee of Attorneys-General [SCAG] in late 2004. The primary object of the model defamation provisions was to achieve national uniformity—which is no mean feat. The other objects of the model laws remain equally relevant today. These include ensuring that defamation law does not place unreasonable limits on freedom of expression and, in particular, on the publication and discussion of matters of public interest and importance; providing effective and fair remedies for persons whose reputations are harmed by the publication of defamatory matter; and promoting speedy and non-litigious methods of resolving disputes.

The world has changed since 2005. The digital age has evolved in ways that the SCAG could not have imagined. The law of defamation was once the domain of big media and high-profile individuals, both having deep pockets to pay for expensive lawyers. With the growth of Google, Facebook and Twitter, ordinary people can now become publishers with the tap of a button. Social media has democratised defamation. A 2018 report by the University of Technology Sydney, Centre for Media Transition, found that it is becoming more and more common for private individuals to be plaintiffs in defamation actions. The report also found that in 2017 more than 50 per cent of defamation matters involved digital publications—about triple the 15 per cent of cases in 2007. The report also found that for the period 2013 to 2017 New South Wales was the preferred forum for defamation actions. More matters reached a substantial decision in New South Wales than in all other Australian jurisdictions combined.

The growth of social media has paralleled the rising number of defamation matters in our courts. In September 2019 Matt Collins, QC, gave an address to the National Press Club of Australia. During his address he reflected on the following: First, between 2014 and 2018 there were 268 references to defamation law in the

decisions of superior courts in the United Kingdom compared with 577 in Australia. Of those 577 references, 312 came from New South Wales. On a per capita basis, superior courts in Sydney considered defamation more than 10 times as frequently as did courts in London. As the objects of the Model Defamation Provisions make clear, a person whose reputation is harmed by the publication of defamatory matter should have access to effective and fair remedy but this needs to be balanced against the spiralling numbers of expensive, stressful but ultimately minor matters in our courts, many of which could be solved better over a coffee or a barbecue or even a handshake, the legal costs of which are nil. These are some of the issues that the bill seeks to remedy.

In 2018 the then New South Wales Department of Justice completed a statutory review of the Defamation Act 2005. The review identified a number of provisions in the Act and, by implication, a number of provisions in the Model Defamation Provisions that would benefit from amendment or modernisation. In accordance with the Model Defamation Provisions Intergovernmental Agreement, I referred the New South Wales statutory review to the Council of Attorneys-General [CAG] and recommended that the defamation law working group be reconvened to review the model laws. The CAG agreed. Later that year an ambitious timetable was agreed that would enable all jurisdictions to begin enacting changes to their defamation legislation by the middle of 2020.

Led by the New South Wales Department of Communities and Justice, the review of the Model Defamation Provisions has involved detailed policy work and two rounds of stakeholder consultation. A discussion paper was released in early 2019 inviting stakeholder submissions. Forty-four submissions were received and three stakeholder roundtables were held. Six main themes emerged from stakeholder submissions: first, the urgent need for the model laws to be modernised to adapt to digital communications, for example, by addressing the multiple publication rule, which means that for online material the one-year limitation period is effectively redundant; and, second, the increasing use of defamation law for trivial and vexatious matters, including neighbour disputes and instances where individuals sue for comments made on digital platforms. Submissions indicated that these matters tend to be relatively minor and with low damages but result in disproportionately high legal costs for both the plaintiff and the defendant. Minor claims are also placing a substantial burden on court resources.

The other main themes were: third, parties not having sufficient incentives to resolve disputes without resorting to litigation; fourth, the need for a dedicated public interest defence to protect the ability of journalists and media organisations to report on matters of public concern; and, fifth, for those jurisdictions in which defamation proceedings may be tried by jury, the respective roles of judges and juries. This was a particular issue in relation to the determination of defences where the reflection of broader community standards and expectations is important. The sixth main theme related to a number of provisions requiring clarification and refinement to ensure they operate as originally intended.

The Defamation Working Party, which comprises representatives from all jurisdictions, considered the issues raised by stakeholders and developed options for reform. In late 2019 exposure draft Model Defamation Amendment Provisions [MDAPs] were released for public consultation. Thirty-six submissions were received and another stakeholder roundtable was held. Changes were subsequently made to the MDAPs to address stakeholder feedback. The CAG agreed to the final MDAPs at a meeting on Monday 27 July. Stakeholders who have engaged with the review include peak legal bodies, academics, digital platforms, media companies, consumer groups, legal representatives for plaintiffs and defendants and individuals with experience in bringing or defending defamation claims. I thank everyone who has contributed their expertise, insights and experiences to inform this process.

The Model Defamation Amendment Provisions agreed by the CAG are far-reaching. The ultimate aim is to strike a better balance between, on the one hand, providing fair remedies for a person whose reputation is harmed by a publication and, on the other hand, ensuring defamation law does not place unreasonable limits on freedom of expression, particularly about matters of public interest. These are the objects of the original Model Defamation Provisions but with the passage of time and the rise of digital platforms we need reform to restore the balance between them.

The bill achieves this by introducing a serious-harm threshold, generally to be determined by the judicial officer as soon as practicable before the trial; by clarifying which corporations may have a cause of action; by making it mandatory to issue a concerns notice before proceedings can be commenced and clarifying the form, content and timing of concerns notices and offers to make amends; by clarifying that a defendant may plead back imputations relied on by the plaintiff to establish the defence of contextual truth; by introducing a new defence for the publication of defamatory matter concerning an issue of public interest; by introducing a new defence for peer-reviewed matters published in academic or scientific journals; by clarifying the operation of the defence of honest opinion; and by clarifying that the cap on damages for non-economic loss sets the upper limit of a scale and that aggravated damages are to be awarded separately.

Further, the bill achieves this by requiring plaintiffs to seek leave from the court to commence proceedings against associated defendants for claims relating to the same matter; by providing that an election to trial by jury



can be revoked only with the consent of all the parties or with the leave of the court on the application of a party; by giving the court discretion to determine costs if a party dies after proceedings have commenced if it is in the interests of justice to do so; and by introducing a single publication rule to provide that the applicable one-year limitation period runs from the date of first publication. For electronic publications this is the date the material is first uploaded to the internet for access or sent electronically to a recipient. Further, the bill provides for the limitation period to be extended to enable pre-trial processes to be concluded and to provide courts with greater flexibility to extend it and allows for service by email where an email address is specified by the recipient for the giving or service of documents.

The CAG agreement to those changes marks the conclusion of the first stage of defamation reforms. That first stage focused on those issues affecting the Model Defamation Provisions, which were regarded as well understood and longstanding. The attorneys-general have also agreed to a second stage of reforms. That stage will focus on the responsibilities and liability of digital platforms for defamatory content published online. This raises complex and technical issues that require further consideration and consultation. It is expected that a discussion paper will be released for consultation at the end of this year. I now turn to the detail of the bill.

The bill amends the Defamation Act 2005 and the Limitation Act 1969. The bill's main provisions, which I will outline, implement the Model Defamation Amendment Provisions that I have just described. First, I deal with the amendment of the Defamation Act 2005. Schedule 1 [1] to the bill inserts five defined terms into the section 4 definitions. Each of those terms relate to substantive changes to the Act that I will cover in context. Section 9 of the Defamation Act provides that generally a corporation does not have a cause of action for defamation. The rationale for this is that harm to reputation affects natural persons. The concept of hurt feelings does not apply to corporations. It is also considered that corporations have recourse to alternative causes of action as well as the capacity to protect their reputations through other means.

However, section 9 does preserve the ability of a corporation to sue for defamation if it is a non-profit organisation or if it employs fewer than 10 people and is not related to another corporation. Those corporations are referred to as "excluded corporations". Those corporations are less likely to have the resources to pursue alternative causes of action and may be disproportionately affected by defamatory publication. In consultations, stakeholders raised the need to clarify the definition of "excluded corporation". Section 9 does not define the term "employee", so it carries its ordinary meaning. This means it does not include independent contractors and other non-employees. However, those people may play major roles in the operations of the corporation. The inability to count these kinds of people as employees could enable some larger corporations operating for financial gain to avoid the general prohibition on corporations suing for defamation because of the way their businesses are structured.

To address this problem, schedule 1 [4] will amend section 9 to include a definition of "employee" that includes any individual, whether or not an independent contractor, who is both engaged in the day-to-day operations of the corporation, other than as a volunteer, and is subject to the control and direction of the corporation. Schedule 1 [3] also removes subsection (4) of section 9, which provides that in determining whether a corporation is related to another corporation, section 50 of the Corporations Act 2001 of the Commonwealth applies as if references to bodies corporate in that section were references to corporations within the meaning of section 9.

Schedule 1 [2] replaces "is not related to another corporation" in section 9 (2) with "is not an associated entity of another corporation". "Associated entity" is one of the defined terms added to section 4 Definitions by schedule 1 [1]. It has the same meaning as in section 50AAA of the Corporations Act 2001 of the Commonwealth. This change was suggested by a number of stakeholders. The practical difference between the definitions is that related bodies corporate are holding companies and subsidiaries that are related. In contrast, the definition of "associated entity" looks to the level of control between an associate and the principal of another entity as well as the level of investment an associate has over a corporation, regardless of the formal structure.

Finally, schedule 1 [1] inserts a definition of "excluded corporation", with reference to section 9, to facilitate use of the term throughout the Act. Section 10 of the Defamation Act prevents a person, including a representative of a deceased person, asserting, continuing or enforcing a cause of action for defamation in relation to the publication of a defamatory matter about or by a deceased person. Schedule 1 [5] inserts new subsection (2) to provide that if it is in the interests of justice to do so, a court is not prevented from determining costs for defamation proceedings discontinued because of the death of a party. Stakeholders raised significant concerns that defamation law is increasingly being used for trivial, spurious and vexatious backyard claims. The costs and stress of defending a defamation claim can be prohibitive for private individuals. As the Law Council noted in its submission responding to the discussion paper:

The case management of [proceedings between self-represented natural persons] invariably involves a disproportionate amount of judicial time and resources when the likely award of damages and vindication will be small or the meanings contended for are barely,

if at all, defamatory. On this basis, stakeholders overwhelmingly supported the introduction of a serious harm threshold. The bill includes a provision similar to the approach taken in the Defamation Act 2013 of the United Kingdom. Schedule 1 [6] inserts new section 10A into the Act to make it an element of the cause of action for defamation for the plaintiff to prove that the publication of the defamatory matter has caused, or is likely to cause, serious harm to the reputation of the plaintiff. Corporations that are not excluded from suing for defamation will also have to prove serious financial loss. To ensure that the serious harm threshold performs its intended function of filtering out trivial claims, new subsection (5) requires that, if raised by a party, the judicial officer is to determine whether the element is established as soon as practicable before the trial commences unless there are special circumstances justifying postponement. As the explanatory note to the bill makes clear:

The purpose of the procedure is to encourage the early resolution of defamation proceedings by enabling the issue to be dealt with as a threshold issue.

Because serious harm is now a required element to be proven by the plaintiff under the reforms, the section 33 defence of triviality will no longer have any work to do. Schedule 1 [32], therefore, omits section 33 from the Act. One of the objects of the Defamation Act 2005 is to promote speedy and non-litigious methods of dispute resolution. Part 3 of the Act establishes a procedure to enable parties to settle disputes without the need for expensive litigation by encouraging publishers to make a reasonable offer to make amends to the aggrieved person. If the aggrieved person does not accept an offer that was reasonable in all the circumstances, the publisher may establish a defence in any subsequent defamation action.

Stakeholders identified a range of issues with the provisions in part 3. They suggested that too many defamation actions proceed to trial as there is insufficient incentive for parties to engage in non-litigious dispute resolution. The bill proposes to address those concerns by clarifying the dispute resolution mechanisms in the Act. Schedule 1 [7] changes the title of the division to "Concerns notices and offers to make amends". A key issue raised by stakeholders is that there is no requirement for an aggrieved person to issue a concerns notice. Stakeholders, including The Law Society of New South Wales, identified the necessity of providing that concerns notices be mandatory, saying:

Without this step, the offer to make amends process may lack potency and, in some instances, may be overlooked.

Schedule 1 [9] inserts new section 12B. The purpose of the section is to make it mandatory for an aggrieved person to issue a concerns notice. New section 12B provides that an aggrieved person cannot commence defamation proceedings unless, first, they have given the proposed defendant a concerns notice that particularises the imputations of the defamatory material and, second, the applicable period for an offer to make amends has elapsed. The court may grant leave for proceedings to be commenced before the applicable period has elapsed but only if it is just and reasonable to do so or if the commencement of proceedings after the applicable period would contravene the limitation law because the court would have ceased to have power to extend the limitation period.

Schedule 1 [8] inserts new section 12A. It includes some of the provisions relating to the form and contents of concerns notices that are currently in section 14. New section 12A also includes new provisions such as that requiring the aggrieved person to indicate to the publisher the serious harm to reputation caused by or likely to be caused by the publication. If an aggrieved person is a corporation capable of bringing an action, it must detail the serious financial loss caused or likely to be caused by the publication. That is intended to enhance the concerns notice process by providing the publisher with sufficient information on which to make a reasonable offer of amends. It will also encourage the aggrieved person to turn their mind to the serious harm threshold at the time of preparing the concerns notice. An aggrieved person will also be required to specify the location where the matter in question can be accessed, for example, the webpage address. That is to address challenges identified by stakeholders in identifying the publication that is the subject of a concerns notice. New subsection 12A (2) also makes it clear that a document that is required to be filed or lodged to commence defamation proceedings cannot be used as a concerns notice.

Schedule 1 [1] inserts into section 4 a statement that "concerns notice" is defined by section 12A. Schedule 1 [1] also inserts a definition for "further particulars notice". That is added to section 4 and refers to section 12A (3), which provides that if a concerns notice fails to adequately particularise the information required to be in a concerns notice, the publisher may give the aggrieved person a written notice requesting that the aggrieved person provide reasonable further particulars, in other words, a further particulars notice. Schedule 1 [1] inserts into the definition section, which is section 4, that any applicable period for an offer to make amends is defined by section 14. Schedule 1 [10] and [11] amend section 14 to provide that the applicable period for an offer to make amends is as follows: 28 days since the publisher was given a concerns notice by the aggrieved person, or if the aggrieved person provides further particulars in response to a further particulars notice more than 14 days after the original concerns notice was given, then the publisher has 14 days from the date of receiving the further particulars in which to make an offer of amends. That may have the effect of extending the 28-day period.

The extension applies only once, in respect of the first request for reasonable further particulars. Currently there is no requirement for how long an offer to make amends must be kept open for acceptance. Schedule 1 [12] inserts a new provision requiring that an offer to make amends must be open for acceptance for at least 28 days commencing on the day the offer is made. Section 15 (1) (d) currently provides that an offer to make amends "must include an offer to publish, or join in publishing, a reasonable correction of the matter in question". Some stakeholders submitted that this incorrectly assumes that every matter complained about is capable of a reasonable correction. In some instances the complaint may not relate to a factual inaccuracy but to an omission of contextual information, which cannot be corrected as such. Schedule 1 [13] amends section 15 (1) (d) to provide that the mandatory requirement for an offer to make amends may be fulfilled by an offer to publish "a clarification of or additional information about" the matter in question.

Schedule 1 [14], [15], [16] and [17] make structural changes to delineate clearly between matters that must be included in an offer to make amends under section 15 (1) and matters that may be included under proposed new section 15 (1) (a). An apology may be included but is not required. New section 15 (1) (a) also makes it clear that an offer to make amends can include an offer to remove the matter from a website. Section 14 (1) of the Defamation Act states currently that an offer to make amends cannot be made if 28 days have elapsed since the publisher was given a concerns notice or after the delivery of a defence. However, section 18 (1) (a) provides a defence if the publisher made a reasonable offer as soon as practicable after becoming aware that the matter was defamatory and at any time before the trial when they were ready and willing to carry out the terms of the offer.

Stakeholders submitted that the interaction between the two sections is confusing. Schedule 1 [18] omits section 18 (1) (a) and replaces it with a requirement that the publisher makes the offer as soon as reasonably practicable after being given a concerns notice and, in any event, within the applicable period for an offer to make amends. That indicates to publishers that they must act quickly where possible, while allowing sufficient time for more complex matters. Schedule 1 [19] removes the words "at any time before the trial" from section 18 (1) (b). That is to make clear that the defence can still be relied on by the publisher if they remain ready and willing to carry out the terms of the offer during the trial. Finally, schedule 1 [20] inserts new section 18 (3), providing that the judicial officer, rather than the jury, is to determine whether the defence under section 18 is established.

Schedule 1 [23] and [24] make consequential amendments to section 22 of the Act concerning the respective roles of judicial officers and juries to recognise that the determination of the defence is a matter for the judicial officer rather than the jury. Section 21 of the Defamation Act enables a party to defamation proceedings to elect to have a jury trial. However, it does not indicate expressly whether an election to have a jury trial can be revoked by a party once it is made. There is competing precedent about whether a party's election to trial by jury can be unilaterally revoked. In *Chel v Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd (No 2)* [2015] NSWCA 379 the New South Wales Court of Appeal held this is impermissible. However, in *Kencian v Watney* [2015] QCA 212 the Queensland Court of Appeal held it is permitted.

Schedule 1 [22] omits section 21 (3) and replaces it with provisions that enable an election to trial by jury to be revoked with the consent of all the parties to the proceedings or, if all the parties do not consent, with the leave of the court on the application of a party. The court will be permitted to grant leave only if satisfied it is in the interests of justice for the election to be revoked. Like the discretion to order there be no jury trial, the discretion to allow a revocation of an election is not intended to allow the election to be displaced lightly. An example where it might be in the interests of justice to allow a revocation is if pre-trial publicity has created an unacceptable climate of hostility or prejudice against a party. Schedule 1 [21] relocates section 21 (3) to fall after section 21 (1) as section 21 (1) (a). Section 21 (1) states:

Unless the court orders otherwise, a plaintiff or defendant in defamation proceedings may elect for the proceedings to be tried by jury.

New subsection (1) (a) provides that, without limiting subsection (1), a court may order that defamation proceedings are not to be tried by jury if the trial requires a prolonged examination of records or the trial involves a technical, scientific or other issue that cannot be conveniently considered and resolved by a jury. It is logical that these subsections sit together as the exercise of this ability to dispense with a jury will usually occur when an election is sought. Currently the Act does not prevent a person bringing defamation proceedings against persons who are closely associated with a previously sued defendant at the time of the publication, for example, employees or contractors. This can result in multiple proceedings in respect of the same matter, simply because the plaintiff chooses to sue an associate rather than the previous defendant.

Schedule 1 [25] omits current section 23 and replaces it with new section 23 entitled, "Leave required for multiple proceedings in relation to publication of same defamatory matter". The effect of this section will be that leave of the court will now be required to bring further defamation proceedings against associates of the previous defendant in respect of the same or like matter. Associates of the previous defendant include employees of the defendant, persons publishing matters as contractors of the defendant and associated entities of the defendant or

employees or contractors of these associated entities. "Associated entity" has the same meaning as in section 50AAA of the Commonwealth Corporations Act 2001.

The purpose of the defence of contextual truth in section 26 of the Defamation Act is to deal with circumstances where there are a number of imputations carried by the matter and the plaintiff has chosen to impugn one or more but not all of them. In this circumstance a defendant may argue that the substantial truth of the contextual imputations means that the impugned defamatory imputations do not further harm the plaintiff's reputation. Section 26 was intended to reflect section 16 of the now repealed Defamation Act 1974. Under that Act it was accepted practice that the defendant could plead the substantial truth of both imputations that the plaintiff had not pleaded and imputations that the plaintiff had pleaded, known as "pleading back".

However, the Court of Appeal in *Besser v Kermode* [2011] NSWCA 174 has held that the phrase "in addition to the defamatory imputations of which the plaintiff complains" in current section 26 (a) precludes the defendant from pleading back any imputation that the plaintiff had pleaded as a contextual imputation to establish a defence of contextual truth. This is one of the longstanding issues affecting the model defamation provisions widely acknowledged as requiring resolution. Professor David Rolph, who contributed extensively to these reforms via his position on the Defamation Working Party's expert panel, submitted that this reform is "urgent and overdue" and that:

The problems arising from the drafting of the defence of contextual truth are well-known to defamation practitioners and scholars. They must be fixed.

Schedule 1 [26] omits the current section and replaces it with a revised defence of contextual truth that makes it clear that a defendant may plead back imputations raised by the plaintiff. I now turn to one of the most significant reforms in this bill. One of the objects of the Act is to ensure that the law of defamation does not place unreasonable limits on freedom of expression, in particular on the publication and discussion of matters of public interest and importance. The Act includes a defence of qualified privilege to provide protection in a range of situations where there is a moral or legal duty to make what might otherwise be defamatory statements. One of the key messages conveyed to the Defamation Working Party is that this defence does not adequately protect publication regarding matters of public interest. Submissions noted that the defence has not been successfully argued by a mass media defendant since it was introduced.

That is not to say that in all those cases defendants ought to have succeeded. But the absence of any successful defence on this ground by a mass media publication suggests that the defence does not achieve the object of facilitating discussion on matters of public importance. Many stakeholders therefore submitted that we need a dedicated public interest defence to protect the ability of journalists and media organisations to publish on matters of public concern without fear of defamation litigation. This exists in the United Kingdom, Canada and more recently New Zealand; it will now exist in New South Wales and ultimately across Australia. The bill seeks to introduce a new public interest defence modelled on section 4 of the United Kingdom Defamation Act 2013.

Schedule 1 [27] inserts after section 29 new section 29A entitled, "Defence of publication of matter concerning issue of public interest". It will be a defence to the publication of defamatory matter if the defendant proves that both the matter concerns an issue of public interest and the defendant reasonably believed the publication of the matter was in the public interest. In determining whether the defence is established a court must take into account all the circumstances of the case. That is why the defence also includes a list of factors the court may take into account in assessing the defence. The purpose of identifying these factors is to provide some non-exhaustive guidance to the court. Some stakeholders have expressed concern that courts will inevitably treat the list of factors as a checklist. I wish to be very clear that the CAG's intention is that not all, or any, of these matters need to be considered if they are not relevant to the matter at hand. It is not intended that the list be a mandatory checklist. I note two factors. The first is new section 29A (3) (f), which states:

... if a source of the information in the matter published is a person whose identity is being kept confidential, whether there is good reason for the person's identity to be kept confidential (including, for example, to comply with an applicable professional code or standard) ...

This addresses the fact that journalists' sources may be confidential and that journalists may be bound by ethical obligations not to reveal their sources. The inclusion of this factor is intended to mean that in appropriate cases the defence can still be made out in these circumstances. The other factor I note is new section 29A (3) (i), which states:

... the importance of freedom of expression in the discussion of issues of public interest. While this reflects the relevant object of the Act, it is an important reminder of its relevance to this defence particularly. Finally, new section 29A (3) provides that in defamation proceedings tried by jury it is the jury and not the judicial officer that is to determine whether the defence is established. Throughout the consultation process, in expressing support for a public interest defence, stakeholders made clear that the defence should be for the jury to determine. That is particularly important for a defence that will most often be relied upon for publications to the world at large. It is the jury that is able to represent the audience perspective and reflect broader community values in making the decision. The bill retains the existing

section 30 defence of qualified privilege. While the defence does not adequately protect public interest journalism, it does effectively protect narrower forms of communication.

Schedule 1 [28] omits section 30 (3), inserting instead a version that removes or modifies those current factors more relevant to the new public interest defence. That reduces overlap with new section 29A. A new subsection 3A is included to make clear that the factors are intended to provide non-exhaustive guidance to the court. They are not intended to be used as a mandatory checklist. New subsection 3B emphasises that it is not necessary to prove that the matter published concerned an issue of public interest in order to establish the defence of qualified privilege. Consultations revealed a degree of confusion regarding the role of judges and juries, where empanelled, in determining whether the defence of qualified privilege is established. Schedule 1 [29] provides that in defamation proceedings tried by jury, it is the jury and not the judicial officer that is to determine whether the defence is established. That is because it is the jury that is best placed to apply community standards in determining whether the elements of the defence are made out. Schedule 1 [30] inserts new section 30A entitled, "Defences concerning scientific or academic peer review".

In the consultation process for the reforms, there was general agreement by stakeholders about the importance of academics and scientists being able to express their views on matters that had been peer reviewed and to scrutinise material without the threat of defamation litigation. There are existing defences that offer some protection—for example, section 29, which provides that it is a defence to the publication of defamatory matter if the defendant proves that the matter was, or was contained in, a fair report of any proceedings of public concern, unless it was not published honestly for the information of the public or the advancement of education. However, there should be a clear, easily applied defence for academic inquiry. That new defence is modelled on section 6 of the United Kingdom's Defamation Act 2013. It provides a defence to the publication of defamatory matter if it was published in a scientific or academic journal and it relates to a scientific or academic issue and it was peer reviewed by someone with expertise in the scientific or academic issue concerned.

If a publication of defamatory matter in a scientific or academic journal that meets these conditions is defensible, so too is a publication of any assessment of the matter in the same journal by the person who undertook the peer review. The defence can be defeated only if the plaintiff proves that the defamatory matter or assessment was not published honestly for the information of the public or the advancement of education. Current section 31 provides a defence to the publication of defamatory matter if it is the expression of an opinion that is in the public interest and based on proper material, for example, material that is substantially true. Some stakeholders told the Defamation Working Party that the requirement stemming from case law that the opinion needs to set out the proper material on which it is based is no longer appropriate in the age of digital communications.

The purpose of the requirement is to ensure that the reader can judge for themselves the fairness of the statement based on the facts. A solution was put forward to amend section 31 to clarify how proper material is to be made apparent, particularly in the context of digital communications. Schedule 1 [31] omits current section 31 (5) and replaces it with a revised provision that requires that the proper material be set out in specific or general terms in the published matter, or be notorious, or be accessible from a reference, link or other access point included in the matter—for example, a hyperlink on a webpage—or otherwise apparent from the context in which the matter is published.

One of the most high-profile issues affecting the Model Defamation Provisions relates to the cap on damages for non-economic loss. The Act imposed a limit on the amount of damages that may be awarded for non-economic loss. The cap is adjusted annually; it is currently \$421,000. There are two well-known issues relating to the interpretation of section 35: first, whether the cap operates as a scale or as a cut-off; and, secondly, whether the cap still applies when a court is satisfied that aggravated damages should be awarded. Recent decisions, including *Bauer Media Pty Ltd v Wilson* [No. 2] [2018] VSCA 154, *Rush v Nationwide News Pty Ltd* [No. 7] [2019] FCA 550 and *Wagner v Harbour Radio Pty Ltd* [2018] QSC 201 concerned the latter issue in particular, finding that if aggravated damages are warranted, the cap on non-economic loss no longer applies. This is contrary to the original policy intent. As former Attorney-General Bob Debus said in his second reading speech introducing the Defamation Bill 2005:

The bill proposes an indexed cap of \$250,000 for general damages, retention of aggravated damages and abolition of exemplary damages, but no cap on economic loss. Aggravated damages may be awarded where the injury to the plaintiff has been exacerbated by the conduct of the defendant, for example, if the defendant has acted maliciously.

The purpose of introducing the cap on damages for non-economic loss was to ensure that the amounts awarded would be commensurate with awards of general damages in personal injury claims. The amount of damages awarded for non-economic loss should vary according to the harm to reputation in each case. At the same time, it is important that exorbitant amounts are not awarded. This is why there is a set limit. Schedule 1 [33] and [34] amend section 35 to make clear that the maximum amount sets the upper limit of the scale, with the maximum amount to be awarded only in a most serious case. An award of aggravated damages is to be made separately from any award of damages for non-economic loss. This means that the maximum amount continues to apply even if

the court is satisfied that aggravated damages are also warranted. This is not the same outcome as those matters decided by the Victorian Court of Appeal, the Federal Court and the Supreme Court of Queensland.

Schedule 1 [35], [36] and [37] amends section 44 entitled, "Giving of notices and other documents". This is to allow notices and other documents to be sent to an email address specified by the recipient for the giving or service of documents. Schedule 1 [39] provides that an amendment made to the Act applies only in relation to the publication of defamatory matter after the commencement of the amendment. Schedule 1 [38] enables the Governor to make regulations of a savings or transitional nature consequent on enactment of the amending Act.

I now turn to the amendments to the Limitation Act 1969, which are found in schedule 2 to the bill. The changes that I will now outline are designed to interact with reforms to the Defamation Act and to contribute towards modernising defamation law. This is in recognition of the nature of digital publications. While stakeholders supported making it mandatory to issue a concerns notice, some suggested that protections should be provided to aggrieved persons to ensure that the limitation period does not expire while the dispute resolution process is running. Otherwise the aggrieved person may have no option but to commence proceedings prior to the completion of the process. This could happen when the plaintiff only becomes aware of the defamatory material at the very end of the limitation period.

Schedule 2 [1] amends section 14B to provide for the one-year limitation period to be automatically extended by an additional period if a concerns notice is given to the proposed defendant on a day within the period of 56 days before the limitation period expires. The additional period aims to give the proposed defendant time to consider the concerns notice and the aggrieved person time to consider any offer to make amends. It is calculated by subtracting from 56 days any days remaining after the concerns notice is given until the one-year limitation period expires.

A cause of action in defamation arises when defamatory matter is published by the defendant. Section 14B of the Limitation Act provides that a person who has been defamed has one year from the date of publication to commence proceedings. This limitation period may be extended in certain circumstances to a period of up to three years from the date of publication. For online material publication occurs each time a third party downloads the material. This is known as the multiple publication rule. It means that the one-year limitation period effectively does not apply where there are subsequent downloads. This is one of the main problems affecting the model law and a clear example of how the law has not kept up with digital change.

Many stakeholders raised concerns about the multiple publication rule, arguing that it is ill-suited to the digital age. Some of the main concerns raised with the Defamation Working Party were that, first, digital publication and online archiving creates a potentially endless limitation period, as material may be stored and downloaded repeatedly for an indefinite period; second, there are evidentiary difficulties for publishers if material is downloaded long after the date of upload; and, third, plaintiffs should be required to sue promptly. There was strong support for the introduction of a single publication rule similar to that in the United Kingdom's Defamation Act. The University of Technology Sydney's Centre for Media Transition submitted that a single publication rule would be "responsive to the contemporary environment for media publication, distribution and consumption". Facebook submitted that "The proposal to introduce a single publication rule is a reform fit for the digital age" and that "This is a significant improvement on the law which recognises multiple publication". Professor David Rolph described the reform as overdue.

Schedule 2 [2] inserts new section 14C, entitled "Defamation—single publication rule". Under the single publication rule, the date of the first publication will be treated as the start date for the limitation period for all subsequent publications, except if the manner of a subsequent publication is materially different from the first publication. While the rule proposed is medium neutral, for electronic publications the date of first publication is the date the publication was first uploaded for access or sent to a recipient. This differs from the approach taken in the United Kingdom. However, as the Defamation Working Party noted in its background paper to the draft model defamation amendment provisions in December 2019, "it appears that [the approach taken in the UK] has resulted in challenges for parties trying to identify when the material was downloaded." For this reason, the CAG agreed that the date of publication should be the date on which the material is uploaded. This is more readily identifiable by referencing, for example, the date of an article, the date a website was edited or the time stamp on a social media post.

In determining whether the manner of a subsequent publication is materially different from the manner of the first publication, the court may have regard to the prominence the matter is given and the extent of the subsequent publication. Section 56A of the Limitation Act provides that a court may extend the limitation for a cause of action in defamation if satisfied that "it was not reasonable in the circumstances for the plaintiff to have commenced" proceedings within one year. The limitation period may be extended by up to three years from the date of publication. In the context of introducing a single publication rule, several stakeholders submitted that the standard for extending the limitation period is too high. Schedule 2 [3] amends section 56A to provide the court

with a discretion to extend the one-year limitation period to a maximum of three years from the date of publication if the plaintiff satisfies the court "that it is just and reasonable to allow an action to proceed". In determining whether to extend the limitation period, the court is required to have regard to all the circumstances of the case and, in particular, to a number of matters, including the length of and the reasons for the plaintiff's delay—for example, if the plaintiff did not become aware of the publication until after the end of the one-year period.

The single publication rule in new section 14C provides that for electronic publications the date of first publication is the date the publication was first uploaded for access or sent to a recipient. This is limited to determining the commencement of the limitation period. It does not change the law concerning when the elements for a cause of action for defamation are established, or the choice of law for determining that cause of action. To make this clear, schedule 2 [4] inserts new section 73A entitled "Defamation—effect of provisions concerning electronic defamatory publications on other laws". Schedule 2 [5] provides for the provisions concerning the extension of the limitation period to apply only in relation to publication of defamation matter after the commencement of the provisions, subject to one exception. The single publication rule applies to subsequent publications occurring after the commencement of the provision, even though the first publication was before commencement.

The proposed amendments to the Defamation Act 2005 and the Limitation Act 1969 are the culmination of an intense reform process. While drafting and introducing uniform law was a great achievement in 2005, the world has changed dramatically, particularly with respect to the growth of digital platforms. Balancing the objects of protecting reputations on the one hand and maintaining freedom of expression on the other hand is harder than ever, but it is worth the effort. I am confident that when enacted the amendments in the bill will go a long way to restoring that balance. This does not mark the end of the Council of Attorneys-General review of the Model Defamation Provisions. A second stage focusing on the liabilities and responsibilities of digital platforms for defamatory content published online is already progressing. Stage two will consider, among other issues, takedown procedures for defamatory content published online and the extension of privilege to statements made to employers about allegations of unlawful conduct. The impacts of the recent decision in *Voller v Nationwide News Pty Ltd* [2020] NSWCA 102 will be addressed. Speaking extra-judicially, Justice David Ipp once suggested that defamation is the Galapagos Islands of tort law, so bizarre has its evolution been. He said:

The giant turtles of defamation have evolved their own dialect, arcane customs and overly subtle distinctions. Defamation pleadings are as complex, pedantic and technical as anything known to Dickens. Interlocutory disputes continue to vex plaintiffs and there are often massive delays in getting defamation cases to trial. Damages seem out of proportion to damages awards in other categories of cases. Many of these problems are the product of legislation and improvements will be slow until the legislation is changed.

His Honour was probably right, but I believe these reforms go a long way to remedying these issues. I acknowledge the outstanding work of the Defamation Working Party led by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice. The Defamation Working Party consulted widely and thoroughly and delivered these reforms to an ambitious but necessary timetable. I particularly thank the following team from the department: Paul McNight, Stephen Bray, Katy Wood, Celia Barnett-Chu, Alison Bell, Grace Angwin, Andrew Forsyth, Netta Egoz, Camille White, and Sally McCausland. I thank the members of the Defamation Working Party's expert panel: Justice Lucy McCallum; Judge Judith Gibson; Solicitor General for New South Wales Michael Sexton, SC; Professor David Rolph; and Sandy Dawson, SC. I thank the drafters of the bill: Deputy Parliamentary Counsel John Ledda and Assistant Parliamentary Counsel Melissa Low. I believe that John was also involved in drafting the original model defamation provisions. Finally, I thank my staff past and present who have been involved throughout this process: Alex Gibson, Michael Peng, Damien Smith, Tim Smartt, Rebecca Meyer and Bran Black. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (COVID-19 HOUSING RESPONSE) BILL 2020**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Dominic Perrottet, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (10:44:52):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is six months almost to the day since Australia recorded its first case of COVID-19. When it first emerged very little was known about the virus. That has meant our efforts to fight it have had to evolve gradually and incrementally. At every step we have listened, we have learned and we have acted. Each measure we have introduced has been built upon the last and we have refined our response, working with the community, to make it more effective as time goes by. In six months we have come a long way, and that is a credit to everyone in the

State who has done their bit adapting to a challenging set of circumstances. But there is still a long way to go, and this bill reflects our commitment as a government to keep going.

In responding to COVID-19 our efforts have focused on two areas: first, safeguarding the health of the community and, secondly, supporting the economy through its biggest challenge in a century by keeping people in jobs and businesses in business as we move towards a safe, steady recovery. The bill before the House today represents another important step on each of those fronts. It will support our efforts to keep the most vulnerable members of our community safe by facilitating the Commonwealth Government's aged care retention bonus and it will stimulate jobs and help drive economic recovery, with targeted support for the residential construction sector. The bill achieves these outcomes by reducing the tax burden on employers in the aged care sector and on the construction of new homes. In this way the bill will ensure that taxes are not a barrier to either quality care for our older citizens or the recovery of the economy in the months and years ahead.

Before addressing the detail of the bill, it is important to provide some economic context. As members are well aware, the COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound effect on the global, national and New South Wales economies. The Australian economy fell by 0.3 per cent in the March quarter—its first decline in nine years. Restrictions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 are expected to cause a further drop in activity in the June quarter. This is expected to drive the Australian economy into a technical recession for the first time in 29 years. In May the Reserve Bank of Australia forecast that the national economy would decline around 10 per cent from peak to trough. Since then more stable conditions have led to a more optimistic outlook. However, a renewed outbreak in Victoria will weigh on the national economy and there is still significant uncertainty about what the final economic impact will look like.

The national economic downturn is being felt here in New South Wales too. At the time of the half-yearly review our economy was on track to grow by  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent over 2019-20 and return to trend growth of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent by 2021-22. Following a severe bushfire season and then the pandemic, the State economy is now expected to contract by around 10 per cent over the second half of the 2019-20 fiscal year. In practical terms, the economic impact has put thousands of businesses under intense pressure and cost hundreds of thousands of New South Wales citizens their jobs. From March to May this year the number of people employed in New South Wales fell by a staggering 269,300. The easing of restrictions led to an increase of 80,800 jobs in June but there are still 188,500 fewer people in work since March, just in our State.

Almost half a million individuals in New South Wales are receiving JobSeeker—up 92.2 per cent since March—and more than 335,000 businesses in New South Wales are relying on JobKeeper to get them through, supporting an estimated one million workers. One sector that faces significant challenges—a sector that will be crucial to our economic recovery—is construction. The construction sector is the third-largest industry in terms of gross value added in New South Wales. It contributed \$48 billion to the New South Wales economy in 2018-19 and has accounted for 7.7 per cent of New South Wales gross State product.

The sector employs around 376,000 workers in New South Wales, making it the fourth-largest employer of all industries in our State. That crucial industry, which employs so many people, has been hit especially hard by COVID-19. Construction accounts for the highest share of businesses across all industries that are on JobKeeper in New South Wales—around 16 per cent of the total. As of last week more than 54,000 construction businesses in New South Wales had applications for JobKeeper payments processed. While those businesses are trying to stay afloat, tens of thousands of construction jobs have disappeared. The Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] payroll data suggest that almost 4 per cent of construction jobs in New South Wales were lost between March 2020 and June 2020. Further falls in construction employment are anticipated over the next 12 months. That short-term pain is compounded by a difficult outlook for the sector. Dwelling investment is expected to contract by around a quarter between June 2019 and December 2020.

In light of those challenges, the bill proposes measures to support housing construction activity in the near-to-medium term when the labour market in New South Wales is expected to be weak. The proposed measures can be readily implemented and will support direct and indirect jobs in metropolitan and regional areas. They will support jobs in the construction industry and the benefits will flow into the broader economy. ABS data indicates that for every person employed in residential construction in New South Wales, a further 2.2 people on average are employed in supporting industries such as building materials, business services and distribution.

I turn now to the detail of the bill. Firstly, the bill will support housing construction and housing affordability by reducing taxes on the purchase of new homes by first home buyers. Stamp duty will be cut for first home buyers of new homes valued between \$650,000 and \$1 million. A first home buyer will pay no stamp duty when they purchase a new home valued up to \$800,000 and a concessional rate of duty will apply when purchasing a new home valued between \$800,000 and \$1 million. Purchases by first home buyers of existing homes valued below \$650,000 will continue to be exempt from stamp duty. The increased concession will be in place for one year for contracts exchanged from 1 August 2020. Stamp duty will also be cut for first home buyers



of vacant land, with exemptions applying for land valued up to \$400,000 and concessions applying for land valued up to \$500,000. That increases the current support which provides an exemption for land valued up to \$350,000 and concessions for land valued up to \$450,000.

By targeting new homes, the measure will support demand for new construction, which will have a flow-on effect on jobs, spending and the economy more broadly. The concession is limited to one year to provide timely support for the construction industry. The one-year limit will maximise the stimulus effect by encouraging buyers to take advantage of the concession sooner. Under the new policy, a first home buyer will save up to \$31,335 when they purchase a new home worth up to \$800,000. First home buyers of new properties valued between \$650,000 and \$1 million will be better off under the policy. Other first home buyers will continue to receive the existing duty exemption for purchases of new and existing homes valued up to \$650,000 and concessional duty for purchases of existing homes valued up to \$800,000.

The new measure builds on our Government's efforts to help more people in New South Wales get the keys to their first home. When we expanded our first home buyer concessions in 2017, the challenges our State was facing were very different. Improving housing affordability was one of the Government's top priorities. I am pleased to note that since July 2017 more than 93,000 first home buyers have taken advantage of the First Home Buyer Assistance scheme. Collectively they have saved more than \$1.4 billion in stamp duty. The new measures will open the door of home ownership to even more people in New South Wales. But more importantly in our present circumstances, the new tax cut will support jobs in a sector that is vital to our economy at a time when too many people in New South Wales find themselves out of work.

The second change that the bill implements relates to rental housing. The bill takes an important step in removing barriers presented by State taxes to the construction of build-to-rent developments. Build-to-rent housing refers to high-density developments built with the intention of creating high-quality rental housing for those who want it. Because they are built with the specific purpose of providing rental accommodation, build-to-rent developments offer greater security for tenants because they are better able to accommodate long-term leases. They also provide a counter-cyclical source of housing supply and improve housing diversity, offering more choice for New South Wales citizens in finding a place to call home. This form of housing has been hugely successful in other countries, particularly in areas such as Europe and the United States of America, but it is almost non-existent in Australia and New South Wales.

One of the barriers to build-to-rent development is the current structure of land tax in New South Wales. With a high tax-free threshold, the structure makes it far more profitable for a developer to sell off individual units to small, private landlords than to operate a professionally managed, large-scale rental development. To mitigate that tax discrepancy, the bill, in an Australian first, introduces a 50 per cent discount to land valuations for the purposes of calculating land tax. The discount applies to new build-to-rent developments until 2040. By limiting the benefit to new developments, the measure will help support new construction during this difficult time. Providing those benefits until 2040 ensures a period of certainty for investors, with the greatest benefit flowing to those who start building sooner. The bill will also effectively extend the existing carve-outs of developers from foreign investor surcharges to include build-to-rent. This is consistent with the Government's existing position that while the surcharges should generally apply to foreign owners of residential land, they should not inhibit new housing supply from coming online.

The bill also implements integrity measures to prevent this tax discount from being used for tax avoidance. A developer that subdivides land within 15 years of first gaining this tax benefit will be required to repay the benefit with interest. Finally, the bill provides for further details of the build-to-rent land tax policy to be set out in guidelines. The guidelines will be administered by the chief commissioner of taxation, including technical details of what constitutes a build-to-rent development. Both the first home buyer and build-to-rent elements of the bill are designed to drive the creation of new housing for the people of New South Wales. They will further contribute to improving housing affordability over the medium term and they will act as an important stimulus measure, supporting job creation in the near future to help get New South Wales working again and on the path to a robust recovery.

As our State begins the careful process of getting back into work, it is necessary to remain vigilant against the virus that has taken such a tragic toll. COVID-19 poses a greater threat to certain vulnerable demographics, particularly our older citizens. We can only open our economy safely if we take the appropriate steps to protect these vulnerable groups as much as possible from the effects of the virus. That means ensuring that the aged care sector has enough skilled workers to meet the rigorous demands of working with older citizens in the time of COVID-19. To support the continuity of the aged care workforce, the Commonwealth Government is funding the aged care workforce retention grant opportunity program. Under the program the Commonwealth will make two payments of up to \$800 per employee to aged care employers. The retention bonus payments will then be passed

on to staff. The first payment will be made to employers from July 2020 and the second payment from September 2020.

Under current New South Wales payroll tax laws those payments would be regarded as wages when passed on to employees. That would mean aged care employers would be required to pay tax on the retention bonuses, leaving them out of pocket. Clearly that is not the intention of the Commonwealth grant. Accordingly, schedule 4 to the bill provides an exemption from payroll tax for these payments to remove the disincentive for aged care employers to participate in the program. Members will recall passing legislation earlier this year to provide a similar payroll tax exemption for additional wages paid under the JobKeeper payment scheme. The bill will do the same for aged care workers who receive the bonus payment. In doing so, it will support the provision of the highest quality care for our older citizens to protect them from COVID-19. It will also signal our State's full support of the workers who are working tirelessly in the aged care sector every day. It is another measure that will more broadly help to keep people in jobs at a time when so many are being forced out of the workforce.

The provisions in this bill assist in getting New South Wales working again in the supply and the provision of housing to support people in finding new homes and to support the construction industry at a time when it is necessary and where it protects the health of our people. The bill complements the plan launched by the Premier to regenerate our economy through six key focus areas: a \$100 billion infrastructure pipeline; accelerated planning and precinct development; education and skills; digitisation; advanced manufacturing and local supply chains; and the reform of Federal financial relations. These major initiatives will be implemented one step at a time. This is how we must approach the road ahead. We know it will not be easy, we know that recovery will not happen overnight, but if we keep working, keep adapting and keep responding to the challenges as they arise, we will succeed. The provisions in this bill seek to achieve that. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (INFORMATION EXCHANGE) BILL 2020**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 18 June 2020.**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (11:01:10):** I lead for the Opposition in this House on the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020. Labor will reserve its final position on this bill until after it is debated in the upper House. Labor members intend to keep speaking with those who remain deeply worried about the spread of silicosis in New South Wales. This bill amends the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 so that NSW Health is no longer prohibited from notifying SafeWork NSW that a worker from a particular workplace has been diagnosed with silicosis if Health chooses to do so. SafeWork NSW is then meant to undertake compliance and enforcement checks at that workplace. While Labor will provide in principle support to any measures that might curb the explosion of silicosis cases across New South Wales, it believes this is a half-hearted measure from the Liberal-Nationals Government that ought to be strengthened.

The Minister is trying to pass off the bill as a dust diseases register but it does not establish a dust diseases register at all. In fact, it does nothing of the sort. New South Wales is experiencing a sharp rise in the number of people developing silicosis, a severe and irreversible occupational disease of the lung that can lead to an early death. Historically, New South Wales would average three to four diagnoses of silicosis each year. Patients would present in their 70s or 80s, having likely contracted the disease from exposure to dust while working in mining, quarrying or tunnelling industries.

In the 2018-19 financial year New South Wales identified 40 new known cases of silicosis. The new stratum of patients identified as stonemasons aged in their 30s and 40s who had been cutting manufactured stone, like Caesarstone, commonly found on kitchen benchtops. The latest figures we have for the previous financial year suggest more than 70 cases have been detected. Even though our State is likely to have the most cases of silicosis in Australia, we are substantially lagging behind the Queensland and Victorian State Labor governments in taking action to stop the nationwide rise of silicosis. Notwithstanding this bill, the New South Wales Government still has no comprehensive strategy to tackle silicosis in this State. The law and justice committee's recent report into the dust diseases scheme recommended:

That the NSW Government immediately establish the Silicosis Health Register and ensure that it captures not only diagnosed cases of silica-related disease but also screening results and investigative reports undertaken for workers exposed to crystalline silica.

This recommendation came from a committee chaired by a member of the National Party. I congratulate my colleagues from all parties in this place who made strong recommendations to fight the spread of this terrible but preventable occupational disease in New South Wales. It is such a shame that the Minister has failed to listen to their call. Labor is concerned that the bill before the House grants discretionary powers to NSW Health but weakens the potential of SafeWork NSW to crack down on workplaces where dust lingers. The health secretary

is under no obligation to disclose information to SafeWork. I simply ask the Minister to explain how SafeWork is able to undertake compliance and enforcement checks where information is not provided to it.

Further, as the Minister said in his second reading speech, the bill depends on the health Minister to declare silicosis as a scheduled health condition to make a silicosis diagnosis notifiable to NSW Health. Could the Minister please provide details of when that is expected to occur? The Minister has also quite embarrassingly missed the deadline of 1 July to have this notification system in place. Queensland introduced a notifiable dust diseases register last year. Here in New South Wales, despite having some of the highest numbers of cases, no comparable action has been taken by this Minister. Sadly, the result of this dithering and delay is that more workers are at risk of developing the debilitating and incurable disease. While we on this side will not stop this bill passing through this House, I reiterate our longstanding calls upon the Minister to address these concerns.

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (11:07:11):** I speak in support of the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020 and I commend the New South Wales Government and Minister Anderson for bringing this bill forward. This bill lays the groundwork for information sharing between NSW Health and our work health and safety [WHS] regulators. That information sharing will enable the WHS regulators to better target their efforts at preventing occupational disease in the State. I welcome the announcement by the Government that it intends to use the information-sharing power created by this bill to address the threat of silicosis. In the 1990s I worked for one of the leading bricklaying companies in our great State, Peter Favetti and Sons Pty Ltd. Peter started the business over 40 years ago when he arrived as an immigrant from Sicily. His sons, Sam and Ray, later joined the company and were both instrumental in growing the business to one of the largest bricklaying contractors in New South Wales.

The Favetti team has always led the way in safe work practices. They were the first in Sydney to have an entire bricklaying crew in high-vis, long before high-vis was a thing. With their fluoro green work shirts, the Favetti team stood out on construction sites such as the Dunc Gray Velodrome, Tuggerah Westfield and the Sydney Giants Stadium. They also ensured when working with large blocks that are associated with building such large structures that they were always using a wet saw to cut the blocks involved. The Favettis have always cared about their workers' health. Being in the industry for 40 years, they have never wanted to see any of their team suffer from silicosis. Silicosis is a terrible disease. It is not always a long latency disease. It can kill young people who have only just begun their working lives and affect people who have only recently begun to work with silica-containing materials.

There is national concern about the increase in diagnosis of accelerated silicosis. The increase appears to be linked to working with manufactured stone. Manufactured stone contains a high percentage of crystalline silica, which causes silicosis when it becomes airborne. Minister Anderson and I recently visited Carrara Marble & Granite, a business that services the East Hills electorate. The owner, Wally Anboussi, gave us a tour of his large factory and showed us the various marble, limestone, granite, travertine and sandstone that is cut by expert masons for projects such as kitchens and bathrooms and how the slabs are moved about within the very large factory. Wally said that he welcomed the Government's Silicosis Reduction Strategy as it is vital to stop the rise in disease caused by uncontrolled dry cutting and the grinding of stone. Sadly, he knew of several cases of people within his industry who now have the disease. I understand that making silicosis notifiable is supported not only by business owners within the industry, like Wally, but also by other key stakeholders in the area, including respiratory physicians.

The Work Health and Safety Act creates a strong framework for protecting workers' health from exposure to hazardous materials. When a workplace does not comply with the provisions in the Work Health and Safety Act on working with a hazardous chemical like silica, its workers can develop silicosis. Workplace health and safety [WHS] regulators need to know which workplaces are not complying, which means they need to know where workers are getting sick. At the moment WHS regulators can be left in the dark. Persons conducting a business or undertaking [PCBUs] are obliged to tell WHS regulators when a person is diagnosed with silicosis through mandatory health monitoring but they know that an investigation into their work practices is likely to follow. PCBUs may be choosing to protect themselves by concealing this information from the WHS regulators. WHS regulators have been able to gather information about some silicosis diagnoses through icare, which provides health monitoring services to workers exposed to hazards like silica, but this does not show a complete picture.

A key objective of these reforms is to ensure that WHS regulators are fully informed by NSW Health about silicosis diagnoses in New South Wales. That is why this bill makes it possible for the health secretary to share personal and health information with SafeWork NSW. From 1 July medical practitioners have been obliged to inform NSW Health of a silicosis diagnosis. This bill enables NSW Health in turn to tell SafeWork NSW. It also builds on the existing capacity and expertise of both agencies. WHS regulators need to know when a person is diagnosed with silicosis so that they can commence an investigation into whether the person's workplace practices

contributed to their disease. If those practices contributed to the worker's disease, they may also be having an adverse effect on the health of other workers in the workplace. This is when WHS regulators need to step in and put a stop to dry cutting or other unsafe practices that risk the lives and health of workers.

Thanks to this reform, SafeWork NSW will no longer have to rely on PCBUs to tell it when a worker is diagnosed with silicosis. This will make all workers in the industry safer. I am mindful that this goal needs to be achieved without unduly compromising the privacy of workers. The private medical information of workers diagnosed with silicosis will be treated by both NSW Health and SafeWork NSW with the sensitivity appropriate to this kind of information. I welcome the involvement of the Information and Privacy Commission in developing the memorandum of understanding that will govern information sharing in relation to silicosis between NSW Health and SafeWork NSW. I thank the Minister for health for making silicosis a scheduled medical condition under the Public Health Act 2010. I thank the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation for bringing forward the bill. Coordinated government action can halt the rise in silicosis cases. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (11:14:12):** I speak in support of the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020. As the Minister has already stated, the bill demonstrates this Government's ongoing commitment to ensuring that every worker in this State has a healthy, safe and productive working life. The bill amends part 14 division 1 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 by inserting the following:

**271B Health Secretary may provide information to regulator**

- (1) The Secretary of the Ministry of Health is authorised to provide information to the regulator if the Secretary considers the provision of the information is necessary to enable the regulator to exercise the regulator's functions under this Act.
- (2) Information may be provided in accordance with this section despite any prohibition in, or the need to comply with any requirement of, any Act or law (in particular, the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* and the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002*).

I will focus my contribution on the workplace exposure standard. I commend the Minister for recognising the issues associated with exposure to crystalline silica and moving swiftly to address the re-emergence of this disease. Sources of crystalline silica include bricks, sandstone, shale, concrete and manufactured stone. The health hazard is generated when very fine particles of crystalline silica exist and are inhaled. Particles are considered to be respirable when they are less than seven microns in diameter. Respirable crystalline silica can cause silicosis depending on factors such as how much dust a worker breathes in and for how long. Silicosis is a fibrosis or scarring of the lung that results in loss of lung function. This scarring continues to develop after exposure has stopped. People with advanced silicosis suffer severe shortness of breath and may suffer complications such as heart failure. Significant long-term exposure to crystalline silica has also been associated with an increased risk of developing lung cancer.

I thank the Minister for introducing the bill and for developing other reforms to protect workers from silica dust. One of the most important of those reforms is lowering the workplace exposure standard for silica. Under the Work Health and Safety Regulation, a person conducting a business or undertaking at a workplace must ensure that no person at the workplace is exposed to a hazardous substance like silica in an airborne concentration that exceeds the workplace exposure standard for that substance. The workplace exposure standard is set at a national level as part of our harmonised work health and safety laws. Until recently the workplace exposure standard for silica was set at a time-weighted average of 0.1 micrograms per cubic metre. The Minister agreed with his interstate colleagues, in light of new evidence about the dangers of silica, to lower the workplace exposure standard to 0.05 micrograms per cubic metre. That is a halving of the former workplace exposure standard. I welcome the Minister's decision to expedite implementation in New South Wales of the new standard well ahead of time.

The Minister has also agreed that Safe Work Australia should investigate whether a further reduction in the workplace exposure standard to 0.02 micrograms per cubic metre can be achieved. At present there are technical difficulties with going to 0.02 micrograms per cubic metre but research should continue on moving to that level. We should not delay acting to improve the work health and safety framework that protects workers and others in New South Wales. Stonemasons working with manufactured stone, which is usually used for bathroom and kitchen tabletops, are at risk of exposure due to the high concentration of crystalline silica in the manufactured stone. The significance of this reduction in the workplace exposure standard is that it reduces the risk of developing lung disease that in some cases is fatal and in others severely reduces the quality of life.

I share the view of the leading industry experts and the Government that a reduction in the workplace exposure standard is exactly what is needed to protect workers in this industry. It complements the initiatives of the Government and others to address the re-emergence of silicosis. These include explicitly banning the dry

cutting of manufactured stone, enabling inspectors to issue new on-the-spot fines and putting in place the information-sharing arrangement for which this bill lays the groundwork. These initiatives will ensure that workers are protected throughout their working lives.

The Government is serious about making silicosis once more a disease of the past. It is working tirelessly to change workplace practices to prevent this terrible disease and to improve the health and safety outcomes of all those who work with materials containing silica. The information-sharing arrangement between NSW Health and WHS regulators is vital to ensuring work safety and plays a key role in the package of silica reforms that this Government is introducing. At the end of the day, the Government wants to see every worker go home safely each and every day. With reforms such as this bill, we are one step closer to achieving that aim. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (11:21:05):** On behalf of The Greens, I speak in debate on the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020. I indicate that this bill amends the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to make silicosis a notifiable disease, creating a silicosis health register to allow SafeWork NSW to track and investigate the workplaces of those diagnosed with the disease. When a medical practitioner diagnoses an individual with silicosis they will be required to notify NSW Health. Taken on its own, this reform is not a bad thing. However, exposure to silica dust is linked to the development of lung cancer, kidney disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease as well as silicosis. The diseases should be included in any notifiable disease regime.

Even with those diseases included, we have concerns this reform goes nowhere near far enough to ensure that no worker becomes ill or dies after being exposed to silica dust. We know that these have been long-term campaigns. We know the historical impacts of the campaigns around the impact of asbestos on workers in our community. Many unions and others are reflecting and supporting the rights of workers in the community who are very concerned about the impact of silicosis on our communities and on working people. I acknowledge that the Minister said we want to minimise the number of people who contract the disease or, ideally, remove the idea that anyone will get silicosis and therefore die as a result of going to work. We should never accept in our community that anyone would go to work and not return home or suffer a long-term illness causing death as a result of their work. All that can be done must be done to ensure we stop this disease. That is why The Greens believe we need to go further and ban manufactured stone entirely to address this ongoing issue.

We recognise that the disease is widespread so we encourage widespread free screening of all workers within the manufactured stone industry. That should be available as soon as possible. A low-dose, high-resolution CT scan, not a chest X-ray, should be the preferred diagnostic measure available to workers in the manufactured stone industry and other impacted industries. The Government should be working towards implementing the recommendations contained in the *2019 review of the Dust Diseases scheme: Silicosis in the manufactured stone industry* inquiry report. As I said, we believe we should go further and ban manufactured stone entirely. The Greens will work with the Opposition to move amendments to this bill in the upper House, and I acknowledge the contribution of the Opposition in this Chamber to try to enforce more robust testing measures in this bill, along with other recommendations from the inquiry. I acknowledge that this bill does go some way towards that and, on its own, is not a bad thing. However, more can be done. We hope that in the upper House the amendments will be considered by the Government and the Minister to strengthen the bill to ensure that no worker is put at greater risk to their health or is at risk of death as a result of working in an industry in this State.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (11:24:43):** I speak in support of the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020 and I commend Minister Anderson for bringing the bill forward, along with other reforms, to address the re-emerging disease of silicosis. I acknowledge the Minister who is present in the Chamber. He has moved swiftly to help protect workers from contracting this terrible disease. It is a disease that is close to my heart. My best friend is a stonemason. He has done some fantastic work across New South Wales; in fact, he has worked on the church across the road from Parliament House, St Stephen's church.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Is it a rocky relationship?

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** Not a rocky relationship; it is a wonderful one. He has done brilliant work across New South Wales. He has worked on some cenotaphs.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Bedrock of belief.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** Bedrock of belief. He has three wonderful children. Hence it is very important that this bill passes to keep him and other stonemasons safe in their trade. He does wonderful work, he is proud of his work and it is right that we recognise the serious health risks associated with manufactured stone. The Government has been putting in place appropriate measures to address those risks since 2017 when, at the launch

of SafeWork NSW's five-year hazardous chemicals strategy, the Government identified respirable crystalline silica as one of its top two priority chemicals.

Since 2017 SafeWork NSW has been taking consistent action in accordance with that strategy to protect workers in the manufactured stone industry. The reforms now being introduced are the next step in promoting and maintaining strong health and safety practices when working with silica-containing products. This bill will be key to equipping our work health and safety [WHS] regulators with the information they need to ensure that everyone in the manufactured stone industry is complying with their health and safety duties. The Government is bringing forward other reforms to reduce workers' exposure to the health risks associated with cutting manufactured stone.

I welcome in particular the ban on dry-cutting manufactured stone. The evidence is clear: Dry-cutting of manufactured stone during the fabrication and installation of engineered stone benches exposes workers to unacceptably high levels of silica dust. This can cause silicosis. This practice has long been prohibited under the general obligations of the Work Health and Safety Act. Every person conducting a business or undertaking [PCBU] is under a duty to ensure, so far as reasonably practical, the health and safety of their workers. That includes ensuring that workers are not exposed to unacceptably high levels of silica dust created by dry cutting. But the Government wants to make it explicitly clear that no-one in this State should be engaging in dry cutting.

That is why the Government has amended the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 to create a specific offence of directing or allowing a worker to dry-cut manufactured stone without appropriate control measures. These measures include ensuring appropriate personal protective equipment is worn and the use of a water delivery system, extraction system or exhaust ventilation system to minimise the creation of silica dust. These control mechanisms are key to eliminating dust particles escaping into the air. The amendment to the regulation has also given SafeWork NSW inspectors the power to issue tough new on-the-spot fines for non-compliance. These new powers support SafeWork NSW's efforts to secure compliance with health and safety in this industry.

The Government has also amended the regulation to enable inspectors to issue on-the-spot fines when a PCBU fails to comply with their obligation to notify the regulator that one of their workers has been diagnosed with silicosis by providing a copy of their health monitoring report. Inspectors will be in a strong position to enforce that obligation now that the Government is putting in place arrangements for SafeWork NSW to be notified of silicosis diagnoses independently through NSW Health and medical practitioners. This is an important step because at present SafeWork NSW is only notified when a worker is diagnosed through health monitoring conducted by icare or when the PCBU complies with its obligation to notify. This reform will give PCBUs an incentive to provide health monitoring reports and to comply with their obligations to protect workers from exposure to respirable crystalline silica.

Together with the halving of the workplace exposure standard these reforms create a comprehensive and cohesive package which will enable the Government to protect workers in the manufactured stone industry from silicosis. These reforms are essential to ensure that every worker employed in the silica-exposed industry goes home safe at the end of the day and enjoys a happy retirement. I thank the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and the Minister for Health and Medical Research for the work that they have put in to ensuring that silicosis cases will be notified to the NSW Health Secretary and passed on to SafeWork NSW. This is a whole-of-government strategy which draws on the expertise of multiple agencies in tackling a workplace health challenge. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (11:30:43):** I support the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020. Before I comment on the bill, I acknowledge the stonemasons across the Cootamundra electorate. I especially mention Ethan Richens, who is a stonemason in and around the Young area. He is a very talented, young stonemason who at the moment is doing a fantastic job restoring the historic police stables in Murringo. He works on his own and it is hard work—at times backbreaking work. It is a very important and noble craft. It is with this in mind that I turn my attention to the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020.

The bill is an important next step on the road the Government has embarked on since October 2017 when it launched the hazardous chemicals and materials exposures baseline and reduction strategy. The bill is a product of this five-year strategy and it shows the strength of the New South Wales Government's commitment to address this entirely preventable disease. One of the key focus areas of the strategy was targeted regulatory review and reform. That is what we are seeing today in the Government's recent amendments to the work health and safety regulation to ban dry cutting and create new penalty notices. The other areas of focus, widespread education and awareness, and rigorous compliance and engagement, continue to be implemented by SafeWork NSW.

I recognise the enormous work that has gone into SafeWork NSW compliance and engagement under the strategy and its strong results. SafeWork NSW has set itself a target of 9,000 interactions with businesses working with silica by 2022, and they are well on their way to meeting that ambitious target. As at 30 June 2020

SafeWork NSW has had 5,707 interactions with businesses relating to compliance with our laws on working safely with silica. There have been 644 visits by inspectors to manufactured stone workplaces alone and 1,218 across all industries. Inspectors have issued 857 notices, of which 699 were in manufactured stone workplaces. Of the 857 notices, 531 related to silica and 127 were improvement notices for health monitoring.

Follow-up visits to manufactured stone sites show that 98 per cent of all notices issued by inspectors have been fully complied with, that is, 689 of 699. Follow-up visits for the remaining 10 notices are still being completed. Some outstanding notices relate to health monitoring as screening services provided by icare have been unable to operate due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The icare clinic was expected to reopen this month. Although there has been a strong focus on the manufactured stone industry due to the high level of silica in those products, SafeWork NSW has also been active in engaging with other silica-exposed industries, including tunnelling, domestic and civil construction and foundry work. Inspectors have conducted 493 visits in those industries and have issued 112 notices: 104 improvement notices and eight prohibition notices. Ninety-four per cent of the notices have been fully complied with.

As further evidence of the strategy's effectiveness, an independent evaluation from June last year found that 90 per cent of persons conducting a business or undertaking [PCBUs] who were visited reported at least one change in management's approach to silica and three in four reported new safety equipment or tools being purchased. Health monitoring also increased in 2019, from 2,076 workers to 3,563. That is an increase of over 70 per cent. SafeWork NSW has extensive further activities underway under the strategy planned for 2020. Its work plan sets a target of 2,400 silica-specific interactions with businesses including engagement through inspector visits, webinars, workshops, presentations and industry events. These interactions will cover all types of silica-exposed industry, including tunnelling, major infrastructure sites, construction, foundries and manufactured stone businesses.

I commend SafeWork NSW for its tireless efforts to educate workers and PCBUs about how to work safely with silica and to ensure that all PCBUs and workers are doing the right thing. Those efforts have made and continue to make workers in this State safer. I look forward to SafeWork NSW being able to further target its efforts to combat this irreversible lung disease when this information-sharing arrangement with NSW Health is in place. The bill will strengthen the ability of SafeWork NSW to support businesses and workers in preventing anyone in this State suffering from an entirely avoidable disease. I thank the Minister for bringing this important issue to the House with this bill, and I commend it to the House.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (11:37:50):** We are dealing with a very serious issue today that is affecting a lot of people within our wider community. I commend the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation for his foresight and vision in bringing forward the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information and Exchange) Bill 2020. Many residents have been affected by asbestos over the years and we have funded some of their endeavours to receive compensation. The Northern Rivers headquarters is in my old Tweed Heads Bowls Club. After talking to the victims of asbestosis, the organisations and victims' partners, wives, husbands, families and friends, I have realised that it is a terrible disease that can be prevented but its causes have been allowed to continue for a very long time without being identified. It has affected many people in this State and across Australia.

The New South Wales Government's actions through this bill are admirable. The bill clearly sets out guidelines and regulations for the workplace. Unfortunately in this industry young apprentices—the new kids on the block—often are not given proper instruction and direction. They might pick up an angle grinder and simply cut off a section of stone without using water baths and protective clothing. Those workers can carry the disease like a death sentence for the rest of their lives until it is activated. The main purpose of the bill is to amend the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, known as the WHS Act, to authorise the Secretary of the Ministry of Health to provide information to WHS regulators—that is SafeWork NSW and the New South Wales Resources Regulator—relating to the diagnosis of silicosis cases in New South Wales.

As has been said by previous speakers, silicosis is a lung disease caused by inhaling crystalline silica dust. Crystalline silica is a naturally occurring mineral that is present in most rocks, sand and clay and in products such as bricks, concrete, tiles and manufactured stone. Crystalline silica dust is produced when those materials or products are cut, drilled, ground or polished. The New South Wales Government is concerned by the re-emergence of silicosis as an occupational disease. It has re-emerged primarily due to the increased use of manufactured stone, which has particularly fine dust particles. Silicosis is entirely preventable if appropriate controls are in place, for example, wet cutting, personal protective equipment and extraction systems.

In 2017 the New South Wales Parliament undertook its first review of the Dust Diseases Scheme, which recommended that a task force be convened to consider issues in the manufactured stone industry. The task force was to include regulators and industry representatives. SafeWork NSW convened the task force in July 2018 and considered the necessary regulatory changes to protect workers in the industry. One of the regulatory changes

recommended by the task force was making silicosis a notifiable medical condition that can be notified to other regulators. In 2020 the Cabinet, on the recommendation of the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and the Minister for Health and Medical Research, determined that silicosis should be a notifiable disease in New South Wales.

I support the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020. The bill provides a legislative framework that will allow for the sharing of information between NSW Health and our work health and safety regulators. The advantages of this information-sharing arrangement not only extend to ensuring that compliance efforts by WHS regulators are well targeted but also enable SafeWork NSW to better focus on its information and education campaigns. The combination of improved compliance and focused information and education campaigns will reduce and hopefully one day eradicate occupational disease in New South Wales.

As members have heard, silicosis is a terrible disease. It is indiscriminate, killing young people and those who have only recently started working with silica-containing materials. That makes it different from other types of dust diseases, which often require exposure over a lengthy period. The eradication of occupational disease in New South Wales requires a multi-pronged attack. The bill lays the foundation for such an attack. When practitioners notify NSW Health of a silicosis diagnosis, WHS regulators will know where to target their information and education efforts. The information that has been shared will help the WHS regulators identify workplaces that are most in need of assistance in managing their WHS obligations relating to silica dust.

As part of a concerted national effort to stem the rise in silicosis diagnoses, New South Wales is working with other jurisdictions to ensure that workplaces have all the information, help and support they need to provide safe workplaces when working with products that contain silica. To this end, New South Wales has been instrumental in helping Safe Work Australia develop new guidance on working with silica-containing products. That guidance material is one of the critical elements of the requisite multi-pronged attack on this terrible disease. The new guidance material is available on Safe Work Australia's website and provides information for businesses about many important facts about silica dust.

For example, a business may work with materials that do not obviously contain silica dust, such as manufactured stone. It may surprise some businesses to know that drywall, some plasterboards and asphalt contain silica and that they need to work safely with those materials. The guidance material provides helpful advice for businesses about how to identify hazards and control risks to health and safety from exposure to silica dust. It also provides information about the obligations that businesses have under work health and safety laws and the role that designers, importers and suppliers have in ensuring the safety of workers in New South Wales.

Importantly, the guidance material helps businesses understand how their obligations to control the risks of silica dust are part of their overall obligation to provide their workers with a safe working environment. For example, many businesses may be unaware that when introducing controls for exposure to silica dust they may inadvertently introduce other hazards or may not fulfil WHS duties for other hazards. The importance of guidance material like this is that it provides businesses and workplaces with the necessary tools to protect their workers. That is the key. The objective of the reforms in the bill is to ensure that WHS regulators are fully informed about silicosis diagnoses in New South Wales by NSW Health. Since 1 July medical practitioners have been obliged to inform NSW Health of a silicosis diagnosis. The bill enables NSW Health in turn to tell SafeWork NSW.

WHS regulators need to know which workplaces require the greatest assistance. Providing information and education to those workplaces will reduce the chances of serious harm being done to other workers. Stopping practices that contribute to a worker's disease will remove the chance that those practices will have an adverse effect on the health of others in the workplace. The information-sharing powers in the bill mean that SafeWork NSW will no longer have to rely on persons conducting a business or undertaking to tell it when a worker is diagnosed with silicosis. That will make all workers safer. The bill is the result of a coordinated action. The Minister for Health and Medical Research and the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation have combined their efforts to bring the reforms in the bill to life. The health Minister has already made silicosis a scheduled medical condition under the Public Health Act 2010 and practitioners have been providing notifications to NSW Health since 1 July.

The Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation brought forward this important bill which will allow information to be shared. Harnessing accurate information about which workplaces need the greatest assistance to keep their workers safe from silica dust will allow for targeted information. Guidance material like the Safe Work Australia publication about working with silica and silica-containing products can then be directed where it is needed most. In my electorate I have four manufacturers of manufactured stone. Tweed Heads has a large construction industry, particularly the construction of houses, and the manufacturers often have a large number of young apprentices. I am pleased to say that to my knowledge they all wet cut. In fact, one of my electorate's large manufacturers uses four Olympic swimming pools of water every six months, which is a major cost to his business.



They are doing the right thing. I think the bill will go a long way to protect workers, particularly young workers. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (11:48:06):** I speak in support of the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information and Exchange) Bill 2020. I note that it is part of a substantial body of work by Minister Anderson to bring forward a reform to address the re-emergence of silicosis in the life of this Parliament. The Minister has moved swiftly to help protect workers from contracting this terrible disease. While listening to my colleagues the member for Manly, the member for East Hills, the member for Tweed and the member for Cootamundra, I have been impressed hearing about their body of experience. I understand that the member for Wollondilly will follow me. He has considerable experience working on the tools.

This is a very short bill in terms of its content. It requires the notification of silicosis in order to protect the safety of workers. It was with some curiosity that I heard the member for Swansea, whom I generally find to be a reasonable and likeable person, say that the position of the Opposition will be reserved on this bill in respect of amendments that may be brought in the upper House. I find that extraordinary. This is an entirely preventable disease and given that this is a bill to deal with a serious disease it should be supported. Of course, the reason for the re-emergence of silicosis has been the increased use of manufactured stone in recent years. When I was a lad kitchen benchtops were made of laminate. Today they are more often made of manufactured stone. There are probably many kitchens in my electorate of Ku-ring-gai that are partly responsible for the problems that this bill addresses.

I am curious about why Labor does not wholeheartedly embrace the bill. I am even more surprised that the member for Newtown has asserted that manufactured stone should be banned altogether. This is an extraordinary proposition which is symptomatic of The Greens in general. The member for Newtown supported a highly dangerous protest yesterday, in the middle of a pandemic—a protest that was condemned by the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association—yet today she advocates for the banning of manufactured stone because of a completely preventable disease like silicosis. That is quite extraordinary. It shows an utter disconnect with the modern world, which people like the member for Newtown seem to be symptomatic of. It is simply not practical or fair to suggest that manufactured stone should be banned. I suspect that if we were to go into the kitchen of the member for Newtown to look at her benchtops there would be manufactured stone.

I find it extraordinary that both the Labor Party and The Greens do not embrace or support this bill; rather, they are creating faux issues that bear no relation to the real world. I was heartened to hear that members of the Coalition Government have a real understanding of this issue as well as life experience to contribute to the debate on the bill. Since 2017 the Government has recognised the serious health risks associated with the manufactured stone industry and it has been putting in place appropriate measures to address those risks. Back in 2017, at the launch of SafeWork NSW's five-year hazardous chemicals strategy, the Government identified respirable crystalline silica as one of its top two priority chemicals. I have had some involvement in the issue of occupational lung diseases: As a young barrister I appeared in the Dust Diseases Tribunal of NSW in asbestosis and mesothelioma cases.

The effect on the lungs and the hardening of the outer layer of the lungs caused by dust diseases is very significant. In fact my grandfather was the first doctor employed by the Joint Coal Board in its laboratories to investigate the impacts on underground coalminers of lung diseases. So I have had some interest in this area. I think it is very important that this Parliament support a bill that is protective of the health of workers and the efficiency of their breathing mechanisms. Since 2017 SafeWork NSW has been taking consistent action in accordance with its five-year hazardous chemicals strategy to protect workers in the manufactured stone industry. The reforms now being introduced are really the next step in promoting and maintaining strong health and safety practices in working with silica-containing products.

The bill will be key to equipping the workplace health and safety regulators with the information they need to ensure that everyone in the manufactured stone industry is complying with their health and safety duties. I must say, having done probably well over 100 cases involving occupational health and safety in the Industrial Relations Commission, the tragic reality of most occupation-related diseases and injuries is that they are entirely preventable. This area is a good instance of that. This bill will equip the regulators to ensure through greater information that they are targeting safe work practices in the areas where they are needed.

The Government is bringing forward other reforms to reduce workers' exposure to health risks associated with cutting manufactured stone. In particular I think it is very important that dry cutting manufactured stone does not occur. The evidence is clear that dry cutting of manufactured stone during fabrication and installation processes of stone engineered benches exposes workers to unacceptably high levels of silica dust, which can cause silicosis. That practice has long been prohibited under the general obligations of the Work Health and Safety Act but every person conducting a business or undertaking is under a duty to ensure, so far as reasonably practical, the health and safety of their workers. That includes ensuring workers are not exposed to unacceptably high levels

of silica dust created by dry cutting. I support this bill. It is an important measure to ensure worker safety. Again I commend Minister Anderson for bringing forward this bill to the House.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (11:58:19):** I speak in support of the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020. I thank the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation for bringing this bill to the House. This bill continues the important work of the Government as part of its Hazardous Chemicals and Materials Exposures Baseline and Reduction Strategy implemented by SafeWork NSW. SafeWork's activities under the hazardous chemicals strategy identify and reduce the level and impact of workplace exposures to hazardous chemicals.

The bill builds upon work this Government is doing to help reduce the occurrence of the occupational lung disease silicosis across New South Wales. Through an amendment to the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 by the Liberal-Nationals Government, the Government has sought explicitly to ban the practice of uncontrolled dry cutting of manufactured stone containing crystalline silica. The dry cutting of manufactured stone with a power tool is particularly dangerous because of its potential to generate a high volume of crystalline silica dust which can enter the respiratory system, potentially leading to silicosis. The Government has acted quickly to ensure that this ban will be in place by 1 July this year.

Another strategy being implemented by the Government to help reduce the occurrence of silicosis is by halving the workplace exposure standard. The halving of the standard will mean that the workplace exposure standard for respirable crystalline silica will be lowered from a time-weighted average over eight hours of 0.1 milligram per cubic metre to 0.05 milligram per cubic metre. This move was agreed to by the Commonwealth Government and other State and Territory work health and safety Ministers. Although the deadline was implemented, the revised workplace exposure standard was set to October 2022. The Minister and the New South Wales Government have acted quickly to ensure that this is implemented by 1 July this year. Importantly, to assist with the transition, SafeWork NSW was offering rebates of up to \$1,000 to manufactured stone businesses that purchased new equipment to control the risk of dry cutting up to 30 June 2020.

A crucial and priority component of the overall strategy, and the reason for this bill, is to research ways to address the workplace dangers posed by silica dust. Silica dust particles, which are small enough to penetrate deep into the lung, are known to cause severe damage to health. The research component of the hazardous chemicals strategy focuses on three key areas: health monitoring, international modelling and medical testing. SafeWork NSW is conducting vital research into the early detection of silicosis and other occupational respiratory diseases to prevent serious illness occurring. It is adopting international best practice test methods in conducting this research. SafeWork NSW is also disseminating and supporting international best practice controls to achieve reductions in workplace exposures.

The Government is investing significant resources through the Centre for Work Health and Safety into real-time silica detection services, which measure respirable crystalline silica [RCS] concentration in the air at workplaces. The centre has engaged Trolex Nome Australia to help develop a silica dust sensor that provides real-time feedback to workers who are at risk of exposure. The research will identify existing technology or create new technology that can be used in the design and build of a silica dust detection device. This research represents a significant advancement in the Government's battle to keep workers safe from the catastrophic harm caused by silica dust.

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. It is important to note that the secretary is not under any duty to disclose information. The 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. Additionally, in relation to silicosis it is the intention of the Government 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 share, use and store the information that they receive from health practitioners about the diagnosis of silicosis. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that workers' personal information is treated with respect and care. With a focus on privacy, the memorandum of understanding is being developed by SafeWork NSW and NSW Health in consultation with the Information and Privacy Commissioners. It is the Government's intent that information—especially that which could be considered in private—will be held in a secure database with restricted accessibility and access auditing. Ultimately the intent is that access to the information will be restricted to those who need to know.

The bill builds upon the work the Government is doing to help reduce the occurrence of occupational lung disease, known as silicosis, across New South Wales. An amendment to the Work Health and Safety Regulation

2017 by the Liberal-Nationals Coalition explicitly sought to ban the practice of uncontrolled dry cutting of manufactured stone containing crystalline silica. The dry cutting of manufactured stone with a power tool is particularly dangerous because of its potential to generate a high volume of crystalline silica dust that can enter the respiratory system, potentially leading to silicosis. The Government has acted quickly to ensure that this ban was in place by 1 July this year. I thank the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, his staff and all others involved for bringing this bill to the House. Through investment in research such as this, through its commitment to the hazardous chemicals strategy and with the introduction of this bill, the Government is taking every opportunity to protect the health of workers in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (12:04:52):** I support the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020. As a member of the House who worked in the construction industry from 1997 until about 2010, I have seen accidents on site and unsafe workplaces. I had an onsite accident in 2008. To indulge the House, I think it was the same day that my father, the then member for Epping, sang in the House about Epping Road. Minister Constance, who is at the table, will remember that. It was on the radio and that same day I had an accident on site and nearly severed my left index finger. As whispers and rumours go, first, I had lost a finger, then a hand and then I had lost an arm. But I only a severed finger. I went straight to hospital, had it stitched up and was soon back working so it was all good. But as someone who has worked in the industry and seen it change since 1997 when I started my apprenticeship, work safety is extremely close to my heart.

Safety has improved on large construction sites, hospital upgrades, tunnels—and Minister Constance is doing a magnificent job—or the roads that we are building for the twenty-first century. The safety improvements in coalmines in my electorate are especially fantastic. Safety is the number one priority and it was great to see the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation bring this bill forward, along with other reforms, to address the re-emergence of silicosis. When I was on site I would hear fellow workers say, "Here is a hanky and a grinder, just cut away. She'll be right, son." That attitude has now disappeared. We do not want to see people cutting corners so it is great that this bill is before the House today. I am a little disappointed that Opposition members are not speaking in debate on the bill, considering that many factories that make manufactured stone are located in Labor electorates and employ their constituents. If companies are cutting corners I cannot understand why Opposition members are not speaking passionately about the bill, which aims to protect their constituents. But that is their decision.

The Minister has moved swiftly to protect workers from contracting this terrible disease. Since 2017 the Government has recognised the serious health risks associated with the manufactured stone industry and has been putting in place appropriate measures to address those risks. In 2017, at the launch of SafeWork's five-year hazardous chemicals strategy, the Government identified respirable crystalline silica as one of its top two priority chemicals. Since 2017 SafeWork NSW has been taking consistent action in accordance with that strategy to protect workers in the manufactured stone industry. The reforms now being introduced are the next step in promoting and maintaining strong health and safety practices in working with silica-containing products. This bill will be key to equipping our workplace health and safety regulators with the information they need to ensure that everyone involved in the manufactured stone industry is complying with their health and safety duties.

The Government is bringing forward other reforms to reduce workers' exposure to the health risks associated with cutting manufactured stone. I particularly welcome the ban on the dry cutting of manufactured stone as there is a lot of growth in the residential market. As the member for Ku-ring-gai said, many kitchens in his electorate were made from laminated chipboard but stone kitchens are now extremely popular. If a stone benchtop does not fit we do not want people cutting stone to fit and potentially catching this terrible disease. Cutting corners is the last thing we want to see.

The evidence is clear the dry cutting during the fabrication and installation process of engineered stone benches exposes workers to an unacceptably high level of silica dust, which can cause silicosis. That is exactly how it would happen: A building might be out by a couple of millimetres and the stone benchtop does not fit into the space that has been left for it. This practice has been long prohibited under the general obligations of the Work Health and Safety Act. Every person conducting a business or undertaking [PCBU] is under a duty to ensure so far as reasonably practicable the health and safety of their workers. That includes ensuring that workers are not exposed to unacceptably high levels of silica dust created by dry cutting.

However, the Government wants to make it clear that no-one in this State should be engaging in dry cutting, full stop. That is why the Government has amended the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017 to create an offence of directing or allowing a worker to dry cut manufactured stone without appropriate control measures. Those measures include ensuring appropriate personal protective equipment is worn and the use of a water delivery system, extraction system or an exhaust ventilation system to minimise the creation of silica dust. Those control mechanisms are key to eliminating dust particles from escaping into the air. The amendment to the regulation has also given SafeWork NSW inspectors the power to issue tough new on-the-spot fines for

noncompliance. Those new powers support the efforts of SafeWork NSW to secure compliance with health and safety in this industry.

The Government has also amended the regulation to enable inspectors to issue on-the-spot fines when a PCBU fails to comply with their obligation to notify the regulator that one of their workers has been diagnosed with silicosis by providing a copy of their health monitoring report. Inspectors will be in a strong position to enforce that obligation now that the Government is putting in place arrangements for SafeWork NSW to be notified of silicosis diagnoses independently through NSW Health and medical practitioners. This is an important step because at present SafeWork NSW is only notified when a worker is diagnosed through health monitoring conducted by icare or when a PCBU complies with their obligation to notify. This reform will give PCBUs an incentive to provide health monitoring reports and to comply with their obligation to protect workers from exposure to crystalline silica.

Together with the halving of the workplace exposure standard, these reforms create a cohesive package that will enable the Government to protect workers in the manufactured stone industry from silicosis. These reforms are essential to ensure that every worker employed in a silica-exposed industry goes home safe at the end of the day and enjoys a happy retirement. That is so important. We have seen so many cases of retired tradies in their 60s and 70s suffering terrible effects from silicosis and other forms of illness from the building industry—and perhaps even the mining industry prior to the introduction of new safety regulations. I thank the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and the health Minister for the work they have done to ensure that silicosis cases will be notified to the Health secretary and passed on to SafeWork NSW. This is a whole-of-government strategy that draws on the expertise of multiple agencies in tackling a workplace health and safety challenge. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:13:45):** I make a contribution to debate on the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020. At the outset I commend the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, Mr Kevin Anderson, for introducing the bill and for reaffirming the commitment that members on this side of the House have to worker safety. Where there is any practical, sensible step to be taken to ensure that workers in New South Wales can do their jobs safely this Government will be there.

Shorn of all the rhetoric that we often hear about workers and the protests, rallies and movements, when it comes to practical measures to look after workers, the Liberal-Nationals Coalition is protecting workers. In this instance we are happy to be doing it with the support of the Opposition. We would have liked to hear a bit more from Opposition members about it, but there is no division between the parties when practical measures need to be taken to look after the health of workers. I note that in his second reading speech the Minister outlined the situation that has given rise to the bill. The fact is that silica has been a known risk for many years. In some industries, it has been commonly present and managed appropriately. Measures have been in place in the industries where it is likely to occur to ensure that the risk of silicosis is minimised but in the past few years something has changed. In his second reading speech the Minister said:

From 1 July 2019 to 31 January 2020—

that is, seven months—

70 cases of silicosis were identified by icare in New South Wales. In the 2018- 19 financial year there were 40 cases and the year before there were nine.

A sudden, dramatic escalation in the number of silicosis cases is coming to the attention of icare in New South Wales. The result of this new evidence is the trigger for this legislation and for the other measures that have already been taken in New South Wales and cooperatively between Ministers across the nation. As we have heard, the reason for the sudden spike in silicosis cases is that crystallised silica is being used in a way which was not common in the past, and that is in our own homes as kitchen and bathroom benchtops and so on. Like many other members of this House, I had my kitchen refurbished a few years ago. The lovely, attractive new stone benchtop is one feature that we like to show off. It looks great. We did not realise at the time that this new product on the market carried with it a risk that was known in other contexts but was not necessarily being addressed in the current context.

Since then this Government and other governments across Australia have adopted a three-pronged strategy to address the risk. The first element of the strategy, which is already in place, is banning dry cutting of manufactured stone containing crystalline silica. In practice, that means anyone cutting manufactured stone has to wear appropriate personal protective equipment and they have to use a water delivery system, an extraction system or an exhaust ventilation system to minimise the creation of silica dust and to minimise any risk of the inhalation of that dust. The circumstances in which the stone is cut, polished and manufactured are now controlled and that is already in place as the first step of the strategy.

The second step was the introduction of the lower workplace exposure standard. The existing standard of 0.1 milligrams per cubic metre had been in place for a number of years across the industry in Australia. Ministers throughout the Commonwealth have agreed to halve that standard to 0.05 milligrams per cubic metre. In New South Wales we have not waited to introduce that standard. We are doing it right now rather than postponing it to October next year. We believe the issue is urgent and serious and should be implemented immediately, and the Minister in his second reading speech put the industry and the community on notice that that would be the way we would deal with it in New South Wales. I commend him for his leadership. We should not be waiting to act; this issue needs an urgent response. We have banned dry cutting. Let us go for the lower exposure standard as well and have that in place as soon as we can.

The third element of the strategy is the reform contained in the bill. It will ensure that information about silicosis cases reaches SafeWork NSW as soon as possible so investigations can begin on the cause of those cases. If conditions exist in some workplaces in New South Wales that are not meeting the standards and not complying with the new rules, that can be found out as soon as possible and other workers can be protected as soon as possible. That is the key element that we are addressing today in the bill. We need to make sure that as soon as we are aware of a case of silicosis—a very dangerous disease with potentially horrendous consequences for the individual—that we act on it as soon as we can. In those circumstances it is appropriate, notwithstanding normal privacy provisions, to ensure that the information about the disease reaches SafeWork NSW. We are dealing with the third leg of a three-leg strategy, which is ensuring that workers in New South Wales are safer than they would otherwise be as a result of the actions of the Government.

I turn my attention very briefly to the suggestion from the member for Newtown that manufactured stone should be banned altogether. That is not a practical or fair proposal. In fact, it is rather silly. We know that many things in industry carry known risks and are appropriately and sensibly managed through proper procedures, safety measures, good planning and good practice. A lot of things could go wrong in many workplaces if we were not adopting a safe approach. That is what work health and safety is all about. We know that it is possible to work safely with manufactured stone if persons conducting a business or undertaking [PCBU] and their workers use appropriate control measures to ensure that they are not exposed to a hazardous level of silica dust.

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 create a strong framework within which PCBUs and workers can manage the risk of silica dust. As has been said before, there has always been within that legislation an obligation on employers to provide a safe workplace and to take measures to ensure that work can be done safely. We have now specified exactly what crystallised silica means so there is an explicit obligation rather than a general one, but that obligation was never absent. There was always an obligation for work to be done safely and now we are spelling out how that work must be done.

From July 2020 workplaces are required not to exceed the new workplace exposure standard for silica of 0.05 milligrams per cubic metre. Through the measures we have outlined they can do that by not using dry cutting methods and by reducing the dust produced. Safe Work Australia has recently updated its guidance for people working with silica-containing products. It sets out the control measures which can be put in place across different industries in which silica is exposed and how PCBUs can meet their responsibilities under the Work Health and Safety Act. One important measure that can be taken is avoiding dry cutting, which has already been banned. Manufactured stone is only dangerous during activities which release silica dust into the air, such as cutting, drilling, sanding or polishing. It is not dangerous once it is in place. It is important to note for people like me and other households that have it in their kitchens and bathrooms that it is a safe product if undisturbed. It is only when undertaking one of those activities that we need to be aware of the risk of silica dust.

The bill will ensure that SafeWork NSW can be notified when workplaces have not used adequate controls, allowing their workers to be exposed to hazardous levels of silica dust. SafeWork NSW will then determine how to act on that information to protect workers. The bill allows for the sharing of health information in the most responsible way. The Government understands and acknowledges the importance of protecting workers' privacy; however, in some circumstances work health and safety regulators need access to the personal and medical information of workers to protect those workers and others from serious risks to their health and safety. The bill sets out that appropriate balance to ensure that when that information is needed it is provided and workers can be afforded the safest workplaces possible in New South Wales.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:23:41):** I speak in support of the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020. The object of the bill is to amend the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to authorise the secretary of the Ministry of Health to provide information to the regulator established by that Act if the secretary considers it necessary to do so to enable the regulator to exercise the regulator's functions under the Act. This authorisation overrides restrictions on the provision of the information that would otherwise be opposed by privacy and other legislation. In the bill new section 271B provides:

- (1) The Secretary of the Ministry of Health is authorised to provide information to the regulator if the Secretary considers the provision of the information is necessary to enable the regulator to exercise the regulator's functions under this Act.
- (2) Information may be provided in accordance with the section despite any prohibition in, or the need to comply with any requirement of, any Act or law (in particular, the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* and the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002*).

I commend Minister Anderson for bringing this bill forward. Minister Anderson is the best Minister for Better Regulation that this Parliament has seen. With this reform to address the re-emerging disease of silicosis, the Minister has moved swiftly to help to protect workers from contracting this terrible disease. I am particularly aware of this disease as the best man and a groomsman for my father when he was married both died of mesothelioma. A very, very good friend of mine was the Forster Dolphins Rugby Club's first president and he played over 200 first-grade games for Eastwood. He was an owner-driver of a truck who moved up to Forster. Even though he was a fitness fanatic he died of asbestosis. The only connection we could make for him contracting the disease was from his truck's brake drums, which contained asbestos.

In my electorate is Edstein Creative Monumental Masons—the number one and best masons in regional New South Wales. Not only do they manufacture headstones and other things, but they also manufacture stone kitchen benchtops. I have been to their factory—in fact, I took the Deputy Premier there to look at their process—and they do an absolutely fantastic job. In listening to members' contributions I have noted some commentary from the Opposition and crossbench members about the scope of the bill and why it does not pertain to other occupational diseases. For those members' edification: The bill establishes a framework for sharing information between NSW Health and the New South Wales work health and safety regulators, which is not limited to any one disease or medical condition. That is an important point to raise and I do not know why they did not note it.

To address the sharp spike in silicosis cases it is the Government's intention to use the framework created by this bill to put in place as a matter of urgency an information-sharing arrangement between NSW Health and SafeWork NSW relating only to silicosis. But the Government knows that new health challenges can emerge at any time—or re-emerge, as silicosis has. That is why the Government is setting up a framework for information sharing, which can be flexible and responsive to other risks to the health of workers in New South Wales. Discussions can continue between NSW Health and work health and safety regulators about how best to use the information-sharing power in the bill to protect workers from other occupational diseases.

The Opposition continues to call for a workplace exposure standard for silica of 0.02 milligrams. The reality is that the technology simply does not exist in 2020 to reliably measure a workplace exposure standard as low as 0.02 milligrams. Reducing the workplace exposure standard would require industry to meet an impossible standard. In late 2019 a majority of work health and safety Ministers across Australia—irrespective of political persuasion—agreed to halve the workplace exposure standard for respirable crystalline silica to a time-weighted average [TWA] over eight hours of 0.05 milligrams per cubic metre. They did so after a majority of Safe Work Australia members from across the country voted to recommend that change, following extensive research and consultation by Safe Work Australia on a review of the workplace exposure standard. A majority of work health and safety Ministers also agreed that Safe Work Australia should undertake further investigation into measurement methods and practical considerations that would enable a future reduction to the workplace exposure standard to a TWA of 0.02 milligrams per cubic metre.

At present practical difficulties exist in measuring to that standard and, therefore, in ensuring compliance. When I started work as a detective there was no way of measuring DNA but over time DNA science has developed and we now have the ability to do that. Similarly at the moment we cannot measure crystalline silica down to 0.02 milligrams per cubic metre. But the work health and safety Ministers across Australia and Safe Work Australia have given an undertaking that they will devise a measurement method to do that. We do not yet have that. It is ridiculous for crossbench members to say, "This is the standard we need", when it cannot be measured. In New South Wales the new workplace exposure standard took effect from 1 July 2020. That is well in advance of the national deadline for implementing the revised standard because workers' health and safety is at the forefront of what the Government is doing.

Every person conducting a business or undertaking [PCBU] is under a duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of its workers. That includes ensuring that workers are not exposed to unacceptably high levels of silica dust created by dry cutting. But the Government wants to make it explicitly clear that no-one in this State should be engaging in dry cutting. That is why the Government amended the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 to create a specific offence of directing or allowing a worker to dry-cut manufactured stone without appropriate control measures. Those measures include ensuring appropriate personal protective equipment is worn and the use of a water delivery system, an extraction system or an exhaust ventilation system to minimise the creation of silica dust. Those control mechanisms are key to eliminating the release of dust particles into the air.

The amendment to the regulation also gave SafeWork NSW inspectors the power to issue tough, new on-the-spot fines for noncompliance. Those new powers support the efforts of SafeWork NSW to secure compliance with health and safety requirements in the industry. The Government amended the regulation to enable inspectors to issue on-the-spot fines when a PCBU fails to comply with its obligation to notify the regulator by providing a copy of its health monitoring report that one of its workers has been diagnosed with silicosis. Inspectors will be in a strong position to enforce that obligation now that the Government is putting in place arrangements for SafeWork NSW to be notified independently of silicosis diagnoses through NSW Health and medical practitioners. The bill is a great piece of legislation. New South Wales is ahead of the game in Australia. The Government will introduce new measuring devices when they are invented. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:34:10):** I speak to the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020. I acknowledge the large number of contributions to this debate by Government members today. I acknowledge the member for East Hills, who made an eloquent speech, the member for Camden, the member for Manly, the member for Cootamundra, the member for Tweed and my good friend the member for Ku-ring-gai, who was incredibly detailed in his response—as we expect from him. I also acknowledge the member for Holsworthy, the member for Wollondilly, the member for Riverstone and the member for Myall Lakes.

The bill will enable the secretary of the Ministry of Health to provide information to the New South Wales work health and safety [WHS] regulators, as established by the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. The bill proposes to amend the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to permit NSW Health to share information with the WHS regulators: SafeWork NSW and the NSW Resources Regulator. This measure is necessary to enable them to exercise their functions under the Act. The bill will also enable NSW Health to share information about a silicosis diagnosis with the WHS regulators, as the Minister for Health and Medical Research has made silicosis a scheduled medical condition under part 4 of the Public Health Act 2010. I commend the Minister for that action.

The bill will also assist the WHS regulators to better investigate high-risk workplaces and detect noncompliant workplaces, with the aim of preventing further instances of silicosis. I thank the Minister for bringing the bill forward as part of the Government's strategy to address the harm of silicosis. We have heard from many members—most recently the member for Myall Lakes—about the issues relating to silicosis and the Government's strategy to address the harm of silicosis. I want to focus on the framework created by the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the WHS regulations. The information sharing power in the bill will reinforce the strong framework for managing risks to workers' health created by the Work Health and Safety Act.

While the bill may be small in content, it is powerful in what it delivers. It obliges employers to take steps to manage risks to the health and safety of workers and to anyone who may be put at risk by work. It enables our State's work health and safety regulators, SafeWork NSW and the NSW Resources Regulator, to step in and protect workers when they see behaviour that has the potential to cause harm. They do not have to wait for the harm to eventuate. That is particularly important in the case of occupational disease because it can take years before it becomes clear that a worker has contracted a disease from exposure to a hazardous substance. That is why the Work Health and Safety Act strongly regulates the use of hazardous chemicals like silica which can cause occupational disease.

The Work Health and Safety Regulation sets out in detail how the obligation to manage risks to health and safety applies in workplaces that are exposed to hazardous chemicals. Those obligations apply for the life of a product containing a hazardous chemical, from import or manufacture through to disposal. There are obligations to label products and provide safety data sheets so that everyone working with the product understands the danger. Vitally there is an obligation to provide health monitoring to a worker when there is a significant risk to their health as a result of ongoing work with a hazardous chemical. That ensures that any harmful effects caused by exposure to the hazardous chemical or material are picked up early. Appropriate action can then be taken to protect the worker's health and ensure that their workplace is operating safely.

The regulation also creates a strong framework for managing the risks posed by airborne contaminants. It is an offence for a person conducting a business or an undertaking to allow a person to be exposed to an airborne concentration of a harmful substance which exceeds the exposure standard for that substance. Workplace exposure standards are published by Safe Work Australia and cover over 700 chemicals. Safe Work Australia takes a proactive approach to updating and revising those standards in light of new evidence. That is why we have recently seen the workplace exposure standard for silica lowered from 0.1 milligram per cubic metre to 0.05 milligrams per cubic metre. I commend the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation for moving so swiftly to implement that revised standard in New South Wales. As the member for Myall Lakes eloquently put it, New South Wales is leading the way.

The regulation obliges employers to conduct air monitoring where necessary to determine whether there is a risk to health. I am very pleased that the Government, through the Centre for Work Health and Safety, is investing in research to make air monitoring cheaper and more accessible for businesses. This is the kind of

innovation we need to ensure that workplaces in New South Wales are both safe and productive. The bill will support the existing provisions in the Work Health and Safety Act and in the regulation which are targeted at preventing occupational diseases. NSW Health will be able to tell work health and safety regulators where people who are diagnosed with silicosis work. WHS regulators will be able to investigate those workplaces and take enforcement action if appropriate.

The power to share information between NSW Health and WHS regulators is particularly valuable in the case of silicosis, which in the most serious cases can present very early on. Symptoms of acute silicosis can appear in someone from a few months to two years after they have been exposed to high concentrations of silica. Accelerated silicosis can appear in workers who have had high levels of exposure over one to 10 years. The bill will enable a timely regulatory response to those diagnoses. It will build on the Government's recent reforms to the Work Health and Safety Act, clarifying the regulatory powers to enable the sharing of information between work health and safety regulators so that they can perform their duties under the Act.

Many workplaces in this State that are exposed to silica are regulated by SafeWork NSW, but some are regulated by the NSW Resources Regulator, Comcare or the Australian Government's work health and safety regulator. I acknowledge the Minister and those staff members who have worked diligently on this legislation. Gavin Melvin, Emma Dowsett, Jeremy Scott, Chloe Stevenson, Megan McCool, Gabrielle Gallagher and Rachael White have played a pivotal role in putting together this legislation to help protect workers from the dangers of silica. I commend the bill to the House.

**Business interrupted.**

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

#### **Reports**

#### **Debate resumed from 17 June 2020.**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:43:15):** I recommence my contribution to debate on the *Legislation Review Digest No. 16/57*. I have already reviewed a number of the bills in the previous digest, so I will move onto the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Bill 2020 that was examined by the committee. I have spoken about the bill briefly. The bill establishes a new defence of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment, which replaces the current defence of mental illness. This change provides that a person is not criminally responsible for an act if, at the time it was carried out, he or she had a mental health or cognitive impairment and, as a result of this, did not know the nature or quality of the act, or did not know the act was wrong.

When a defence of mental health impairment or cognitive impairment has been established, a jury will have to return a special verdict of "act proven but not criminally responsible". Currently, if a successful defence of mental illness is raised, the jury returns a special verdict of "not guilty by reason of mental illness". The amended special verdict responds to concerns that the phrase "not guilty" in the current special verdict causes pain and trauma to victims. This is because "not guilty" may suggest the defendant had not done the relevant act. The revised special verdict seeks to acknowledge that the act causing the offence was proven while maintaining that the person who committed the act was not criminally responsible. However, the committee noted that the new special verdict may impact on the rights of defendants with mental health and cognitive impairments to be presumed innocent.

The presumption of innocence requires that no guilt can be presumed before the prosecution has proven a charge beyond reasonable doubt. Additionally, mens rea or the mental element is an integral factor in establishing liability for a crime. The revised special verdict appears to draw more focus to the act itself and removes the words "not guilty" from the verdict. This may result in the stigma of a criminal act being attached to a person for whom the mental element of the crime has not been proven. The committee therefore referred this matter to Parliament for consideration.

Turning to one of the private member's bills considered by the committee, the Rural Fires Amendment (NSW RFS and Brigades Donations Fund) Bill 2020 seeks to amend the Rural Fires Act 1997 to retrospectively allow certain money in the Rural Fire Service and Brigades Donations Fund to be applied for purposes relating to emergency relief. Without this amendment, it can only be applied for the narrower purposes directly related to the NSW Rural Fire Service's brigades. This is due to the limitations in the terms of the relevant trust. The committee noted retrospectivity that a person who donated at the time, knowing the terms of the trust, would have no recourse if their money were now applied for purposes not covered by those terms.



Further, as regards precedent, there are potential consequences for other trusts should Parliament legislate retrospectively to change the terms of the NSW Rural Fire Service donations trust. Accordingly the committee referred those matters to Parliament for consideration. That concludes my remarks on the sixteenth digest for this Parliament. I thank once again, as always, the other members of the committee and in particular the committee secretariat staff for the work they do, particularly during this challenging pandemic time. I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:46:44):** I make a contribution to debate on the sixteenth digest of this Parliament, dated 16 June 2020. In this digest the committee considered 11 bills and commented on eight. The committee also considered one regulation, the Industrial Relations (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Amendment (Temporary Wages Policy) Regulation 2020, but declined to comment on that regulation because it had been disallowed in the other place before the committee had met. However, I encourage members to refer to this digest, especially appendix two.

Appendix two on page 56 records letters received from Ministers and members responding to the committee's comments for the period 15 November 2019 to 10 June 2020. If we combine this digest with digest No. 9, dated 19 November 2019, we have a record of the responses received to comments made by the committee on bills and regulations. When we tally those, we see the committee has commented on bills and regulations 74 times over the life of the current Parliament. However, only 27 formal responses were received by the committee, as recorded in the two digests I have referred to: the sixteenth and the ninth digests.

When we consider that the review of the Legislation Review Act conducted by the committee in the last Parliament recommended that a mechanism should be introduced and put into effect to ensure all comments of the committee were addressed in some way, this record makes clear that we could be doing a whole lot better. The committee does important work. The Legislation Review Act is an important piece of legislation. It enables the Parliament to be made aware through an independent process of infringements on the rights and liberties of the citizens of New South Wales. Small though they may be, they accumulate over time.

The committee has made a number of comments over the life of this Parliament on infringements on the rights and liberties of citizens of this State that have not been addressed by either informal comment to the committee or in debate before this place. We can do better. I put that out there for members to absorb. I look forward to the Parliament doing a better job of addressing comments made by the committee in the future. Once again I commend the digest to the House. I thank my fellow committee members for their work and the secretariat that supports the committee.

**Report noted.**

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

### **Reports**

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

**Debate on *Interim Report into Support for Drought Affected Communities in NSW* called on and postponed.**

## **COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **Reports**

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

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (12:50:55):** As I was only appointed to this committee in June 2020, I will not go into detail about the *2020 Review of the Annual Reports and other matters of the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People*. However, as I have been elected deputy chair of the Committee on Children and Young People, I make the following observations. The committee reviewed the 2017-18 and 2018-19 annual reports of the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People. The Advocate for Children and Young People [ACYPP] is an independent statutory office that advocates for and promotes the wellbeing of children and young people. It fosters their participation in decision-making processes that affect them, encouraging their views to be given serious consideration and be taken into account.

I welcome the acting Advocate for Children and Young People, Ms Zoë Robinson, and acknowledge her work in the role. I also acknowledge the outgoing advocate, Mr Andrew Johnson. Mr Johnson was the inaugural advocate and worked hard to establish the office of the advocate as the leading voice for children and young people. The review performed by the committee found that the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People has been fulfilling its functions and following the principles governing its work as specified by the

Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014. In particular, the office did significant work talking and meeting with children and young people who have been affected by recent disasters across New South Wales, including drought, bushfires and floods.

During the report period the ACYP reached the milestone of having heard from 10,000 children and young people in face-to-face consultations of a combined total of 28,000 children and young people in the past four years. The office of the advocate has a responsibility to prepare a strategic plan for children and young people in New South Wales. The current strategic plan ran until 2019 and the committee has recommended that the advocate prioritise the development of a new strategic plan to continue to support children and young people in New South Wales.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:53:39):** I speak as a member of the Committee on Children and Young People. It has been my honour to serve on this committee and to take part in overseeing the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People. The tabling of this report demonstrates the accountability of the office of the advocate to this Parliament and, in turn, to the people of this State. As the deputy chair mentioned, it became clear in the course of the committee's review that the advocate was fulfilling its functions as set out by statute. From the outset, I thank the outgoing advocate, Mr Andrew Johnson, for coming before the committee and for what he has achieved so far in this space. Mr Johnson certainly brought enthusiasm to the role of inaugurating the office and establishing it firmly as a voice for children and young people.

I thank the acting advocate, Zoë Robinson, who fronted the committee only shortly after her appointment. I look forward to working with Ms Robinson into the future. The Government should not allow Mr Johnson's and Ms Robinson's hard work to go to waste. Governments around the world face major barriers to engaging with children and young people. Young people often feel their voices are not heard and that their concerns are not taken seriously. There is a deficit of trust in institutional authority and young people do not believe they have a place in government or a voice in our Parliament. It is not that young people and children do not want to be involved. In recent years, we have seen repeatedly that young people are passionate advocates for a variety of causes like marriage equality, climate change and racial equality, with causes like Black Lives Matter. As lawmakers, we owe it to children and young people to take their views seriously, particularly on matters that concern them. We owe it to them to take into account what they have to say when making decisions that impact their lives.

The establishment of the Advocate for Children and Young People presented a major opportunity for the New South Wales Government to bridge this gulf and to build trust in our institutions among young people. As a member of the committee, I was pleased to learn that the advocate has heard from more than 10,000 young people in face-to-face interactions. After being launched with much fanfare at the Sydney Opera House in 2016, the NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People expired last year. Ahead of the launch, then Minister the Hon. John Ajaka told the upper House that the Government would:

... continue to work with [young people] to make New South Wales a great place for children and young people to live in and grow... ensuring that the voices of children and young people are strongly reflected in the forthcoming NSW Strategic Plan... [and] the Government will also be ensuring that their voices are heard in the work being done in the interests of children and young people across all portfolios.

Unfortunately, the Government has taken its eye off the ball, allowing the strategic plan to expire without being replaced or reported on. It is essential that the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services evaluates the expired plan and develops a new one as a matter of priority. We need to ensure that all agencies charged with implementing the plan are called to report on their progress. It was a groundbreaking plan and it worked across government. It is important that all agencies actually report on the progress. Our children and young people are an extraordinary resource and we have the opportunity to harness that resource. We cannot squander that opportunity. I reiterate the committee's recommendations. We need a new strategic plan, we need stronger accountability measures built into its implementation, and we need to do right by our State's children and young people.

**Report noted.**

## **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING**

### **Reports**

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

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:58:12):** As chair of the Committee on Environment and Planning, I speak to the committee's report entitled *Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019* tabled on 15 July 2020. The Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2109, introduced to the House by the shadow Minister for Building Reform and Property, Yasmin Catley, MP, was referred to the committee in November 2019. This was a unique referral, being the first time in recent history that a bill has been referred to a lower House committee.

The bill addressed one aspect of the building and construction industry: the registration of engineers. This was in response to the exposure of a number of problems within the industry following recent cases of defects in residential high-rise apartments. Those incidents have had serious consequences for owners, who are left to foot the bill for costly repairs with few options for recourse. The bill was referred to our committee in the context of broader building reforms proposed by the Government, which aimed to address the industry-wide issues.

In the time since the inquiry held its hearings the Government's wider reforms to the building and construction sector have passed Parliament. The Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 contained welcome reforms that should improve residential construction standards. Importantly, the Act also provided for the registration of engineers. Our inquiry found that the introduction of a broad-based scheme to register engineers is a necessary and effective means of promoting transparency, accountability and higher standards in the industry. This view was widely supported by inquiry participants, including professional associations, academics and key unions, many of whom outlined their sustained and ongoing advocacy for a registration scheme.

The Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 introduced a requirement for certain classes of engineers to be registered from 1 July 2021. To be registered, engineers will have to show that they are qualified and competent to work as a professional engineer. They will also have to undertake continuing professional development to keep their skills current. We commend this reform and believe it will improve standards in the engineering profession as well as the sectors engineers work in. This is a positive outcome and is the result of a multi-party cooperation throughout both the inquiry process and during the passage of the legislation.

While the registration requirement is a positive step towards reforming the industry, the committee considered that the legislated scheme could be improved further. We made a number of recommendations and findings in our report that should be considered during the Government's statutory review of the Act. They include incorporating elements of the engineers bill that were supported by a range of stakeholders and identified as important parts of the registration framework. The registration model proposed in the engineers bill was based on the Queensland system. The model adopted through the Act is different in that the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service will manage the registration process, instead of a board of professional engineers. We think that a board-run model should be looked at, as we found that it was a cost-effective and efficient way to register engineers.

We also recommended that areas of engineering covered by the framework be considered as part of the statutory review. We heard that geotechnical and hydraulic engineering are important disciplines in the building sector and should require registration. We note that regulations will have to be made under the Act to refine its operation and flesh out the details. It is important that those regulations be released for consultation so that industry participants can identify issues and provide useful feedback. However, we heard that given extensive consultation has already occurred this process should be quick and targeted.

We congratulate the Government on its reforms to the building sector. The framework for effective regulation of the sector has been established. While we feel that elements of the registration scheme could be refined, it is clear that consumers will benefit from those changes. In closing, I thank my fellow committee members for their valuable, cooperative contributions throughout the inquiry process. I also thank the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, Kevin Anderson, and the shadow Minister, Yasmin Catley, for their ongoing commitment to better building outcomes for the people of New South Wales. I thank all stakeholders who participated in the inquiry. I especially thank the committee staff for their professionalism and support, which was certainly challenging at times given the COVID-19 pandemic and the way in which we needed to amend our working style and meeting practice. I commend the report to the House.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (13:03:00):** I make a brief contribution to the take-note debate on the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning report on the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019. I thank the staff, my fellow committee members, the chair and all the stakeholders who took part by taking the time to make a submission. Of course, we had to suspend our other inquiry on energy. I suppose it is rare for our hardworking departmental staff that a politician changes their mind at the very last minute to deal with those things.

In recent times we have seen confidence lost in the building sector where people have invested their life savings into buying probably one of the biggest assets of their lives. We see major infrastructure being built all around the State and it is important to make sure that qualified people are doing the engineering work, which goes to the structural part of any building defects. Part of the committee's findings was to ensure that our engineers continue to receive recognition for their skills, knowledge and learning. Engineers hold a very distinguished qualification and it is important that we have a regulatory framework that recognises the important role they play.

I commend my colleague the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for introducing the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019, which is similar to the Queensland model, to ensure that we can build confidence in the

building and infrastructure industry for our engineers. I note that the Government has moved its own bill, the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019. That is okay; it does not matter. The bills are very similar in their objectives and purpose. Labor believes it is important to support the public interest rather than wrangle about whose bill it should be. We want to rebuild confidence in the industry, which will play an even more important role as the economy recovers.

I note—and it was echoed by the chair—that it is important in the statutory review to look at models and improvements that can be made to the legislation. In particular, a board-run model is a much more cost-effective and more efficient registration process. I am sure that in due course those changes can and should be made because they will only increase the transparency, accountability and quality of standards, which will prevent any further deficiencies or defects in the building industry and improve the level of confidence in the industry. I commend the committee for its cooperation and thank the departmental staff for their assistance to the committee. I commend the committee's report to the House.

**Report noted.**

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

*Documents*

**STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE**

**Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** I table an Addendum to Interim Report 3/57 of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee entitled *Modernisation and reform of practices and procedures: ePetitions sessional orders*. I order that the addendum be printed.

*Question Time*

**ICARE**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:15:19):** I direct my question to the Treasurer. Why did the Treasurer cancel Treasury's proposed independent review into icare last September?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:15:31):** I thank the member for her question. The review that the Leader of the Opposition is referring to, as Minister Dominello knows all too well, the independent regulator was already carrying out a comprehensive, in-depth compliance and performance review of the insurer in its role as the regulator. The State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] is the regulator of all New South Wales workers compensation schemes, including the Nominal Insurer, and it is appropriate for them to undertake that review. Rather than undertake two reviews at the same time, the Treasury review will proceed at the end of the year, as required under section 32 of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015.

Today, with the Government's 2015 reforms, the workers compensation scheme is now subject to a greater level of scrutiny and transparency than at any other time in the scheme's history. In addition to having its own independent agency to review its operations, icare is also subject to frequent reviews by the Law and Justice Committee, budget estimates and other forums. Some of the challenges that have come through these reviews—the reason we set up SIRA in the first place was to provide greater scrutiny and greater transparency that did not occur under the previous scheme.

Since its establishment in 2015 icare has participated in a review of the workers compensation scheme 2015-16, a review of the Lifetime Care and Support Scheme 2017, a review of the dust diseases scheme 2017, a statutory review of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015-17, a further review of the dust diseases scheme 2018, a further review of the Lifetime Care and Support Scheme 2018, a further review of the workers compensation scheme 2018, an even further review of the dust diseases scheme 2019 and a review of the Nominal Insurer in 2019. Icare has had more reviews than Broadway, and with great ratings. If one looks at the scheme under this Government compared to how it was run under the former Labor Government—

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Tell us more about that.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Do you remember the siege of Macquarie Street? Members of Parliament wept as they crossed the picket lines.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will resume his seat.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** I simply refer to the use of a prop.

**The SPEAKER:** It was an acceptable reference to an article. The Treasurer will continue. The member for Wakehurst will contain himself.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** He was the only one there at the time. The siege of Macquarie Street, the demonstration under Labor's scheme turned into a riot—and this was pre-Michael Daley with a \$2 billion deficit. As they said at the time, if the auditors are saying you must reform because you have a deficit of \$2.18 billion and growing, then you need to reform the scheme. That was the scheme under the previous Labor Government—before the great reforms of Michael Daley that turned it into a \$4 billion deficit. I see he has a public interest debate on icare. I wonder if he will be in the same state as he was when we had the workers compensation debate in 2012. We all know—certainly the Minister for Local Government knows—the state he was in at the time.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** There was the \$2 billion deficit pre-Daley. Post-Daley, under his watch, we had the resignation of Greg McCarthy, who was the chairman of WorkCover at the time. What did Mr McCarthy say? Mr McCarthy told *The Sun-Herald* that a combination of a number of factors "hammering the scheme's investments and the 'neglect' of former Labor finance Ministers Joe Tripodi and Michael Daley"—

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order. My point of order is Standing Order 129. It is nice to hear history but we are asking about the current situation. The Treasurer is straying far from that.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer has been relevant.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I have five minutes, as members know, and I answered the question early on. The former head of WorkCover said that "the 'neglect' of former Labor finance Ministers Joe Tripodi and Michael Daley had left the scheme's finances in a parlous State". There you go, the member for Maroubra and Joe Tripodi, thick as thieves, stealing from injured workers. That was workers compensation the Labor way: riots outside the Parliament and a scheme that was billions of dollars in deficit.

#### ICARE

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (14:20:47):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Carmel Donnelly, the head of the insurance regulator State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA], wrote to the Treasurer three times—in December 2018, June 2019 and September 2019—warning him of deteriorating performance at icare. Why did the Treasurer ignore those warnings and instead cover them up?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:21:10):** I completely reject the proposition in the question.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Would you like me to table it?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** You can table whatever you like, member for Cessnock. The role that we had for SIRA is operating exactly the way it was intended in the first place. We on this side of the House are not scared of scrutiny. In fact, we embrace it. Under Labor we had a scheme where the service provider was working in the same organisation as the regulator. The new arrangement that we have in place—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** —and all of the reviews into workers compensation ensure that we have the best system possible, a system with a board that ensures the highest standards when it comes to service delivery. Under Labor we had a scheme that was \$4 billion in deficit. Labor cannot help injured workers. The member for Keira says "rubbish".

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order—

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** You disagree with the former head of WorkCover?

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will resume his seat. What is the member's point of order? If it is on relevance I will rule that it is not a point of order.

**Mr David Harris:** It is relevance because the question is about three specific letters that the Treasurer does not want to talk about.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will continue.

**Mr David Harris:** Three specific letters is what the question is about.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** That was an interesting history lesson because we know that the workers compensation scheme evolves over time and what you see under our Government is a scheme in surplus and business premiums at the lowest level since 1987.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Labor presided over a scheme that caused riots outside Parliament House. Labor MPs had to sneak in the back door. MPs were in tears as they had to cross the picket line.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** It had better be good.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** It always is, Mr Speaker.

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

**Mr Clayton Barr:** It is Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** The member will sit down. The Treasurer is being relevant.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** In what way? It is a question about the three representations.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** As the health Minister reminds me, the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union were outside. The unions were there blocking Labor MPs from coming into this place.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Now we have a system that includes members of the union on the board of icare to provide the best service delivery for workers and we have this unique situation—

**Ms Anna Watson:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order from the member for Shellharbour.

**Ms Anna Watson:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Treasurer should return to the leave of the question, which was about the three letters from the CEO of SIRA. He has not mentioned those letters once in his response. He is now having a conversation with the health Minister.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. The Treasurer is being generally relevant; however, I ask the Treasurer to refer to Ms Donnelly and SIRA's role, as raised by the question.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I welcome Ms Donnelly's reviews of the icare scheme. That is what we have set out to do. As the health Minister has reminded me, in the State of New South Wales Labor reaps what it sows after attacking the working class. Opposition members presided over a scheme that attacked the very workers they were elected to represent. Injured workers have never received more support under the icare scheme and the Opposition members hate it.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Treasurer, have you completed your answer?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will stop now. Treasurer, have you completed your answer?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Yes, I have.

#### ICARE

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:25:56):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. In June last year Minister Dominello gave the Treasurer a clear warning from then finance secretary Martin Hoffman. The email states:

The situation [at icare] could get way out of hand really quickly.

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

**Ms JODI McKAY:** The email continues:

Not a time when government/public service can be slow or cautious—or we get in another 12 to 18 months, a real crisis.

[This] needs decisive engagement.

Why did the Treasurer ignore that important advice from then Secretary Hoffman? Why did the Treasurer ignore his alarming warning?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:27:08):** I do not call "alarming" a scheme that has a funding ratio of above 100 per cent. I do not call "alarming" strong financial management of a scheme that provides lower premiums for businesses right across the State. Issues are regularly raised between Ministers and their departments about all aspects of government and action is taken to ensure the best scheme possible to support injured workers right across our State. I call a deterioration of the scheme a \$4 billion deficit presided over by the Labor Party. The member for Maroubra returned to this Chamber yesterday for his welcome-back parade. I wonder if he was in tears when he came into Parliament House on the days of the riots.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. My question relates specifically to a warning given by then Secretary Hoffman with regard to icare and its performance. I require an answer from the Treasurer about that.

**The SPEAKER:** I will give the Treasurer time to come to that specific matter. If he has not done so in two minutes, I will draw him back to it directly.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I am happy to give you the facts.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Would you like a copy of the email?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** No. I am happy to give you the facts.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Let us have a look at the system under icare. The most seriously injured workers are getting more support than they have ever had. Injured workers have greater input into their treatment and work plans.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Gosford to order for the second time. I call the member for Wyong to order for the second time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Workers are contacted within 24 hours of injury notification. Reimbursement is provided for out-of-pocket expenses within 48 hours.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Access to treatment has been expedited from six weeks to five days.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Treatment approvals are provided in four days, down from 21 days under Labor. Liability decisions are made in four days, down from 40 days.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** If the point of order relates to relevance, I am going to give the Treasurer a bit more leeway.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** How long? Forty seconds?

**The SPEAKER:** The member will resume her seat. The Treasurer will continue.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The question relates to the performance of the scheme. I am going through the actual performance of the scheme. It is clearly much improved from when it was under those opposite, who simply used injured workers as political pawns in their political games. That is exactly what they did with the Bernie Banton Foundation, as the member for Cessnock knows, in relation to the Dust Diseases Board. Those on this side of the House remember what occurred at that time—we made changes to the Dust Diseases Board. The people affected by dust diseases are some of the most vulnerable. They were not getting the care they needed under the previous Labor scheme.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. It is important that the Minister provides a response to this email, which clearly shows that he was warned by Minister Dominello on behalf of Secretary Hoffman about the serious mismanagement at icare.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer has been generally relevant, but the question was specific. I ask him to come back more specifically to the leave of the question.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** More specifically, in relation to the performance of the scheme, some of the most vulnerable workers—injured workers right across the State—are receiving the support they need that they were not getting previously. In fact, the other day on a *Four Corners* program one gentleman was involved in the scheme. He said he had never met an injured worker during the entire time he was involved in workers compensation. How poor is that? That was the way the scheme was run under the previous Labor Government.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: Mr Speaker, the Treasurer is flouting your ruling. Again he has not mentioned the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the Treasurer of my ruling.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The member for Cessnock just asked whether I have met injured workers. In fact, when we first set up icare that is exactly what formed its incarnation: sitting down with injured workers, hearing their stories, and tailoring care and support around those workers. That is why when it comes to the reviews of the workers compensation scheme we have received more support—

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will resume his seat.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** The Treasurer is flouting your ruling. He is refusing to answer the question. This is such a critical issue to injured workers across the State and he must answer the question. It must be relevant. Why are you running a protection racket for the board and management of this corrupt organisation, Dom?

**The SPEAKER:** The time has expired.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I do not think Mr Lennon is corrupt. If the President of the Labor Party is corrupt—

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will resume his seat.

#### ICARE

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:32:19):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. The Treasurer covered up warning after warning from Treasury, the regulator and even Victor Dominello that icare was in dire straits. Why is he—

**The SPEAKER:** I am happy for the member for Swansea to wait until there is silence. Members on both sides of the Chamber will remain silent. The member for Swansea will commence her question again.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Treasurer, you covered up warning after warning from Treasury, the regulator and even Victor Dominello that icare was in dire straits.

**Mr Rob Stokes:** Point of order: I ask through you, Mr Speaker, that the member for Swansea use the correct title when referring to a member of this place.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order, but I believe the member for Swansea addressed the question to the Treasurer and then said "you". That is probably acceptable, but I am happy to hear further because I value the opinion of the member for Pittwater.

**Mr Rob Stokes:** To the point of order: In the question there was a reference to a Minister of this place by his name rather than by his electorate or title. Mr Speaker, I ask you to direct the member for Swansea—

**The SPEAKER:** I am sure the member for Swansea can rephrase her question to comply with the standing order. I thank the member for Pittwater.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I direct my question to the Treasurer. The Treasurer covered up warning after warning from Treasury, from the regulator and even from Minister Dominello that icare was in dire straits. Why is he running a protection racket for the gross mismanagement and corruption in icare?

**The SPEAKER:** I note that the question was not specific and was rather inflammatory. The Treasurer has fair leeway to answer.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:34:42):** I begin by thanking the—

**Ms Anna Watson:** You give fair leeway on everything else, so why not this?

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



**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** —planning Minister for clarifying that issue. My relationship with Mr Dominello has never been stronger. Through this pandemic we have gotten to know each other very well.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** With 1.5 metres distancing.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Obviously with social distancing it has been harder for us, but we have come through. When it comes to Labor's accusations in relation to workers compensation schemes, they are false. Review after review has been conducted and the facts speak for themselves. The scheme has never been in a better place under the current arrangements compared with how it was under the Labor Government, when there was a \$4 billion deficit, premiums for businesses were due to rise by around 28 per cent and 12,000 jobs were at risk. That was the scheme that the Labor Party presided over.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** It is all lies.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Those opposite speak about lies. Even today they are raising issues in relation to the recruitment of the CEO, saying it was not done in conjunction with proper processes. Once again, this is completely false. This was a process with rigour; a process that had over 40 interviews during that time and a number of candidates were interviewed. If the Labor Party had conducted the recruitment of its leader with the same rigour, it would not have a leader as bad as the member for Strathfield.

#### WENTWORTH PARK GREYHOUNDS TRACK

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (14:36:27):** I direct my question to Minister Stokes, the Minister for Planning and "Open" Spaces. Considering the Government's stated commitment to improving access to open green space in urban areas, will the Minister support opening up the current Wentworth Park greyhound racing track as public open space when the lease expires?

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (14:37:07):** I thank—

**Mr Ryan Park:** Remember what happened last time.

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

**Mr ROB STOKES:** I could have taken a point of order on the question in terms of the reference to my title, but I left that alone. I anticipated this question and I thank the member for Balmain very much for it. He is a member who does very much what it says on the tin: He is a member of The Greens, he is advocating for green open spaces and his surname—since we are talking of names—consists largely of the word "park". Green open spaces and parklands—

**Mr Ryan Park:** My name consists wholly of "park".

**Mr ROB STOKES:** Yes. It is interesting because I think that unifies all parties in this Chamber: a focus on green spaces and parklands. Across every party, whatever your colour—whether it is red, lime-green, dark green, blue or any shade in between—the importance of our parklands and open spaces right across the length and breadth of New South Wales is dear to the communities we represent. Often when we talk about planning and environmental issues, we are talking about the built environment. Sometimes we forget about the importance of the parklands that separates them, that articulate them and that give them meaning. Particularly during the pandemic the importance of our parks and our public open spaces have been emphasised within the community because of the challenge social distancing creates. Unlike so many cities and states around the world, the use of our parklands means that we have the capacity to allow for exercise and those sorts of things, which are so important to mental health and wellbeing.

The member's question is very timely indeed. But I should say, "Does this member ever stop?" It was only just a couple of weeks ago that I was able to stand with the member in his community at Callan Park and announce a \$10 million grant in support of the outcomes of the consultation over the landscape plan for Callan Park. For 20 years Callan Park has been under a sort of parkland purgatory—a landscape limbo, if you will. But through our commitment, to keep the biblical theme going, we are able to turn it into a veritable Garden of Eden right in the centre of the inner western suburbs of Sydney.

The member's question refers specifically to another park very dear to him in his community—Wentworth Park—and the future directions for that public open space. Indeed all our public open spaces have a variety of uses and we really need to talk to communities carefully about what uses they see for those spaces in the future. That is why we have released a 50-year vision for our parklands, whether that is Centennial Parklands, Moore Park, Western Sydney Parklands, Parramatta Park, Callan Park or indeed other significant parks around New South Wales. The member's question goes directly to the sorts of issues that we want the new Greater Sydney Parklands agency to be looking at. This is a very important question for the future of Sydney and New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will remain silent.

**Mr Paul Toole:** Wake up to yourself—you've got the wrong member.

**The SPEAKER:** I know the member for Bathurst is responding, but I ask that both members contain themselves.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Have you spoken to him about greyhounds?

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

**Mr ROB STOKES:** I really hope that the Leader of the Opposition can join across party lines in recognising the importance of our parklands. It was Sir Henry Parkes—again, these are not intentional puns; they are just names—when speaking at the opening of Centennial Park and the trust that has safeguarded that crucial parkland for so many years who said, "This is the people's park." It will be an enduring adornment for the people of Sydney and indeed of New South Wales. It is the same vision that we are echoing today to recognise that, rather than having all these discrete little trusts to manage a whole series of little huts around the place—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Are you committing to Wentworth Park for a greyhound facility or not?

**Mr ROB STOKES:** If you would let me finish, something I hoped would be a bipartisan policy and not something that the Leader of the Opposition is partisan to, is effectively our vision is that—here is a good one—the whole can be greater than the sum of the parks! Our vision is to bring all our parklands together across Sydney for all Sydneysiders to enjoy.

#### *Committees*

### **COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

#### **Deputy Chair**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 18 June 2020 Peter Bryan Sidgreaves was elected Deputy Chair of the Committee on Children and Young People.

#### *Business of the House*

### **SESSIONAL ORDERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** By leave: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Agrees to the proposed amendments to the sessional orders as follows:

#### **LODGEMENT OF PAPER PETITIONS**

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, Standing Order 119 shall read as follows:

- 119.** A paper petition must be lodged with the Clerk by 12 noon on the day it is to be reported to the House.

#### **LODGEMENT OF ELECTRONIC PETITIONS**

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, the following Sessional Order be adopted:

- 119A.** An electronic petition is considered to be lodged with the Clerk once the petition is no longer open for signatures.

#### **CLERK'S CERTIFICATE – PAPER PETITIONS**

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, Standing Order 120 shall read as follows:

- 120.** A paper petition must bear the Clerk's certification that it is in conformity with the Standing Orders.

#### **CONFORMITY WITH THE STANDING ORDERS – ELECTRONIC PETITIONS**

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, the following Sessional Order be adopted:

- 120A.** An electronic petition is in conformity with the Standing Orders when it is open for signatures.

#### **CONTENTS OF PAPER PETITIONS**

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, Standing Order 121 shall read as follows:

- 121.** A paper petition must:

- (1) Be legible and contain no alterations.
- (2) Be in English or be accompanied by a translation certified to be correct by the lodging Member.
- (3) Contain the request of the petitioner(s).

- (4) Contain the names and addresses of the petitioner(s) and their own original signatures on sheets containing the petition or the request and they must not be pasted on or otherwise transferred to the petition.  
A petitioner unable to write may affix their mark in the presence of a witness who shall list their own name and address as well as the name and address of the petitioner.
- (5) Contain at least one signature on the same sheet as the request.
- (6) Be respectful, decorous, and temperate in its language, and not contain irrelevant statements.
- (7) If from a corporation, be made under its common seal.
- (8) Be received only as the petition of the parties signing the same.

#### **CONTENTS OF ELECTRONIC PETITIONS**

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, the following Sessional Order be adopted:

**121A.** An electronic petition must:

- (1) Be in English.
- (2) Contain the request of the petitioner expressed in no more than 250 words.
- (3) Be respectful, decorous, and temperate in its language, and not contain irrelevant statements.
- (4) Be supported by at least five people before it is open to the public for signatures, with the petitioner and all signatories residents of New South Wales.
- (5) Be open for signatures for a period of one, three or twelve weeks.
- (6) Be received only as the petition of the parties signing the same.

#### **PETITIONS MUST NOT CONTAIN**

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, Standing Order 122 shall read as follows:

**122.** A paper petition or electronic petition must not:

- (1) Have letters, affidavits, or other documents attached to it, except if it is a petition for a private bill.
- (2) Make reference to any debate in Parliament.
- (3) Be lodged by a Member who has signed the paper petition as a petitioner.
- (4) Contain language disrespectful to either House or the Governor.

#### **PROCEDURE FOR LODGEMENT AND PRESENTATION OF PAPER PETITIONS**

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, Standing Order 123 shall read as follows:

**123.** The procedure for the lodging and presentation of a paper petition is as follows:

- (1) The Member must be acquainted with the contents of the paper petition.
- (2) The Member must ensure that the paper petition is in conformity with the Standing Orders.
- (3) The Member must sign the front sheet and, if applicable, certify that the paper petition has been signed by 500 or more persons.
- (4) The paper petition may be lodged for presentation by the Clerk.
- (5) In the House the Clerk shall announce that paper petitions have been received.
- (6) The terms of the paper petition presented shall be printed in Hansard and in the Votes and Proceedings.
- (7) No discussion upon the subject matter of a paper petition shall be allowed, except in accordance with Standing Order 125A or by way of substantive motion.

#### **PROCEDURE FOR LODGEMENT AND PRESENTATION OF ELECTRONIC PETITIONS**

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, the following Sessional Order be adopted:

**123A.** The procedure for the lodging and presentation of an electronic petition is as follows:

- (1) The Member must be acquainted with the contents of the electronic petition.
- (2) The Member must agree to present the electronic petition.
- (3) The electronic petition is considered presented after it is no longer open for signatures.
- (4) In the House the Clerk shall announce that electronic petitions have been received.
- (5) The terms of the electronic petition presented shall be printed in Hansard and in the Votes and Proceedings.
- (6) No discussion upon the subject matter of an electronic petition shall be allowed, except in accordance with Standing Order 125A or by way of substantive motion.

#### **PETITIONS DEEMED TO HAVE NOT BEEN RECEIVED**

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, Standing Order 124 shall read as follows:

- 124.** Paper petitions and electronic petitions shall be deemed to be received by the House unless a motion, moved on the next sitting day, is agreed to, without debate or amendment, that a petition be not received.

#### **REFERRAL TO MINISTER AND RESPONSE**

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, Standing Order 125 shall read as follows:

**125.**

- (1) A copy of every paper petition and electronic petition lodged with the Clerk and received by the House shall be referred by the Clerk to the Minister responsible for the administration of the matter which is the subject of the petition or electronic petition.
- (2) The Minister must lodge a response with the Clerk within 35 calendar days of a paper petition or electronic petition being received by the House if that paper petition or electronic petition has been signed by 500 or more persons.
- (3) The receipt of the response shall be reported to the House by the Clerk and a copy of the response sent to the Member who lodged the paper petition or electronic petition. The response shall also be published.

#### **DEBATE ON PETITIONS SIGNED BY 10,000 OR MORE PERSONS**

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, Standing Order 125A shall read as follows:

**125A.**

- (1) The subject matter of every paper petition or electronic petition received by the House and certified by a Member and announced by the Speaker as having been signed by 10,000 or more persons, 20,000 or more persons for electronic petitions, shall be automatically set down as an Order of the Day "That the House take note of the petition".
  - (2) The Order of the Day shall take place at 4.00 p.m. on the Thursday of the next sitting week
  - (3) Any further paper or electronic petitions received after the first Order of the Day is disposed of shall be set down on succeeding Thursdays in the order in which they are presented.
  - (4) The following time limits shall apply:
    - First speaker – 5 minutes
    - Four other Members – 5 minutes each
    - Response by Minister – 3 minutes
    - First speaker in reply – 2 minutes
    - Total – 30 minutes
  - (5) If a Member does not seek the call when the Order of the Day is called on, the Order of the Day will lapse.
- (2) Agrees to the proposed changes to the sessional orders coming into force on and from 7 August 2020.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

#### **Membership**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That Marjorie Spooner O'Neill be appointed to serve on the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure in place of Gregory Charles Warren, discharged.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Petitions*

#### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following petition signed by more than 500 persons has been lodged for presentation:

#### **Hoxton Park Traffic Management**

Petition calling on the Government to instruct Transport for NSW to retain the right-turn in and out lanes at the intersection of Dorrigo Avenue and Hoxton Park Road, Hoxton Park, as their closure would adversely affect access to the Hoxton Park Shopping Village, received from **Mr Paul Lynch**.

*Bills***WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (INFORMATION EXCHANGE) BILL 2020****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.****Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:45:33):**

In reply: As members have heard, the Government is committed to addressing the re-emergence of silicosis as an operational disease. The bill seeks to amend the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to authorise the secretary of the Ministry of Health to provide information to the regulators established by the Act. There are two work health and safety [WHS] regulators who 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 section 271B to the Work Health and Safety Act, which will authorise the secretary of the Ministry of Health to provide information to the New South Wales WHS regulators if 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 WHS 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 WHS regulators. The health secretary may provide any information that they have as long as the information is necessary for the regulator to carry out its functions under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. It is important to reiterate some facts from my second reading speech about this important issue.

Clause 3 of the bill provides that information may be shared under 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 1998 and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. In exceptional situations, NSW Health may provide limited personal and medical information about workers 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 disease 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 SafeWork NSW and NSW Health are developing the memorandum of understanding in consultation with the Information Commissioner and Privacy Commissioner 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. 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 as soon as possible. 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 about silicosis cases. 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 going home safe at the end of their day and every workplace using hazardous materials doing the right thing by its workers.

We are committed to addressing the re-emergence of silicosis as an occupational disease. The bill forms part of that cohesive Government strategy to address the dangers to workers' health posed by respirable crystalline silica. The Government is putting an end to the practice of dry cutting, which can release dangerous levels of silica particles, and halving the workplace exposure standard to silica dust. The measures will make a real difference to workers' safety on the ground, as will enabling health and safety regulators to better detect workplaces engaging in dry cutting or failing to comply with the workplace exposure standard. The provisions in the bill will make that

possible. An information exchange between NSW Health and the work health and safety regulators means that they will be told which workplaces have workers being diagnosed with silicosis so that they can focus their efforts on holding those workplaces to account and improving their practices. The bill will enable NSW Health and WHS regulators to respond swiftly and flexibly to new threats to workers' health in future. In bringing forward the bill, the Government has had the foresight to create an information-sharing mechanism that can be used to address other workplace health challenges as they emerge.

I will now comment on issues raised during the debate. The member for Swansea said that the requirement for practitioners to notify the Department of Health of a silicosis diagnosis was not in place on 1 July 2020. The requirement for practitioners to notify the department of a silicosis diagnosis was in place by 1 July 2020. On Friday 26 June the health Minister issued a gazette to make silicosis a notifiable disease in New South Wales, which was supported on 24 June by an amendment to the New South Wales Public Health Regulation. Those mechanisms meant that silicosis was notifiable in New South Wales by 1 July. Today's bill facilitates the essential information-sharing between NSW Health and WHS regulators at the time of a silicosis diagnosis.

The member for Swansea also said that the secretary of the Ministry of Health has no obligation to share relevant information with the WHS regulator. That is simply not true. When the bill is passed, SafeWork NSW and NSW Health will enter into a memorandum of understanding, setting out how they will share information about silicosis. The health secretary will provide the necessary information under the terms of the memorandum of understanding. When the information sharing arrangement between NSW Health and SafeWork NSW is in place, NSW Health will be able to share with SafeWork NSW any notifications that it has received since silicosis became notifiable on 1 July.

The member for Swansea also urged the Government to establish a silicosis register, as recommended by the Legislative Council's review of the Dust Diseases Scheme. The Government has considered the recommendation and determined that the most appropriate mechanism to achieve the policy goal of ensuring that our regulators are equipped with the information they need to combat the rise of silicosis is to declare silicosis a scheduled medical condition. The Minister for Health and Medical Research made that declaration before 1 July this year. Once the bill is law, the health secretary will be able to share information about the diagnosis of silicosis with SafeWork NSW. In order to get the regime in place as quickly as possible, the Government has chosen a mechanism that is most appropriate administratively and that leverages existing notification regimes under the Public Health Act 2010.

The member for Newtown called for diseases that are linked to silicosis to be part of the notification regime as well. Silicosis is a risk factor in the development of conditions such as lung cancer. I advise the member that lung cancer is already a notifiable disease through the NSW Cancer Registry. When silicosis is diagnosed, it will be notifiable whether or not other conditions are also present. The Opposition and the member for Newtown have foreshadowed that they may seek to amend the bill in the other place. It is disappointing that the amendments were not moved in this place so that they could have had the full benefit of a robust debate, in which Government members have so thoroughly engaged today—and I thank them for their time. I thank the members representing the electorates of East Hills, Camden, Manly, Cootamundra, Tweed, Holsworthy, Terrigal, Myall Lakes, Ku-ring-gai, Wollondilly and Riverstone for their contributions to the debate.

We need a whole-of-government action approach to put an end to silicosis swiftly and permanently in our workplaces. NSW Health is in the best position to gather information about silicosis diagnoses in the State, and New South Wales work health and safety regulators are in the best position to act on that information to protect workers. NSW Health must give work health and safety regulators the information that they need to do their jobs, and that is what the bill achieves. I commend and congratulate the teams from SafeWork NSW and NSW Health, who have done an outstanding, collaborative job in getting this notifiable disease on the register—as it should be—and who have pulled together to try to look after workers in the State. From my office, I thank our policy director Emma Dowsett who has worked tirelessly on the issue. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Private Members' Statements***PRINCES HIGHWAY**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (14:57:57):** As we grapple with COVID-19 and the significant challenges that the State has been facing due to the pandemic, construction projects along the Princes Highway have been forging ahead as we strive to rebuild our economy. I am proud to be part of a Government that does not sit by idly while work needs to be done, as residents on the South Coast had to put up with for 16 long years of Labor. The Liberal-Nationals Government will always deliver on its commitments, which include a \$630 million investment in the Albion Park Rail bypass as well as the \$450 million Berry-to-Bomaderry upgrade.

Since 2011 the New South Wales Government has commenced construction on planning works of over \$2.5 billion for the Princes Highway. The Government has completed important upgrade works at Gerringong, Berry, South Nowra, Burrill Lake and Termeil Creek. It does not stop there, with work commencing recently on the \$342 million Nowra Bridge project, Batemans Bay Bridge project and the Island Point Road intersection, and multimillion-dollar safety improvements completed at Milton, Wandandian, Ulladulla, Nowra and Sussex Inlet Road. Prior to the 2019 election the New South Wales Government committed a further \$960 million to commence further upgrade works on the Princes Highway. That investment includes building the Moruya bypass, commencing detailed planning works for the Milton-Ulladulla bypass, duplicating sections between Burrill Lake and Batemans Bay, and upgrades between Jervis Bay Road and Sussex Inlet Road, including an upgraded intersection at Jervis Bay Road.

A commitment by the Commonwealth Government of \$500 million towards upgrades to the Princes Highway has allowed the State Government to expedite works on the South Coast, including between Jervis Bay Road, Sussex Inlet Road and the Milton-Ulladulla bypass. The commitment by both levels of government will see unprecedented investment on the Princes Highway across the South Coast. The member for Kiama, the member for Bega and I have fought hard to secure that investment. Every project that I have committed to I have delivered. I reaffirm my commitment to delivering an upgraded Princes Highway, including an upgraded intersection at Jervis Bay Road.

Recently Transport for NSW conducted community consultation on three intersection treatment options for the Jervis Bay Road and Princes Highway intersection. Last month it conducted utility and geotechnical work near the intersection to help develop the design for the upgrade. I have met with Transport for NSW on a number of occasions to put forward the views of my community and the importance of delivering a solution that not only meets the community's needs but also improves safety and travel times at this important connection to the Bay and Basin region. It is also essential that the completed project integrates effectively with the broader upgrade of the Princes Highway. I commend many in the community who are lobbying for an upgraded intersection and encourage them to work with Transport for NSW as it finalises the preferred option and commence detailed design work.

However, it is disappointing that Labor has seemingly withdrawn its pledge to work with the Government to deliver for the South Coast community. Prior to the election—and to his credit—the member for Keira, on behalf of the Opposition, made a commitment to work with the Government in a bipartisan way to deliver those important upgrades along the Princes Highway, especially at the Jervis Bay Road intersection. However, it is clear that those in Opposition will say one thing before an election and another afterwards. During a recent visit by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to—let me remind her—the Kiama electorate, I was surprised to hear Labor renege on its commitment and instead choose to throw political mud and offer no solutions. Clearly the member for Swansea had no idea about the project or the work being undertaken currently by the Government, let alone what electorate she was in. That visit would have been taken seriously had the member actually known what electorate she was in.

I offer some advice for the member for Swansea and, in fact, any member opposite of the House: Next time they make a flying visit to the South Coast, use childish and pointless remarks to attack me and waste the time of the residents of the South Coast with no plans, no commitments and no solutions, they should know where they are and what electorate they are in. To clarify, the member for Swansea believed she was in the South Coast electorate when she was in the Kiama electorate. I will continue to work with my community to deliver the upgrades to the Princes Highway that they deserve and expect. It is important to allow Transport for NSW to continue to consult with stakeholders, undertake the necessary investigatory works and finalise the preferred option for the Jervis Bay Road intersection.

My job as the member for South Coast is to secure the money to deliver the project, which we have already achieved, and to ensure that my community's views are put forward to the department and the relevant Ministers. I have met with the Minister for Transport and Roads and the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads on a

number of occasions and have made strong representations to both of them on behalf of residents of the Bay and Basin. I will continue to work with residents, Transport for NSW, the New South Wales Government and the Federal Government to deliver this vital upgrade for my community; shame on those who try to stand in the way. I thank WIN News journalist Michael Pignataro for asking the member for Swansea which electorate she was in on the day she was in Jervis Bay. I thank him for pointing it out.

### DIRT BIKE RIDERS

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (15:03:05):** In my 13 years as the member for Wallsend, few issues have been as polarising to my constituents as the matter of dirt bike riders. The matter has raised lots of questions, including who should ride them; where should they be ridden; what is to be done to discourage and punish illegal and irresponsible riders; and many more. Professor Phillip O'Neill's opinion piece in May on the subject was interesting reading. He raised many valid points, though I wonder if he was a bit tough on dirt bike riders in general. In describing dirt bike riding, he used the word "mindless". He referred to riders as "no-schoolers" and set them in conflict with the average respectable citizen. Dirt bike riding is a hobby, like any other. It is enjoyed by a wide range of people and does not conform to the easy stereotypes suggested by some. Many of the average respectable citizens imagined by Professor O'Neill might enjoy a ride themselves.

It can be dangerous, but so can surfing or playing footy; it can be loud, but so can target shooting. My interactions with the community on dirt bike riding have been interesting and have brought me into contact with a lot of people from all walks of life who enjoy getting out on the trails. Many of them are responsible, considerate people—they love getting out in the bush and riding their dirt bikes—but as we all know, some of them are not. I work with the community and the police on the unlawful characters. My staff can attest that I write regularly to the local police and interact with them to report the miscreants. I urge all members of the community who witness any incidents of illegal or irresponsible dirt bike riding to lodge a complaint with the Police Assistance Line. My colleagues in the House would agree that it is great to report it on Facebook, but we want it to be reported to the police. They love the details and data, and it is important for them to see the patterns of behaviour.

The professor was correct: It is neither a new issue, nor an easy one to address overnight. We cannot let the bad behaviour of some people destroy an activity that so many people enjoy and take part in responsibly. That is why I have tried to get recreational registration for dirt bikes in New South Wales, as has been done in Victoria. It is obvious that local riders have very few places left where they can ride; their children have even fewer options available. The only real option available for parents is to join a local club and race. That can be very expensive and not what their children are interested in doing. After I spoke with local riders, the idea of reviving the recreational registration campaign was raised. Making more space available, with similar conditions to those that operate at Stockton Beach recreational vehicle areas, would be a good start.

The scheme went very close to being implemented in 2011 and again in 2014. It is obvious from speaking with peak bodies such as the Motorcycle Council of NSW and the Dual Sport Motorcycle Riders Association that there is a real need and want for the scheme. I have circulated a petition calling on the New South Wales Government to introduce recreational registration along the lines of the Victorian model, which will help strengthen police response to illegal or dangerous riding and ensure that the bikes are kept in good condition. The revenue raised will help offset the cost of maintaining and upgrading dirt bike trails and recreational riding areas. Instead of continuing to punish riders, it is time to help them and give them the opportunity to do the right thing.

### REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:08:09):** It was a cold, early winter's day on 29 May when the most powerful media baron in the world, Rupert Murdoch, decreed from his Manhattan penthouse that printing newspapers in regional Australia was no longer viable. He unilaterally announced the closure of more than 100 Australian print newspapers, including the following much-loved mastheads in the region that I represent: *The Daily Examiner*, *The Northern Star*, the *Richmond River Express Examiner* and *Coastal Views*. It was indeed a dark day for regional press. But then something quite remarkable happened: Clarence and Richmond Valley locals ignored Mr Murdoch and decided that there was not only a future for regional newspapers but also a much better one with independently owned local titles. First, the *Clarence Valley Independent*, which had stopped printing two months earlier, got the presses rolling again—hats off to Anne Mazzitelli, John Warden and all the team in Yamba.

That was just the beginning. In the Richmond Valley there were two new players. Locals formed a community association with the aim of publishing the *Richmond River Independent*, a free weekly newspaper covering the Kyogle and Richmond Valley local government areas. They raised startup capital through crowdfunding and they have been delivering an excellent read to locals every week since launching in Kyogle on 8 July. There are too many people to mention but I single out Richmond River Independent Community Association president Bob Mills, editor Susanna Freymark and sales manager Katie Gourlay.



In Casino on the same day, local private company Heartland Media celebrated the first edition of *The Northern Rivers Times*, which is another free weekly paper but with a wider coverage area featuring stories from Grafton to the Queensland border. Founded by Sharon Bateman and Jeff Gibbs, Heartland Media has been publishing the much-admired monthly *Heartland Magazine* since January 2017. Like all great small business startups, *The Northern Rivers Times* is the result of Sharon and Jeff risking their own capital to deliver a product that the community needs. They have done so much with no help from Government. That needs to change. These are early spring days for these new ventures, but one late economic frost could leave them in serious strife. The New South Wales Government can do three things to significantly boost their sustainability.

Firstly, the Government needs to advertise with these newspapers, not out of charity but because it is by far the most effective way of disseminating important information to local residents. In the past, independent regional newspapers like the *Clarence Valley Independent* fared poorly with government advertising, because governments in Canberra and Sydney were lobbied by the big players: News Corp, Fairfax Media and APN. Also, it was much easier for the bureaucrats organising the advertisements to execute statewide advertising buys with the big players rather than to deal individually with independent publications. That needs to change. The Government needs to establish a register of regional independent newspapers and begin to negotiate ad buys as soon as possible. Secondly, the Government must reverse its decision announced on 17 April 2020, which was:

Removing the requirement for council notices to be advertised in newspapers and instead allow the relevant notice to be published on the council's website.

That policy change was driven by lobbying from council general managers and there was zero industry consultation. It was designed to save councils money in a time of crisis but it had two dire, if predictable, consequences. First, it reduced transparency and denied people who take an interest in what their council is doing—mainly, senior citizens—access to council decisions. Further, it removed a major revenue stream for regional New South Wales newspapers right at a time when they had lost most of their hospitality, tourism and real estate advertising. I have no doubt that the decision contributed to the two-month hiatus in printing of the *Clarence Valley Independent*.

Thirdly, the Government needs to recognise independent newspapers as a vital service to regional New South Wales and develop a grants program to help them flourish into viable and sustainable businesses. Not only does no such program exist at a State level, but regional newspapers were also denied access to the Government's \$10,000 COVID-19 support grant and \$3,000 small business COVID-19 recovery grant. Incredibly, regional newspapers were excluded from the official list of highly impacted industries. Distilleries made the cut; newspapers did not. Therefore, I call on the Government to develop a new grants program that is specifically targeted at helping independent newspapers in regional New South Wales. The good people involved with the *Clarence Valley Independent*, the *Richmond River Independent* and *The Northern Rivers Times* are giving their blood, sweat, tears and dollars to provide a vital service to residents of regional New South Wales. I ask the Government to take the practical and affordable measures I have outlined to show those residents that we recognise they not only deserve but also are entitled to our support, along with our heartfelt thanks.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:13:31):** I speak in support of my colleague. In my electorate we also heavily depend on local newspapers, including *The Northern Star* from the electorate of Clarence. In the Tweed we lost our daily news after 140 years. I think what News Corp has done is hurting regional New South Wales. It is putting money before people—we have lost journalists, jobs and so on. There is a real void. Luckily, we have the *Tweed Valley Weekly*, a free paper from Jonathon and his great crew, which is filling that void. There has been a small comeback with *The Daily Telegraph* now publishing a local edition. That means there is one page about the Tweed printed in the Telegraph and there is another page about Coffs Harbour and so on. But I have seen this before with News Corp—that will last about another two months and then it will go. It is all about standing up for our regions. I applaud the member for Clarence.

#### VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE WAR MEMORIALS

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (15:14:38):** On Thursday 23 July I visited part of our local history, the Vaucluse War Memorial, which is nestled on the leafy corner of Fitzwilliam and Wentworth roads in Vaucluse, and, together with Woollahra mayor, Susan Wynne, I announced a \$1,500 New South Wales Government grant to conserve, clean and repair the memorial's commemorative copper plaque and frame. It reads:

A grateful tribute to the gallant men who fought for us in the Great War. This flag was unfurled by His Excellency, the Governor, Sir Walter Davidson KCMG, 26 October 1918.

Sir Walter is buried not far away at South Head Cemetery, Vaucluse. Indeed, the Speaker's electorate of Davidson is named in his honour. The upgrade to the plaque that the Governor at that time installed is the first stage in a well-overdue restoration of the memorial. The memorial is easy to miss if you are not looking for it. It features a 12-metre flagpole flanked by two 75-millimetre cannons on a sandstone block base. The memorial was the

initiative of the Vacluse Progress Association, which was formed in 1915 to honour the loss of two of its members in the First World War. The association operates to this day, led by president Greg Sutherland; vice president John Comino, a former councillor of Woollahra council; and secretary Tony Booth. This restoration is only part of what we will do to conserve the memorial, so watch this space.

A number of RSL clubs and sub-branches in my electorate do wonderful work honouring our defence personnel all year round. One such club is the North Bondi RSL Club. On Anzac Day each year thousands of local residents make their way down to Bondi Beach for the solemn dawn service. But with COVID-19 affecting our day-to-day lives, it has been quite different for all of our local RSL clubs. They were not able to hold their usual ceremonies but that has not stopped them from doing their work. Last week I briefly stopped by the North Bondi RSL to present the sub-branch with a new New South Wales State flag, which will fly outside North Bondi RSL Club, replacing its old weather-damaged flag.

North Bondi RSL and its sub-branch, known as Tobruk House or The Rathouse, was founded in 1944 by some of the original members of the Rats of the Tobruk—Australian diggers who bravely defended the city of Tobruk, now in modern-day Libya. Following their return from World War II, they established the North Bondi RSL Sub-Branch. I acknowledge the sub-branch committee, including president Rob De Graaf, vice president Robert Mooy, secretary Jack Gray, treasurer Anthony Coghlan, assistant treasurer Ryan Mitchell, committee members Dean Evans, William McMaugh and Jayne Morley, and trustees James Isbell, David Sims and Fred Alderman.

Recently, as a club, they held their annual general meeting. I send my congratulations to the ongoing directors, including president Martyn Bell, vice president Paul Koerber, directors Rachel Coghlan, Mary Anne Cronin and John Ferguson, and new directors Wendy De Graaf and Fred Alderman. I am sure they will do a great job. I also acknowledge Rose Bay RSL Sub-Branch, whose home is Club Rose Bay, opposite Tingira Park in Rose Bay. The sub-branch is led by president Lee Stockley and honorary secretary and treasurer Rosemary Stockley, OAM. Last year the club celebrated its 100th anniversary. That club also was not able to hold its regular Anzac Sunday commemorative march ahead of Anzac Day, which was a great shame. But we secured money to upgrade the memorial in Steyne Park not long ago, which is a great addition to that solemn place.

As I said, we are fortunate to have a number of war memorials in the Vacluse electorate, including the Waverley Cenotaph on Bondi Road, which my electorate shares with the electorate of the member for Coogee; and the Double Bay War Memorial in Steyne Park, Double Bay. The Double Bay War Memorial celebrated its 100th birthday last year and I visited the site to present a very special birthday gift: a \$7,000 New South Wales Government grant to restore and upgrade that memorial. The electorate of Vacluse, a very old part of Sydney, has also a rich naval and military history and I am very proud of that. At the peninsula end of my electorate is HMAS *Watson*, which is an active navy base. It is a contemporary connection to the brave men and women who have served and continue to serve our country. With that, I commend my private member's statement to the House.

#### ANTI-SEMITISM

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:19:32):** I express my deep concern regarding the disturbing rise in anti-Semitism within my electorate of Coogee and beyond. Anti-Semitism is racism and bigotry towards Jews. It is a prejudice spanning 3,000 years. Recently Randwick City Council was called upon to remove a swastika that had been graffitied on the footpath outside Coogee Synagogue. I can only imagine the distress of the Or Chadash, or "New Light", congregation, whose original members established the synagogue shortly after the Holocaust.

This year the Executive Council of Australian Jewry [ECAJ] released its thirtieth annual analysis of reports of anti-Semitic violence, vandalism, harassment and intimidation in Australia. Some 368 incidents were reported, many of which involved face-to-face harassment and property vandalism. That figure is high, considering social demographers estimate the Jewish population to be 115,000, or 0.5 per cent of the Australian population, of which approximately 30,000 live in New South Wales. In Sydney during the 1980s and 1990s, in addition to terrorist bombings of a major Jewish cultural institution and the Israeli consulate, there were more arson attacks on synagogues than occurred anywhere else in the world in the 50 years after the Second World War. A great deal has changed for the better since that time. However, plenty still needs to be done to protect citizens against what has been described as the "oldest hatred".

Thanks to extensive advocacy by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Federal and State anti-racism legislation has been enacted and many individuals and groups are working towards interfaith dialogue and community harmony. My electorate includes two large Jewish day schools. I am proud that NSW Labor committed \$2 million in security funding to protect Jewish institutions, an amount the Coalition committed to matching. Jeremy Jones, the Director of International & Community Affairs at the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council, said:

If we are to successfully push back against bigotry and stop racism becoming entrenched, there are few measures as important as vocal and principled condemnations of these ills from our political leaders.

As the world is gripped by fear and uncertainty resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, Jews have once again become a target for attacks. Calling COVID-19 "Jew flu", encouraging people to infect Jews and suggesting the virus was created by Jews or Israel for profit are some of the examples of online anti-Semitism reported both globally and locally this year.

Disappointingly, many disturbing incidents of anti-Semitism occurred in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests. Those incidents reinforce the idea that some people will attack Jews regardless of the events about which they are commenting. During the 2019 Federal election campaign several Jewish candidates were targeted due to their ethnicity. Josh Frydenberg in Melbourne, Julian Leeser and Jason Falinski had their corflutes defaced with anti-Semitic graffiti, including swastikas, Hitler moustaches, dollar signs and devil horns. Kerryn Phelps, the former member for Wentworth, was the target of a vicious anti-Semitic and homophobic email campaign, prompting Julian Leeser to state that anti-Semitism and its manifestations are not always recognised by non-Jews. He stated:

A number of people didn't understand the meaning of the dollar signs being painted on my face—a number of educated, thoughtful, non-Jewish people. We may need some new thinking in that space because educated people who are not Jewish don't necessarily see things that [Jewish people] see. We've grown up with [these things] in a particular cultural milieu by being part of the community and carrying the history of being a Jewish person.

Most recently that idea was demonstrated when the Australian *Financial Review* published a cartoon depicting Federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg with a hooked nose, skullcap and a dollar sign around his neck. Although the newspaper apologised and revised the cartoon, the fact that the cartoon's offensiveness was not detected before it was originally published by a mainstream newspaper is of deep concern. Another manifestation of anti-Semitism in Australia and beyond is expressed through anti-Israel rhetoric. As noted in the ECAJ report on anti-Semitism, all governments should be:

... the subject of criticism for their policies and actions ... However, some ... criticisms of Israel cross the line from ordinary political discourse into ... hate speech.

Examples include the demonisation of Israel, its actions blown out of rational proportion—such as the comparison of Israelis to Nazis—and the double standards that are applied when Israel is called out for criticism while the human rights violations of Saudi Arabia, Iran or China are ignored. Denying Israel, a nation sanctioned by the United Nations, its right to exist is always anti-Semitic.

On 27 January this year the seventy-fifth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz was commemorated. I pay tribute to the Holocaust survivors and other Jewish immigrants who have made Australia their home and have contributed to this nation on a scale greatly disproportionate to their number. It is my hope that the Jewish community and other religious and cultural groups can live and thrive here. Anti-Semitism can be seen as the canary in the coalmine—while it may start with attacks on Jews, it does not end there.

**The SPEAKER:** In the absence of a reply from the Government, I will make a short reply. As a member who has a large Jewish population in his electorate and also as Speaker, I support and appreciate the contribution of the member for Coogee. On behalf of the House, I join with her in condemning anti-Semitism and I welcome the contribution of the Australian Jewish community.

### CARROLL COTTON COMPANY

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (15:24:02):** I believe in supporting and boosting local industry. Through growth in local industry we support our local communities. We do this through not just the creation of jobs but also the building of infrastructure, which encourages young people to stay in their communities and people to move to our regions. Local businesses and industries are the backbone of our communities, providing jobs, donations, sponsorship and growth. It is no surprise that I am excited to speak about local industry and growth in the Tamworth electorate.

It takes a certain kind of person—with a shot of bravery, a dash of belief, a truckload of hard work and years of planning—to grow a business during some of the hardest times in living memory. Doing so as an independent, family-owned business that maintains the traditions of integrity and reliability established 25 years earlier reflects determination, resilience, innovation and a commitment to achieving the best possible results for its clients. The family-operated business run by Scott and Trudy Davies was started by Scott's dad in 1995. It is a classic example of an Aussie family having a crack and keeping the family's dream alive. They are the little guys in regional New South Wales competing against the bigger corporations on the world market.

Thanks to the growth of this local business, Carroll Cotton Company will potentially gin around 10 per cent of Australia's cotton crops on its site. All of its cotton is sourced from its growers, who farm within a 100-kilometre radius of the company's facility. It currently processes up to 100,000 tons of raw cotton every year,

which equates to about 800 million pairs of socks. That is a lot of socks! The state-of-the-art cotton ginning facility will maximise return and investment for local cotton growers and for the region. Carroll Cotton is located in the heart of the Tamworth electorate. It is 30 kilometres from the regional centre of Gunnedah and close to the village of Carroll, which has a population of about 200.

Carroll Cotton Company currently employs 12 permanent staff, with an increase of up to 45 during the cotton ginning season. The company provides local jobs for regional people. With the current lull in some industries, it has been able to fill the void of employment opportunities. Thanks to Carroll Cotton Company, a number of local "gappies" who had to return home from overseas due to COVID-19 have been employed, once again helping to support the local community. Scott and Trudy Davies will be the first to tell you that they would not be where they are today without their amazing team of local workers. From the ground up, their team and their community are the reason they can do what they do. Carroll Cotton Company not only provides jobs and increases the local economy but it also is committed to helping the local community.

Scott is the chair of the Gunnedah Family Support service board and Trudy is deputy chair. The organisation provides access to support for the most vulnerable in our community—those suffering homelessness and domestic violence. Carroll Cotton sponsors local sporting organisations like soccer, rugby union, motocross, polo and pony club. The Carroll Cotton team gave its time and machinery to the Buy a Bale project, loading trucks to deliver fodder to our drought-stricken farmers. It also made a substantial financial contribution to the local Carroll school for a new bus to ensure that country kids get the same opportunities as their city cousins and that this small school survives and prospers for local families.

The New South Wales Government's Fixing Country Roads program has committed \$8.5 million for Gunnedah Shire Council to upgrade and seal the bone-jarring Clifton Road. The project will open up the production route for both agricultural produce and local families. It will provide a safe and efficient route for not only the Carroll Cotton Company to conduct business but also other businesses and farmers. Gunnedah Shire Council will utilise its local staff in addition to contracting local suppliers to provide gravel, bitumen and haulage. Community pride in the Carroll Cotton Company development resonates across the villages of Breeza, Carroll and Somerton, highlighting the true Aussie spirit. The development will secure the future of those local communities and will flow on with economic benefits for families and communities and investment into a sustainable future for our region.

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge a number of interns who are in the Chamber. The Parliament is closed to the public, but this fine group of young women and men are working to support democracy. I welcome you all. It is great to see friendly faces and smiling visages in the public gallery, which will shortly be renamed the Cooper Gallery. I hope you enjoy your time in Parliament.

#### **NSW BOATING NOW PROGRAM**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections)**  
**(15:30:14):** To my friends in the House and to the avid boating enthusiasts in the electorate of Lane Cove, it is my privilege to announce today that, as part of the \$28 million investment in round three of the Liberal-Nationals Government's Boating Now program, two of the 69 new boating infrastructure projects are in the electorate of Lane Cove. The New South Wales Government's Boating Now Program is funded from boating licences and registration fees, which are reinvested back into initiatives to support infrastructure projects for local councils, boating and community groups and private sector organisations to deliver new or upgraded boating access and amenities for local communities and for the safety of all New South Wales boaters. The program will include projects such as boat ramps, jetties, wharves, car and trailer parking, dinghy storage racks and sewage pump-outs.

As part of this funding it is my privilege to announce that \$1,410,500 has been allocated to support plans for both the City of Ryde and Lane Cove councils. The City of Ryde project includes upgrading the boat ramp at Kissing Point Park in Putney with a new boat wash-down bay, a new fish-cleaning station, a new public amenities block, car park improvements, access improvements to the water, and seating and shelter. The Lane Cove Council's projects will deliver public storage for dinghies, kayaks and skiffs; improvements to public non-powered boating access to Sydney Harbour at Butchers Point Block in Longueville; and increased vessel storage for the Lane Cove 12 foot Sailing Skiff Club. The program also offers delivery partners up to 25 per cent of the grant value up-front to help fast-track the planning and delivery of projects and to stimulate our local economies.

As part of this round of funding, \$2 million has been set aside for boating infrastructure to be repaired quickly, following damage caused by severe weather events such as storms and bushfires. The remaining funding will be allocated to priority infrastructure identified in the 2018 Maritime Infrastructure Plan. The plan provides strategic guidance for investing, with funding to be announced later this year. The NSW Boating Now Program also contributes to achieving the outcomes of the 10-year Marine Estate Management Strategy, which coordinates the management of the marine estates in New South Wales. The Boating Now Program allocation is additional to

the \$70 million that has been invested since the program commenced in 2015. The success of the Boating Now Program is only possible due to the New South Wales Government's prudent economic management.

I thank Treasurer Dominic Perrottet and Premier Gladys Berejiklian for their exceptional leadership over this program, which our local communities will benefit from. Maritime infrastructure is essential for recreational boaters, important coastal industries and foreshore experiences for locals as well as international visitors—at least, they used to visit. There is now a lot more room for New South Wales residents to experience the wonderful foreshores. I thank the House and I remind everyone to enjoy themselves and to stay safe when they are out on the pristine waters of Sydney Harbour.

### **BULLI HOSPITAL**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:33:44):** It is with great pleasure that I inform the House that the new Bulli Hospital will commence taking patients from 11 August. This is a truly remarkable achievement for our community. Close to a decade ago, when I was first preselected, the plans for a new hospital at Bulli could not have been further from occurring. The community then was very concerned about the state of the existing old Bulli Hospital and the fact that time and again there would be a lack of services, particularly on weekends. In fact, it was the issue of Bulli Hospital that formed the first 10,000-signature petition from the Illawarra region to be debated on the floor of this House. There were 12,000-plus signatures collected on a petition to ensure that not only was Bulli Hospital saved but also, most importantly, that there was a significant upgrade and that a new hospital built, which would serve the growing community and the demands of the community that I am fortunate to represent.

This campaign has been driven by the community for the community. I commend and acknowledge the work of local public health officials and the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. I commend the team from Health Infrastructure for their work and the builders involved. Although it has been a challenging and difficult build, I acknowledge all those involved in it. But truly this could not have occurred without an enormous amount of community support and dedication. And that does not surprise me at all because Bulli Hospital has its beginnings and foundation as a community-based hospital.

The member for Heathcote, who is present in the Chamber, will know as well as others that this was a hospital largely built through the donation of land in 1890 by Mrs Organ. The first action to commence the Bulli Cottage Hospital was through the support of the colliery managers back in 1888. In 1891 funds began being raised for Bulli Hospital and in 1892 more of Mrs Organ's donations came through. Colliery proprietors subsidised these donations and the Government back then gave £500. In 1892, 22 tenders were received for Bulli Hospital construction and it was completed in 1892, with the opening in 1893 by Lady Darley, accompanied by the Governor at the time, Sir Frederick Darley.

This is a hospital that is very near and dear to the community that I represent and the broader Illawarra region, but particularly to those in the northern suburbs. It has played a vital role in supporting our growing community, but it has also been the hospital of choice for many people who visit our region for recreation, sport, education, lifestyle and leisure. I thank every health worker—every nurse, doctor and NSW Health employee—who goes above and beyond to serve the community of the northern suburbs of the Illawarra through the Bulli Hospital. I hope they will enjoy the new hospital.

But I also congratulate the community—every person who fought hard to ensure this new hospital would become a reality and that the northern suburbs of the Illawarra continued to have strong, reliable and safe health services; every single one of them made an effort to advocate, to agitate and to inform me just how important this hospital was. To the community we say thank you. To the staff—the health workers, the nurses, the doctors and the ancillary staff—we say a heartfelt thanks and we look forward to you serving the community in our new hospital.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Keira for his private member's statement. I also acknowledge, of course, the member for Heathcote, the architect of that new hospital at Bulli.

### **WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:39:01):** The winter recess from Parliament has provided a number of opportunities for Ministers and even the Premier to visit my beautiful electorate of Wollondilly, otherwise known as God's country, both in person, and through virtual meetings and conferences. It is important that Ministers are able to view firsthand the situation and issues that are impacting a regional electorate. I was delighted that our Premier was able to visit the electorate in early July to view some of the great projects being undertaken by the New South Wales Government.

The first of these was the stage one redevelopment of Bowral and District Hospital. The Government has contributed \$65 million towards the project, which will provide a new emergency department, two new operating theatres, a new main entry, and new maternity and paediatric units. The project is about 70 per cent complete. It was scheduled to be completed by the end of the year, but most likely will be completed in early 2021. The Premier was able to inspect the new emergency department set-up and the main entry area. I was most impressed with the standard of the fit-out, and the use of locally sourced materials and local tradespeople on the project. The Premier was equally impressed.

After the inspection the Premier was able to travel to Eridge Park, Burradoo, to officially open the upgraded clubhouse for the Bowral Blacks Rugby Club. The New South Wales Government has contributed \$993,000 towards this project. The Premier complimented the club on the great clubhouse and the excellent work done by local contractors. I have been pursued to play another game for the Bowral Blacks' Golden Oldies, otherwise known as the wilted tulips. That is happening in September. Last year I cracked two ribs—we will not go there; we will see what I crack this year. At the official opening, the club president, Mark Fruend, thanked the Premier for her funding and for the Government's great work in its COVID-19 pandemic response. The crowd strongly applauded the Premier. It was an example of regional people expressing their thanks for the magnificent job our Premier is doing. Although she was unable to spend a long period of time in the electorate, the Premier had the opportunity to see some of the great work that our club and community are doing in the area. I was most appreciative of the time that the Premier made available to the electorate.

Just last week we had the opportunity to host both the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, Sarah Mitchell, and the Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean. Minister Mitchell was on hand to make an announcement about the upgrading of Wilton Primary School. The upgrade will include two new flexible working spaces, new permanent support units and the upgrade of core facilities, including the removal of existing temporary learning spaces. Minister Mitchell and I viewed the library and technology areas of the school. We were very impressed by the facilities and the displays. We were welcomed to the technology area by mini robots controlled by the students using their iPads—a very different and exciting welcome. It was fantastic. The school, which is located in the Wilton Growth Area, is an integral part of the overall plan for the provision of public education in the area. Early planning for a new school in the Wilton Growth Area is already being undertaken. This will cater for the expected demand as growth opens up in the area.

On Minister Kean's visit we had discussions with the mayor and CEO of Wollondilly Shire Council about the creation of a Bargo-Nepean national park and the establishment of the Great Burragorang Valley Walk. We even had the opportunity to take Minister Kean along the reaches of the Bargo River to view the hidden treasure of Mermaids Pool. On a warmer day we would have been tempted to take a quick dip, but that did not occur this time. I was also able to be involved in a virtual panel discussion with the Minister for Transport and Roads, Andrew Constance, about transport infrastructure in the region. It was a great opportunity for the Minister to get feedback from a regional area on how important transport issues are. I am happy to say that Minister Constance strongly supported the upgrading of Picton Road, which is a major transport link between the Illawarra and western Sydney. I am so thankful to all the Ministers and the Premier for taking time out to visit my electorate during the break to get a better understanding of some of the issues that affect my regional community.

#### MAITLAND LEVEE

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:44:10):** Maitland has experienced extreme flood events on multiple occasions during the past century, causing catastrophic damage and loss of life. The February 1955 flood is still recognised as among the largest natural disasters to occur in Australia. It destroyed 59 homes and caused the evacuation of more than 40,000 people and the loss of 24 lives across our region. It led to the development of the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme, also known as the levee system. It is a system of 160 levees around the city, which was finally completed in 1980. The network includes earth banks, spillways and floodgates. I am told the scheme is worth nearly \$1 billion. Following the devastating April 2015 super storms when an east coast low caused massive damage across the Hunter, the Maitland levee system was also found to have been damaged. According to the New South Wales Government, much of that damage was caused by its own hand prior to the floods.

I want to address a number of issues raised recently by local landholders. The first matter is relatively simple. Following the storms I was contacted by one landholder who said that the floodgates on their property had been replaced by Soil Conservation Services, or Soil Con, from the Office of Environment and Heritage. The floodgates were designed to operate by draining the land into the Hunter River and then closing when the Hunter River was rising in order to protect their properties, including land and livestock, from inundation. I understand that the floodgates were essentially put on back to front so that during the super storms the Hunter River flowed onto these landholders' properties.

When asked by the landholders and me why this had happened, Soil Con said the changes were a repair to the floodgates requested by adjacent landholders. But nobody can find out who these adjacent landholders are and nobody can understand why they would have told Soil Con to do that. Despite constantly asking for the floodgates to be fixed since 2015-16, nothing has been done. The floodgates continue to pose a threat to the landholders, their lives, their stock and their land every time the Hunter River rises. Nearly five years later and despite being told funding is available, it is now being delayed because of heritage testing. Given that we experienced an east coast low in the Hunter last weekend—which has already seen the river rise at Melville Ford Bridge, which was washed away in 2015—the landholders and I are very concerned that the damaged floodgates pose a significant threat to residents.

The second issue affects even more residents in my electorate. In March this year the Minister for Energy and Environment requested a meeting with the member for Port Stephens, departmental representatives and me to admit what my community already knew: that they had caused significant damage to the scheme and that they were trying to fix the issues as soon as possible. This potentially exacerbates a flood risk for Maitland suburban communities, not just farmlands, and is something that should never have happened. Yet under this Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government it has and it still has not been fixed despite their promises.

Specifically, residents on Brisbane Fields Road are now in the terrible situation where damage to a flood drain that crosses their road means there has been a 10 tonne weight limit on the road since May 2020. They had just three days' notice of this restriction. Residents have to drag their bins between 100 and 400 metres up the road to get them emptied. They cannot get heavy vehicle deliveries to or from their properties. It is holding up development and normal agricultural businesses on these properties. Now the council's garbage truck and other trucks have to make multi-point turns where the drain is located, causing further damage at the end of the road and also to residents' properties that are currently being used for a turning circle.

I discussed these matters with Minister Kean this afternoon and told him he must take responsibility for fixing the issue now. Those residents are furious and want the people who are unable to fix this simple matter to lose their jobs. They are unable to fix a system that has been in place for many years and which this Government has broken. Promises were made to residents that the issue would be fixed by 2017-18 and that a solution was fully funded. It has been too long. Why on earth has it not been fixed? I call on the Minister to come to my electorate and meet with community members as a matter of urgency, since his department has been unable to fix these issues in five years.

#### **MANLY HOSPITAL SITE**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:49:12):** I update the House on a milestone moment in the redevelopment and revitalisation of the old Manly Hospital site, with the draft concept master plan being unveiled this week for community consultation and feedback. Since the by-election in 2017 I have worked closely with the project steering advisory committee, which incorporates NSW Health, the Northern Sydney Local Health District, led by chief executive Deborah Willcox, stakeholders from local community organisations and, now, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—in particular, the development and transactions team, which is led in this place by Minister Pavey.

In October 2018 Manly Hospital closed its doors to make way for brand-new facilities at the Northern Beaches Hospital in Frenchs Forest, which provides a level of care previously unavailable on the northern beaches. We made a commitment at that time that the former Manly Hospital site would be retained to host a number of health and wellness services that would benefit not only my community but also the wider New South Wales community. The site will be anchored by Australia's first purpose-built hospice for adolescents and young adults. The department has been working hard over the past few months in collaboration with Cox Architecture, which is the lead consultant and has been developing a master plan.

Last week I joined the department and local health district CEO to unveil the plans and open community consultation, which is open until Monday 31 August. The master plan highlights some key considerations, including endangered ecological communities on the site, in addition to establishing the asset protection zone, which members will know is incredibly important. In addition, the master plan also outlines and identifies a number of heritage buildings that will be adaptively re-used—in particular, the former Manly Peace Memorial Hospital sandstone archway, which is at the northern end of the site. The adaptive re-use of existing buildings, particularly those of heritage value, has been a key focus of the community steering group. I acknowledge its strong advocacy over many years on this particular project.

The master plan also maps out primary public domains, such as the contemporary heritage ceremonial court in the north, the central courtyard and the proposed Indigenous cultural heritage parkland in the south-west, as well as additional public domains around the site, which may include gardens, seating or grassed areas. Given this was a hospital for nearly a century, a lot of these grassed areas and public spaces have been kept from the use

of the general public. One of the more exciting elements of this master plan is that these areas will be open for the public to visit and enjoy for the first time in nearly a century.

The community consultation outcomes report from 2019 demonstrated that there was going to be a need for the existing zoning of the land as a health services facility to be expanded for complementary services, including community and recreation facilities—perhaps a cafe or restaurant—to complement the community aspects of the site, as we seek to give a reason for people to visit it and enjoy the area. All of these uses will be anchored by Australia's first hospice for adolescents and young adults, which will take prime position on the site and provide views across Sydney Harbour for people from across New South Wales to rest and take time as they manage their terminal illness.

I put on the record my thanks to the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women in the other place, who visited the site for a tour earlier this month. It was important to have the Deputy Premier and the Minister attend to reaffirm Manly's strong connection with the bush. We are also home to Royal Far West, which serves the community of regional and rural New South Wales as a place for people to come and enjoy the coast. It is my hope that the hospice on the former Manly Hospital site will be another great service that will serve and provide dignity to young people across this State. We look forward to delivering on our vision statement for the site:

A vibrant health and wellbeing sanctuary which welcomes and supports the needs of the local and wider community—achieved through innovation and balance.

I thank the House.

### WARNERVALE AIRPORT

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (15:53:50):** Unfortunately, tonight I am very upset with the Government and its treatment of my community. For the benefit of members, I will quickly go through the saga of Warnervale Airport. An Act of Parliament, the Warnervale Airport Restrictions Act 1996, was made to protect the community from overdevelopment of the Warnervale Airport.

In 2016 there was a review of the Act, which our community participated in and made submissions to in good faith. The Government came back with a finding that the Act should be kept, which was very acceptable. That was under then planning Minister Roberts. We thought that the Government had done a very thorough consultation and had come back with a good result for the community. Unfortunately, in 2015 the previous Wyong council had extended the runway, which had triggered the Act and imposed a limit of 88 movements per day. That disadvantaged the local aero club, which ran training and joy flights from there. There was general consensus, even from the community, that the Act could be amended to allow their activities to continue. Anyway, it went on. The member for Terrigal ran a very serious campaign against the Central Coast Council and a local environment group, the Community Environment Network [CEN], slamming the group for its opposition to the airport.

The current Minister, Rob Stokes, called another review to look at the Act again. I asked for the original 2017 report to be released publicly so that people would know what the previous findings had been. I was denied that. I then put in a request under the Government Information (Public Access) Act and I was denied again. The Government said that the previous report would prejudice the current review. How can a report done by the Government only two years earlier prejudice, rather than inform, the community? The result of that last review was released yesterday. I have to say, as the local member, that I was very disappointed. I did not want a copy of the report. I did not even need to know what it said. I just wanted the courtesy of knowing that it was going to happen. Minister Roberts did that; he had informed me when the previous report was going to be released. But this time I found out about it in the media. I am not surprised, because part of the release was the 2017 report, which the Government would not release.

Guess what? The first recommendation was that the Act should be retained, which is what the community wanted overall. The second recommendation—and this was back in 2017, before the last election—was to immediately remove aircraft movement restrictions applying to general aviation activities operating at Warnervale Airport's existing runway. The Government's own report said that we could have come into the House, moved an amendment that everyone agreed with and fixed the problem. Instead, for three years the member for Terrigal has run a campaign against the council and against CEN, the local environment group, attacking the group for something that the Government had the power to do and should have done already. It is absolutely outrageous. Not only that, but the report released the transcripts of the conversations. Guess what? The Independent member for Lake Macquarie said, "Keep the Act; take away the restrictions." Lake Macquarie Council said, "Keep the Act; take away the restrictions." I said, "Keep the Act; take away the restrictions." The local environment group CEN said, ""Keep the Act; take away the restrictions."



What did the Government do? It kept the restrictions and attacked us all, when its own reports—which it has now released, after the fact—told it what it should have done. It is absolutely outrageous. I am really angry about this because I participated the whole way in good faith. I made submissions on behalf of my community. I was involved with interviews. I made concessions and said, yes, we can work around this, and everything. But the whole time the Government would not release the report that backed up everything we said. The latest thing is that the Government is getting rid of the Act altogether, so it is removing the independent umpire. We will have the local council as the owner, operator and regulator of that airport. Our community does not trust that the council can do that right. The Government has taken away the opportunity to have the Minister appoint someone independently. It could have made the changes that would have solved the situation. Instead of that, it has chosen to be politically active and attack us.

#### **PORT MACQUARIE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB AWARDS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:59:12):** I acknowledge the Port Macquarie Surf Life Saving Club awards presentation evening that was held on Sunday 14 June 2020, which recognised members who excelled in service and commitment to surf lifesaving in our community. The Port Macquarie Surf Life Saving Club overlooks the stunning Flynn's Beach in Port Macquarie. Acknowledged as the oldest surf lifesaving club in the Hastings, the organisation continues to be at the forefront of volunteerism and professional development, leading the way in beach safety and training for the past 91 years. Boasting approximately 120 active members and 250 junior nippers, the club is well resourced to cater for the routine three- to four-hour patrols as well as the sometimes hazardous conditions when rescues are required.

This year's awards were held in the club auditorium under strict social distancing rules to acknowledge those volunteers who selflessly gave their time and energy to ensure that our locals and holiday-makers were safe on Town Beach. I recognise the award recipients who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to support their organisation and the community at large. Club Person of the Year for outstanding contributions in a number of areas throughout the season was awarded to Danny Sutor and Leanne Hatherly. The President's award for outstanding contribution in a number of areas was presented to club secretary, Trevor Franklin, for his overall dedication and commitment to the organisation. Rookie of the Year was Emily Moloney who only recently received her bronze medallion and has embraced the role as a patrolling member in exceptional style. Cadet Club Person of the Year was presented to a number of age categories for outstanding contributions throughout the season in various areas. Male and female 15s were Jackson O'Rourke and Camryn Dal Broi. Male and female 17s were Thomas Collins and Sarah Hatherly.

Cadet Supervisor Award of the Year was awarded to Jodi Kemp, acknowledging her outstanding efforts with the cadet group. Surf Boat Rower of the Year was presented to Jon Logie. Patrol Person of the Year was presented to the best on patrol in their respective age groups: Male and female 15s were Sam Kobelke and Lily Carson; male and female 17s were Hugh Robertson and Molly Kemp; male 19s went to James Robertson; and under-19s went to Skye Vaughn. Patrol of the Year male and female open awards were presented to Rex O'Rourke and Nikki Stafford. This year the Patrol of the Year award was presented to Patrol 6 for being the best patrolling group in the club this season. The recipients were Phillip Hatherly, Rob McCue, Sonja Crossingham, Molly Kemp, Sarah Hatherly, Jessica Hamel, Kylie Rosenbaum, Emma Schuch, Emily Moloney and Ben Hamel. Patrol awards for exceptional time spent on the beach patrolling 50 hours plus included Tony Wright, Rex O'Rourke, Anni Yaringa, James Wootton and Nikki Stafford.

Club champions by age group in three rounds with water and beach disciplines were: Male and female under-15s, Sam Kobelke and Camryn Dal Broi; male 17s, Jack Caldwell; and female under-17s, Emily Maloney; male 19s, James Robertson; male open, Tony Lineham; and female open, Emily Maloney; male and female 30s, Jasper Pengelly and Cassie Mackay; male and female 40s, Norman Kobelke and Ginette Kobelke; male and female 50s, James Wootton and Carolyn Turnham; male and female 60s, Jeff Polverino and Amanda Higgerson; and male 70s plus, Hugh Mackay. The special award for 10 years continuous service with nippers and transitioning to roles within the senior club was awarded to Leanne Hatherly and Danny Sutor. The special award for the National Service Medal was Rick Rolfe for his instrumental contribution and dedicated service to the club over many years.

It was a pleasure to meet with the Port Macquarie Surf Life Saving Club President Rick Rolfe recently and member Peter Fox to announce \$14,545 through the Liberal-Nationals Local Sport Grants Program to go towards the installation of solar panels for the clubhouse and the purchase of oars and equipment for youth education. I was extremely proud to recognise all the award recipients who work tirelessly each year to ensure the Port Macquarie Surf Life Saving Club is the successful and vibrant organisation it is today. They are the backbone of our community and their efforts are to be commended. On behalf of our community I extend a sincere thank you to every member.

### HILLS FOOTBALL INCORPORATED

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (16:02:55):**

It is with mixed emotions that I inform the House that Kurt Johnson will step down from his role as general manager of Hills Football Incorporated, the governing body for association football, Futsal and small-sided football in the Hills District, which is dedicated to helping our players' football goals become a reality. For members who may be unfamiliar, Hills Football prides itself as a centre of excellence in the delivery of the football experience by providing local community football players in the Hills District the opportunity to receive quality coaching and training opportunities at an affordable price. At the heart of the organisation's commitment to excellence is its policy of equal opportunity for all players.

The organisation comprises 21 member clubs with over 13,000 winter players, over 3,000 summer players, over 350 referees, over 2,000 coaches, and thousands of volunteers, all a part of The Hills community. The organisation also provides opportunities for boys, girls, men and women of all ability levels to play football all year round, as well as provides introductory football programs for three- to five-year-olds via the Little Legends program. These programs run within selected childcare centres, shopping centres and member clubs. The organisation's focus is for all players and skill levels, not solely around the elite space.

Hills Football aims to provide players with a platform to show off their potential, as well as learn new skills and techniques in an exciting, all-inclusive and safe environment. I am certain that the open opportunity for self-development will extend beyond just players and will inspire our next generation of coaches. It is an honour to see how the organisation has grown, developed and promoted the beautiful game under Kurt's leadership since he commenced as general manager in January 2017. It has transformed immensely from a three-by-three metre room that had nothing inside it at a time when the business had just under two months to get ready for round one. Under his management, Kurt has supported all members, stakeholders and football family through effective governance, strong leadership, transparent communication, professional administration and clear strategic direction. Despite many challenging periods Kurt leaves having achieved everything he set out to do, and I have full confidence that the board is more than capable of taking Hills Football to the next level.

I understand Kurt has decided to jump into the deep end and pursue an opportunity to work for himself entirely separate from football. The board of Hills Football is now in the process of finalising a succession process and Kurt will be assisting them along the way until the handover on 14 August. I wish Kurt every success as he embarks on the next chapter of his life. I am sure every club president, administrator and volunteer will agree that it has been a privilege to work alongside Kurt over many years and to share the same passion in football. I thank Kurt for his commitment, passion, creativity and, most of all, a willingness to look at change with an open mind and a positive approach. We will miss his professionalism and care, which has always shone through.

### UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:05:44):** Around the globe, teams of researchers are working around the clock to develop a COVID-19 vaccine. The past few months have highlighted the importance of jobs and professions that are sometimes overlooked and researchers, sadly, are often among them. We have rightly heaped praise on our health professionals and we have come to rely on cleaners to help keep us safe in public places and in our workplaces, even though this important work has always been done mostly by women who are largely unrecognised. Parents have a new respect for teachers and we have all acknowledged the commitment of small business owners to keeping their workers employed. Fresh consideration is being given to manufacturing and supply chain vulnerabilities, and our thoughts have been with transport workers who have helped us get around safely or have brought the world to our front door when we could not leave home.

Immediately prior to my election I worked with researchers at the University of Wollongong, who are fantastic, dedicated individuals. They were a highly skilled and diverse group, but maintaining a strong research capability is not easy. Research funding is highly competitive. The research labour market is a global one with people moving from all parts of the world to be part of research teams. Similarly they will move back, or to other parts of the world, to maintain their employment and continue their research if they are forced to do so. While the world looks to researchers to develop solutions to protect them in the future, researchers are looking to governments to support them right now. Sadly, the New South Wales Government is failing them, which is putting the current and future research task—and thousands of jobs—at risk.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** You were going so well for a minute.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** There are 11 publicly funded universities in New South Wales ranking among the leading universities in the world. They employ thousands of researchers who are connected to tens of thousands more. They contribute to the largest service export from New South Wales—education—which is worth more than \$12 billion a year. They undertake around 90 per cent of fundamental research and 40 per cent of applied

research. In regional areas universities also have a large employment and economic multiplier. In Wollongong it is estimated that the University of Wollongong has a direct and indirect economic impact of around \$1.4 billion annually. In employment terms, the University of Wollongong helps to sustain nearly 7,700 full-time equivalent jobs in the Illawarra and nearly 11,000 nationally.

Research through government funding and industry partnerships was worth around \$640 million over the last decade. In 2019 start-ups in the university's relatively young business incubator program—iAccelerate—generated nearly \$60 million in revenue alone. Every \$1 million spent by students generates around \$3.2 million in other parts of the economy. Universities also contribute to tourism with around two in every five visitors to Wollongong connected to the university—parents and friends visiting students and staff and others engaging with the university. Local industry is supported with high-quality graduates. Research partnerships help build our economic future. Australia has a proud history of research success. Cochlear implants, wi-fi, spray-on skin, clinical testing of penicillin, along with some Nobel laureates are just some of Australia's research track record. Imagine a world where those breakthroughs were not discovered and developed. As the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces said late last year:

NSW is renowned for its innovative science sector, which is why we're not only investing in developing and nurturing ideas but commercialising them too. While last year the Berejiklian Government was willing to support research and researchers with grants, when university staff were left out of the Morrison Government's JobKeeper program, the New South Wales Government was silent. It ignored calls to support universities, unlike the Victorian Government. I urge the Government to continue to nurture the development of ideas by supporting research and research jobs in New South Wales. Why? It is because lack of action from the New South Wales Government is putting jobs at risk.

Government members will try to claim—as the member for Tweed did in his earlier interjection—that its commitment to guarantee commercial loans will help. But the member for Tweed and his colleagues know that the New South Wales Government's response to the pressure on the university sector is inadequate. They know they are putting jobs at risk, particularly in regional areas like Wollongong and the Tweed, and limiting future innovation, creativity and industry growth. They know that, without a strong research sector, not only is our largest services export sector at risk, but so, too, is our economic future. We look to technology and research to help us solve problems—to develop low-carbon energy solutions, to reduce the carbon intensity of our manufactured products, and to protect us and help us live longer.

But research and researchers are not like a tap that can be turned off and on again. Research cannot simply resume from the point at which it was left. It does not work that way. New South Wales and its economy cannot afford for this Government to stick its head in the sand and ignore the difficulties facing our universities. I urge the Government to take those difficulties seriously and consider the calls for longer payroll tax deferrals or waivers and direct financial support or additional research funding rather than rejecting them, sitting on its hands and waiting for the Morrison Government to step in. All measures must be on the table to help save jobs now and to help support and create the jobs and industries of the future.

#### **MOUNT CANOBOLAS MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (16:10:58):** I speak about the proposed Mount Canobolas mountain bike trails project. The project is uniquely supported by neighbouring Orange City Council and Cabonne Council for the future economic and social benefit of the broader region. The project is the initiative of Orange City Council and comprises 11 mountain bike trails, totalling 117 kilometres of single-track mountain bike terrain on the iconic geographical feature of Mount Canobolas. Prominently positioned on the skyline overlooking the nearby city of Orange, the mountain is an extinct volcano with an elevation of 1,397 metres.

Mount Canobolas is located in the neighbouring local government area of Cabonne. Cabonne Council fully supports the development, which has the potential to yield opportunities for the townships and residents of the district. Following completion of the concept plan, the project has been widely supported and embraced by the local community, which recognises the opportunities it will provide to the community and to visitors to our region. The communities of both local government areas have sustained financial injury and economic impact following years of drought. The widespread bushfire smoke earlier this year tainted the region's fruit harvest and has all but left vineyards and wineries without a 2020 vintage. To top all that off, the region has been hit with COVID-19, trebling the economic assault.

This project should interest the Government in responding to the economic impacts of COVID-19. The construction and development of the project's infrastructure will stimulate the local building and construction sector, providing employment opportunities in the construction and post-construction phases of the operation. The sporting and tourist development is expected to generate significant visitation. The related spend will provide the necessary financial boost that our district and broader region needs to get back on its financial feet and facilitate continued growth.

From a sports person's viewpoint, Mount Canobolas provides exciting opportunities. It is considered by international experts to possess the geographical attributes necessary for a world-class mountain bike course with potential to attract high-level and international events. Infrastructure to support riders and visitors that is planned for the trail head at the park's entrance and the summit of the mountain includes barbecues, shelters, bike wash stations, an e-bike charging station, storage, parking, drinking water, toilets and showers, and a tourist information centre to supply trail maps and information. The visitor centre will provide general information to visitors and facilitate business development opportunities and jobs for the Aboriginal community, such as mountain bike tours of culturally significant parts of the mountain, trail maintenance, and bike hire and maintenance.

Benefits of the project include attracting investment, diversifying the local economy and creating jobs, growing the visitor economy, maintaining and enhancing liveability, and attracting and retaining a skilled workforce. Advantages of the development of the trails will be the provision of access to the State conservation area where they are located and assistance to NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service personnel in managing noxious weeds and controlling pests. Increased funding generated from paying visitors could enhance bushfire mitigation and enable access to areas of the mountain via the bike and service trails.

To be realised, this project requires the political and financial support of the New South Wales Government to facilitate the planning, funding and coordination of various ministerial bodies. Realising just how beneficial it will be for my electorate, I have lobbied the Government to fund this project. I thank the Minister for Energy and Environment, the Hon. Matt Kean, for his interest in and support for the project. Minister Kean responded to my invitation to visit the proposed project site at Mount Canobolas, where he joined me on a bike ride to help understand and visualise the benefits that the project will deliver. Minister Kean subsequently approved the plan of management, which will enable the progress of the project when New South Wales Government funding is delivered to commence it. In a subsequent meeting that I facilitated, Minister Kean remained engaged with Orange City Council and Cabonne Council, maintaining his support.

I also thank the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, the Hon. Stuart Ayres; the Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans, John Sidoti; and the acting sport Minister, Geoff Lee, for showing interest in the project. I thank them for taking the time to engage with stakeholders and offer advice on progressing this initiative. I have requested that the Government provide assistance to Orange City Council via the Planning System Acceleration Program. I have also requested the fast-tracking of the planning aspects of the project as the proposed sporting and tourism infrastructure will provide beneficial post-COVID employment opportunities and economic stimulus through its development, construction and completed operation phases. My constituents and I look forward to a cooperative and supportive response from the Government to deliver this fantastic project.

#### **ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE FOR GIRLS, CAMPBELLTOWN**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:15:52):** Like many of us, I am truly fortunate to have a local community filled with amazing schools, wonderful students and amazing teachers. On this occasion I would like to talk about one of them, St Patrick's College for Girls in Campbelltown, which is an integral educational institution in our community—one of many in the electorate. It is the only all-girls school in the Macarthur region and its 180-year history is extensive. With the indulgence of the House, I would like to take members through some of those moments in time.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Certainly.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** I appreciate the support of the member for Tweed. I note that my colleague the member for Camden is in the Chamber. He is a strong supporter of the school and many of his constituents attend the school. In 1840 the survey plan for the parcel of land was gifted to the Roman Catholic school by Dennis and Mary Shiel. That same year Dennis passed away. He was survived by his wife, Mary, and their 12 children. In 1887 the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict arrived in Campbelltown to establish a convent and boarding high school for female students. In 1887 the sisters were given St John's church to use as a convent and school, and in 1888 Cardinal Moran blessed and opened St Patrick's convent.

In 1939 Mother Veronica changed the name to "St Patrick's College". In 1969 St Patrick's College moved to premises vacated by St John's Preparatory College. The current site of the school was purchased in 1888 by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict to establish a boarding school for boys aged between five and 12; the first intake of boarders was in 1889. In 1969 St John's Preparatory College closed. The students of St Patrick's College for Girls are always exceptionally respectful. Their school spirit is obvious and on display for all to see. I am proud of all our local schools, but I am particularly proud to have recently attended the school to see the history library and the collection that it continues to collate for everyone to see.

As many in this place will know—particularly the member for Camden—this year Campbelltown celebrates its 200th anniversary. That is a remarkable occasion for our city, and indeed for our region. The school has done an amazing job collecting that rich history to ensure that our proud story will remain for generations to understand. Recently the girls did some research on the military history of nurses around Campbelltown during the war years. They had done thorough research and they even dressed up as the nurses of the day once did. Members may recall that I raised this in the House on a previous occasion to ensure that they got the acknowledgement they deserved.

To cut a long story short, I was back at the school and it was good to see the students again. Principal Mrs Lennox and her staff do an amazing job. It was a proud moment when I was joined by Mr Jeff McGill, who recently received a community award. I felt it fitting to present him the award at the school, given his historic links with the school, given the support that he has provided to it as a historian and also given he was a proud local journalist and former editor at the *Campbelltown-MacArthur Advertiser*.

When you see what all of our schools achieve, I know that each and every member in this House has the same feeling of pride for the schools in the electorates they represent. I am immensely proud of all the students and I am immensely supportive of Mrs Lennox, all the staff and everyone who contributes to the wonderful school. I thank them for having me. They will always enjoy my support. I look forward to seeing them further develop into the proud school that they have been for almost two centuries.

### CAMDEN ELECTORATE SPORTING CLUBS

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (16:20:55):** I concur with the member for Campbelltown. St Patrick's College in Campbelltown is an outstanding college for young women. Without doubt, local sporting clubs enrich our community. More often than not in Camden, you will drive past a sporting field or centre and see clubs of all codes training hard for upcoming games or competitions. It has been upsetting to see local sporting fields on weekday afternoons and on weekends empty because of COVID-19 restrictions. However, as restrictions ease and as sporting seasons start, it has been wonderful to see the resilience and adaptability of the sporting codes that call Camden home. For example, the Macarthur Football Association has implemented a number of changes, such as recording attendance and introducing sanitising stations, and some clubs have made use of face masks to protect their players when the season recommenced.

With the Macarthur Bulls, the twelfth A-League team slated to enter the competition in the 2020-21 season, Macarthur is quickly becoming a hotspot for local talent. I thank the Camden Falcons, the Oran Park Rovers Camden Tigers, the Harrington Hornets, the Mount Annan Mustangs, the Narellan Rangers and the Macarthur Magic for their resilience during this time. I wish them the best of luck during their season. Netball is another sport that is thriving in Camden. Our area is producing some of the State's most promising and gifted local talent. Recently I had the pleasure of visiting the Bringelly Netball Club to award them their share of \$4.6 million in sporting grants so that they could provide umpire and coaching courses for their growing netball community. The Camden District Netball Association has responded to the challenges with great initiative. I thank the Benkennie, Bringelly, Camden RSL, Currans Hill, Harrington Park, Macarthur, Mount Annan and Oran Park netball clubs.

Rugby union has also had challenges to its season, and I commend the Camden Rams for their continued training both on and off the field as they prepare to hit the ground running when their season commences on Saturday 1 August. I look forward to the clash between the Camden Rams and the Bowral Blacks—I acknowledge my colleague the member for Wollondilly—next season. This community spirit can also be seen from our rugby league teams. The Camden Rams, the Mount Annan Currans Hill Knights, the Narellan Jets and the Oran Park Gregory Hills Chargers have shown resilience during this time. I wish them well with their season, which commences on 1 August. I had the pleasure of awarding the Camden Junior Australian Football Club, the Camden Blues, a local sporting grant, which allowed them to purchase training balls, match balls and uniforms so they could hit the ground running when the first bounce of the official competition commenced on the weekend of 17 to 19 July.

I also wish the Camden Cats every success this season. The club's men and women compete in the Sydney Australian Football League competition. I note that both teams have already had wins. The efforts of the Harrington Park Hurricanes, the Macarthur Skylarks, the Oran Park Hockey Club, the Camden and Oran Park Oztag clubs, the Macarthur Collegians Cycling Club and the Southern Cross Gliding Club have all shown that the local sporting clubs in Camden are resilient and adaptable to the circumstances. Finally, in early July I had the pleasure of introducing the Premier to the Macarthur BMX Club and showing her the completed stage one of the new race track at Kirkham Park. This track will be further upgraded during stage two in the near future with the support of a \$2.79 million grant from the New South Wales Government through the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund. Those stories of resilience and adaptability serve as a testament to not just Camden's local sporting clubs but also the parents, volunteers, mentors and participants involved who have kept the sporting spirit of Camden alive during the COVID pandemic.

## MACQUARIE FIELDS ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (16:25:11):** If there is one word that sums up much of the public, political and social debate nowadays, it is "infrastructure". It is the term on everyone's lips. There are a multitude of newspaper articles and social media posts discussing the need for infrastructure every day. The need for infrastructure—vital infrastructure, community-building infrastructure—has never been greater, especially in my rapidly growing electorate. What were green fields and open spaces just a few short years ago are now home to new and burgeoning communities. It stands to reason—and it is hardly rocket science—that the need for infrastructure grows as our community grows. Evidence-based decision-making shows it is the right thing to do.

Few areas are growing more rapidly than those in my electorate of Macquarie Fields. But under this Liberal Government, my community is constantly short-changed when it comes to new and vital infrastructure. It is evidently clear that infrastructure has failed to keep pace with development in our suburbs. It is a topic that constituents raise with me constantly. Let me give a few examples. In terms of vital infrastructure, few items are more important to a new community than local public schools. It is not as if the Department of Education does not know how to build schools; it is just told to be politically selective about where those schools are built. It is not about educational need but about political convenience.

Edmondson Park is home to thousands of residents and hundreds of young families. Many more thousands will be arriving in the coming years. No doubt many built their homes and futures around the expectation that a primary school and a high school would be built in their suburb. Indeed, residents have shown me a Landcom master plan that clearly shows where the school was to be built and which of course influenced their decision to buy and build their family home. It is not an unreasonable expectation that a family's children can attend a nearby public school. Yet, for all the promises, residents in Edmondson Park are still waiting. In truth, they will be waiting for years to come because of this Liberal Government's constant delays and outright laziness. Despite all my efforts and questioning, the Government still cannot tell my community when the school will be built.

Not only is this Liberal Government failing to build new infrastructure in my electorate, it has actively and deliberately closed vital public services. A case in point is the Ingleburn motor registry. To this day local residents have to travel miles away out of the area to perform the most basic administrative tasks. In the lead-up to the 2019 election the Liberal Government committed to building a Service NSW centre in Edmondson Park. Despite the promise, the new Service NSW centre is nowhere to be seen. In fact, the Liberal Government now says the centre could be three years away. It sounds like a non-core promise to me. The Government has no problem making my constituents wait. I am just glad the Government did not make this promise contingent on my community holding its breath.

We can all agree that fair access to our public transport system falls under the umbrella of vital infrastructure. It is evident that access to public transport actually depends on where you live. If you live in a Liberal electorate, you can expect funding through the Transport Access Program to be expedited. If you live in south-west Sydney in a Labor electorate, you can go on the backburner and the never-never. Macquarie Fields station has constantly missed out on funding for lifts despite having a higher community need, supported by this strange thing that the Government seems to forget called facts and statistics. I have been campaigning for lifts on behalf of my community for years and I will not stop until we get our fair share.

The frail and elderly, people with a disability, parents with prams and travellers with luggage are all confronted with a completely inaccessible station marked by steep stairs. It is okay to fund lifts at train stations located in Liberal seats that have fewer than 1,000 trips per week but not one in the Labor seat with many thousands of trips per week. Needs and evidence-based resource allocation has been replaced by political gerrymandering. It is simply not good enough. In recent days and weeks the Government has constantly fast-tracked infrastructure projects but not one item—not one nut, not one bolt—has been allocated to my local community. The Government has spruiked that its fast-tracking of infrastructure during the COVID-19 pandemic will boost jobs and help the recovery. It appears it does not care about the jobs or the economic recovery in south-west Sydney. Infrastructure may well be a buzzword for the Liberal Government, but in south-west Sydney all we hear are empty promises. All my community is asking for is a fair go and its fair share.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:30:13):** I assure the member for Macquarie Fields that the school is on its way. He said that his electorate has been ignored and yet I know that the kids are having a great time at Bardia Public School and appreciating all that is on offer there. They are also enjoying the Prestons Public School upgrade down the road in my electorate. A lot of kids from the Macquarie Fields electorate go there too, as we share a boundary. They enjoy it and they cannot wait until Edmondson Park opens as well, which is on its way. They are also enjoying the South West Rail Link and the fact that there are double the number of trains. Trains are not every half hour as was originally proposed. The car park is on its way, with temporary parking announced. I announced it and then those opposite come out and say they did too. Those opposite announced

something like 100 car parks during the election campaign. The Government announced 750 car parks and that has now been increased to 2,000. I tell the member for Macquarie Fields that his electorate is not being ignored; it is absolutely being looked after. His constituents are going to love the Service NSW centre, whether it be located in Edmondson Park or in Prestons. [*Time expired.*]

### TRIBUTE TO HAROLD JOHN BENYON, OAM

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:31:30):** I take this opportunity to pay tribute to a great man by the name of Harold John Benyon, OAM, who sadly passed away recently. I was fortunate to meet John in my early days as a councillor. John was a well-known man in Kenthurst who earned the great respect of the local community—and rightly so, considering his dedication and love for the betterment of the community. He was always championing a cause. Big or small, he believed all were worthy projects that deserved attention. He was a great community advocate, who would dedicate his time and effort to those causes. John and I formed a solid relationship in my role as a councillor.

Not only would John advocate for causes but he also dedicated and contributed his own time, effort and labour to volunteering and advancing the things he deemed worthy. He wore a striking eye patch and towered over me, but he was such a gentle soul. John was a wise and savvy businessman and from 1975 put his business wisdom to work as a dedicated volunteer with the Rotary Club of Kenthurst. He was involved with the men's shed transformation, Australia Day and Anzac Day services, and looking after the Kenthurst Swimming Pool and the Kenthurst Literary Institute Hall, where he became president in 1990. He was a life member of the Graphics Arts Institute and volunteered at Kenthurst Primary School. He was also involved in the preservation and maintenance of heritage-listed buildings in Kenthurst for approximately 30 years.

In 2014 John was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to the community of Kenthurst. He was also awarded Citizen of the Year by The Hills Shire Council in 2006 and Person of the Year by the Graphic Arts Institute in 1987. It was very fitting that Kenthurst Rotary Park was renamed the John Benyon Rotary Park in his honour a few years ago. It was a reflection of the impact he had on the local community. In addition to his great work and influence elsewhere in the community, he was dedicated to the very park that would be named after him. He is credited with the expansion and maintenance of the children's playground and having initiated improvements to the park, including barbecues, footpaths, water bubblers, seating, shelters and a basketball court—among other things.

I recall how humbled and even a little uncomfortable John was whenever I congratulated him on having the park named after him. The John Benyon Rotary Park was the place where we all came together as a community on so many occasions throughout the years. As the years move on and we return to the park for special ceremonies and events, we will be reminded of our dear friend John. He will be sadly missed but fondly remembered and his legacy will live on forever. I offer my condolences to his family. Rest in peace, John.

### BLACK LIVES MATTER PROTEST

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:34:40):** Yesterday I was in The Domain for the "I can't breathe" Black Lives Matter protest calling for justice for David Dungay Jr because I know that systemic racism—just like COVID-19—can infect our community and cause significant harm. I also know both are lethal. Like many, I have had enough of this so-called justice system assisting police to undermine the right to peaceful assembly and safe protest in our community. We are living in a new reality with this pandemic, with no clear end in sight.

To maintain a healthy democracy, in which citizens exercise their right to peaceful assembly and protest, we must find COVID-safe ways for people to engage with community protests and activities just as the Government facilitates corporate entities, corporations, commercial entities and this Parliament to continue to function in a COVID-safe way. It is concerning how people have attempted to distract from yesterday's rally by focusing on a false dichotomy. I want to put on record a statement by a Dungay family member outlining the reasons for yesterday's protest. I quote:

The reason we are protesting is because after five years not a single person has been held accountable for the death of my uncle.

SafeWork NSW and the DPP won't even investigate whether charges should be laid. How would you feel if these Government officials wouldn't even lift a finger to investigate whether there should be charges following David's death?

Remember that the Coroner said there was no reason for anyone to go into David Jr's cell that day and assault him.

The police say they want to shut us down because they are concerned about people's lives but they don't care about black lives. Are we not human too?

Under the protocol for investigation and cooperation between agencies following a serious workplace incident, the Police Commissioner could work with the DPP and SafeWork NSW to investigate my uncle's death and they could investigate whether charges could be laid but they are refusing to do that.

The Commissioner isn't interested in investigating my uncle's death. All he wants to do is shut me up and silence black voices to stop us complaining about the way that we are treated.

In this statement, the family urged the Premier to commit to asking SafeWork NSW and the Director of Public Prosecutions [DPP] to investigate whether charges could be laid, adding they were sure they could put off the protest in the interest of community safety if the Premier took that one small action. It is incredibly disappointing to see that no leadership was provided and no action was taken. All of those—including those in my electorate of Newtown—who say this is not the right time are absolutely correct.

The right time for mass mobilisation and outrage over David Dungay Jr's death was in the days and weeks after 29 December 2015 when he was found dead in his cell in Long Bay jail. Why did they not do it then? Why no action then? It is a totally flawed argument to say that it is not reasonable or rational to do it during a pandemic and try to tell this family, these Aboriginal leaders and this activist community that now is not the right time because they know it is not the right time. The right time was back in 2015 when there was no outrage about his death. In the context of the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, people have been quoting Martin Luther King. It is important to put this quote on the record today:

First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically feels that he can set the time-table for another man's freedom; who lives by the myth of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait until a "more convenient season."

I urge this Parliament to do all it can to address systemic racism in our community and make sure that we focus on the need to both have COVID-safe measures and enable people to protest significant issues in our community. [*Time expired.*]

## PUBLIC PARKLANDS

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (16:40:02):** Parramatta Park is one of Australia's most important sites. Its importance reaches as far back as 39,000 years for the Burramattagal people. It is recognised by UNESCO as being of World Heritage significance. It is proudly home to Old Government House and is one of the oldest public parks in the world. For the residents of my electorate of Auburn, it holds particular significance for its heritage value as our most important regional park. That is why the Parramatta Park is protected by current New South Wales legislation, with its own trust. That prevents any government of the day plundering the parklands without the consent of the Parliament.

However, last week the New South Wales planning Minister announced he was dissolving the current trust, alongside those of Centennial and Moore Park and Western Sydney Parklands, and handing over the management of public parks to an agency called Greater Sydney Parklands, alongside Callan Park and Fernhill. For decades, local residents and members of Parliament have fought to protect the integrity of Parramatta Park from those who have seen these heritage lands as a shortcut to accessible land. Fundamental to this fight to protect Parramatta Park has been the legislation that enshrines the land within a trust.

The Government has an appalling record of sustained attacks upon our trust parklands. Residents across Sydney need look no further than the former sport Minister's ongoing denial that Western Sydney Stadium would be built over Parramatta pool on trust lands, right up to the day before he released the plans. He did not even bother to consult his colleague the member for Parramatta. Who can forget his attempts to place a 55,000-seat stadium on Moore Park lands? Spare a thought for the Moreton Bay figs on open space, which have been consistent victims of this Government under the flag of building light rail. Rows of beautiful Moreton Bay figs along Anzac Parade and on Robin Thomas Reserve at Parramatta were chopped down to make way for light rail. Likewise, great chunks of land have been excised from sports fields and open spaces in Moore Park and Robin Thomas Reserve for light rail.

The Mays Hill precinct of Parramatta Park Trust has already lost two hectares, including for—surprise, surprise—a car park. It only adds to the ongoing attacks on heritage in Parramatta, which include the destruction of the St George Terraces and Willow Grove and the high-rise development surrounding the important heritage precinct that includes the Female Factory. Despite Gabrielle Upton stating in this Chamber on 11 October 2017 that the Government would transfer the ownership of the Wisteria Gardens from NSW Health to the Parramatta Park Trust, three years later this still has not happened.

At the Western Sydney Parklands this Government has already leased out 150 hectares of land within the seat of Blacktown. That exceeds the 2 per cent cap on lands allowed for this purpose, or an additional 50 hectares. You will not hear about these raids on public lands from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, but he tells you a lot about the Government's plans. What he will not tell you is that this is about commercialisation. Forget about the Callan Park Act, with its edicts that there be no commercialisation on those lands. My colleagues,



particularly those members on the crossbench, might want to check how other parklands have been funding themselves under this Government. I assure them it is not through the largesse of government; it is through commercialisation.

The current Acts of Parliament protecting the trusts are enshrined in legislation and are there for a very good reason: to protect against attempts such as this. It is legislation that this Government seems to think it can ignore. It has already dissolved the Parramatta Park Trust despite this legislation. It will not be long before it is back in this House removing all those Acts. To those who believe they have received assurances about advisory committees and local voices, I say go and check the legislation for the Wollongong and Newcastle stadium trusts when they were dissolved and received legislated advisory committees. Then go and ask the members representing the electorates of Wollongong and Newcastle when those committees last met. The answer, under this Government, is never. Members may call me cynical if they like, but experience tells me where this is going, and it is not protecting the parklands or allowing local communities to be heard.

### **HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE PREMIER VISIT**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:44:38):** Today I speak about Premier Berejiklian's visit to the Holsworthy electorate on 24 June 2020. We were lucky enough to have the Premier visit the local area for her first COVID-safe community visit. The Premier and I had the opportunity to speak with local residents and visit some of our local small businesses. We mostly discussed things related to COVID support and recovery and also checked in to see how they were going. The Premier talked with local residents and with students and families from Hammondville Public School as well. What came out of the visit was that everybody was so grateful to the Premier and took the opportunity to thank her, particularly for her handling of the COVID pandemic. It was nice to see that acknowledgement, as we all know the hours that she, Dr Chant and the Minister for Health and Medical Research are putting in to try to keep New South Wales as safe as it can be.

At Hammondville shops we spoke with Betty, the owner of Euphoria Florist, who has managed to adapt her business to be COVID Safe. She serves local residents from the front of the shop instead of customers coming inside, and that seems to be working so far. I am a massive fan of Betty. She makes beautiful bouquets and I know she is going to be looking after us again. Two local residents are turning 100 and 102 this month and I will be turning to Betty to help us look after them as well. We also visited Colin and the team at First National Real Estate Davidson to hear about how they have been impacted and to look at some of their ideas. We saw Kelly and Fish at The Shop Cafe, where we picked up some very tasty treats. Importantly for me, we picked up some coffee as well because it was a long day.

There are some great businesses that have really adapted to the COVID pandemic. The Premier and I reminded those local businesses that applications for the \$3,000 Small Business Recovery Grant opened on 1 July and we encouraged them to apply for those grants in order to adapt or change their operations. The grants cover those necessary expenses and give a little helping hand. The Premier and I also paid a visit to the Casula Rural Fire Brigade. It always gives so much to our local community, so it was fitting that we stopped by the station to see Captain David Collins and some of the volunteers. Casula RFS has helped protect and support communities across the State during the most recent bushfire season. Its members showed heroism when they were the first responders to the large bushfire that went right across our Holsworthy electorate in April 2018. They also responded to the Voyager Point fire and other fires across the State during the most recent fire season.

At the end of 2019, unfortunately, Casula's RFS base was damaged by a big storm. It was hit by a bolt of lightning and some of its equipment was damaged. Obviously that needs to be repaired. In an effort to support Casula Rural Fire Service, the Premier and I were pleased to present the team with \$35,000 in funding to help them get back up and running and to replace the items and equipment that had been damaged during the storm. It will help repair and replace equipment like their fire-spotting camera. It is a phenomenal camera; it can see everything and is shared by the whole Macarthur area. It is a pretty cool thing. The funding will also help them to replace their computers, smart boards and all those other little electrical things that they need. I thank Captain Collins and the Casula RFS brigade for their continued hard work and dedication to keeping our local community safe. It definitely does not go unnoticed.

The Premier and I also had the pleasure of visiting the team at Miracle Babies Foundation at Chipping Norton. We surprised the team; we told them we were just popping in to say hi but we presented them with \$40,000. I have spoken about Miracle Babies in this Chamber previously. It is Australia's leading organisation supporting premature and sick newborns, their families and the hospitals that provide care for them. The organisation is currently working on Liverpool Hospital's upgrade to make sure it will be right for all the tiny babies that are born in that hospital. The funding will help Miracle Babies reach and assist more mothers and families of premature babies within the local community and across New South Wales.

It was great to hear how the team at Miracle Babies has continued all its hard work during COVID-19 to support the families obviously going through more isolation than they would during normal times—which is not normal even then. Once again I congratulate the team at Miracle Babies, especially co-founders Kylie Pussell and Melinda Cruz, for their dedication to helping young families across the electorate and, as I said, New South Wales and Australia. I know the funding will further enhance the important work they do. I thank the Premier for coming to the Holsworthy electorate on a COVID-safe visit and for meeting some of our wonderful local businesses, organisations and residents. We appreciate it very much.

### PLANNING SYSTEM ACCELERATION PROGRAM

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:49:45):** Yesterday I drew to the attention of the House my very grave concerns about an approval to the modification of a development application for the Eastlakes Shopping Centre, and what I consider to be improper relationships between the applicant and senior members of the former Government and the applicant, and the Liberal Party through donations to the Free Enterprise Foundation. I spoke expansively to the Minister about my private concerns in relation to this modification application that was being considered in accordance with the fast-tracked project assessment. After making my contribution to the House yesterday the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Dr Stokes, courteously, as he always is, indicated this, and I quote from *Hansard*:

I am aware of his concerns—

meaning me—

about the somewhat sordid history of the site and the applicant, as he has described it.

He went on to say:

... the qualities of the applicant are not a relevant planning consideration. The planning system is very clear; it looks at the merit of the application on the face of the application and does not inquire into the merits of the person putting forward the application. That is not a relevant planning consideration.

He went on to say further:

It is my expectation that the requirements of the acceleration criteria are met with this application, as with any other.

This application was considered as part of the fast-track project assessment. The guidelines issued in April 2020 provide:

All projects nominated by industry groups are to be "shovel-ready" continue to be considered in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, and projects that do not satisfy the criteria will continue to progress through the planning system.

The project criteria are to create jobs and to be of public benefit, and the timing of these assessments and determination of the project are to be completed quickly and to commence within six months. Yesterday I drew to the attention of the House a newspaper publication, the *Southern Courier* of 22 June 2020, wherein the applicant indicated he expected this project to be completed by mid-2021, which is beyond the six-month period. These projects for the benefit of employment are expected to be shovel ready within six months.

I invited the Minister's attention to the fact, before consideration by the department of the application, that this project will not be shovel ready within the six-month period and that that matter ought to be examined and considered. For the Minister to respond yesterday that it is his expectation that the requirements of the acceleration criteria are met with this application is not satisfactory because the Minister is accountable to the House for the conduct of development applications. It is not good enough that he has an expectation. It is his responsibility to ensure that the criteria to speed up the process of the development application are met.

The reality of the situation in respect of this application is this: There can be one administrative failure if we do not want to accept the questionable permission under part 3A that was given by the former Labor Government. There can be a questionable administrative decision for the member for Wakehurst to ignore my suspicion of improper interference with a part 3 application when I spoke to him towards the end of 2012. But there cannot be a third and another improper consideration of the Government's own criteria to rush through a development application or modification of application that does not meet the criteria. One cannot be in a position of making three errors in an application, bearing in mind the detailed information I have provided to this House, to this Minister and to the Minister's predecessor in regard to what I consider to be improper relationships between this applicant and senior members of the former government and his connection with the Liberal Party.

### *Community Recognition Statements*

### HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:55:14):** This evening I speak of two fantastic surf life saving clubs in my electorate that have just received some major funding from the surf life saving fund. One of the clubs is Garie,

a surf life saving club in the Royal National Park, which has no access to electricity, sewerage or water. It is completely self-sufficient. The club was opened in 2008 and over the past few years the weather has given it a bit of a hard time, so it is receiving \$300,000 for an infrastructure upgrade. Era is another little surf life saving club in my electorate in the Royal National Park and it is receiving \$57,000 to replace its solar batteries, which are now defunct. I congratulate both Garie and Era surf life saving clubs in my electorate.

#### **BERT BENNETT**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:56:07):** I congratulate Bert Bennett from Mondrook in my electorate on being recognised and awarded life membership of the Rural Fire Service [RFS]. Bert joined the RFS in 2005 when he lived in Kurrajong Heights, and after he moved to the Myall Lakes electorate he joined the Tinonee Rural Fire Brigade in 2006. Bert has held many positions, including training officer, community engagement officer, permit issuing officer, equipment officer, Rural Fire Service Association representative and deputy captain. His contribution and dedication to both the community and the Tinonee brigade over 13 years has been exceptional. With all good men there is always a spouse who supports them and Bert's wife, Linda, is no exception. She has always supported him in his endeavours and she is very proud of him.

During the November-December Black Summer fires, Bert's extensive knowledge of the local brigade area and the high-risk areas within allowed him to set up a forward communications post in his private vehicle. He ventured out during and after the fire front approached to warn property holders of the impending danger, to check on their preparedness and to offer safety advice. Tinonee Rural Fire Service Captain Alan Steber commented on how Bert has brought a wide range of knowledge and skills to the brigade. I congratulate Bert on this lifetime achievement.

#### **DOREEN GARDNER**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (16:57:15):** Today I pay tribute to Doreen Gardner, an amazing member of the Keira community who at age 93 spends her time making the uniforms worn by nurses and other staff who provide patient care at Wollongong Hospital. Doreen donates many hours of her time making brightly coloured and patterned scrubs, which she then donates free of charge. The material is donated by Doreen's equally generous friend Betty Gallen. Together, Doreen and Betty team up to produce and hand deliver the uniforms to grateful hospital staff. Nurses say they love the brightly coloured scrubs, which bring smiles to their faces and to the faces of their patients. Doreen is an active member of the Keira community with many interests but she says that sewing is still her favourite activity. Doreen is admired by many, leading a completely independent life at age 93. Doreen's large family describes her as a national treasure—a beautiful soul who is always happy and laughing and bringing sunshine to the lives of many. I am sincerely grateful for the time that Doreen gives to our local community and I wish her many more years of happiness and independence.

#### **GOSFORD PALLIATIVE CARE UNIT**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:58:17):** I am delighted to inform the House that for the first time in the history of the Central Coast our region will have its own palliative care unit. On Thursday 16 July I stood side by side with the hardworking Elsie's Retreat Committee—Judy, Margaret, Oana and Peter—to announce that their eight-year campaign has yielded this fantastic result. The new indoor and outdoor spaces will transform palliative care services for patients, families and carers. It is so important that we create the right environment with the best care but also with the best surroundings. All of the money raised by the Elsie's Retreat Committee will go towards furnishings and equipment in the new unit. The tender is out right now and construction work on the new unit—which happens to be the former maternity ward—will begin later this year. It is critical that we provide families who are facing the death of a loved one with more choices and greater access to high-quality care, and I am so proud that the New South Wales Government has done exactly that.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Gosford, the member for Cessnock and the member for Shellharbour that each of them is on three calls to order.

#### *Public Interest Debate*

#### **ICARE**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:59:54):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Expresses its outrage over recent reports that the Treasurer's agency, icare, has underpaid 52,000 workers by up to \$80 million, in what is the biggest wage theft scandal involving any government in Australian history.
- (2) Notes the Treasurer's failure to investigate the awarding of an \$11 million contract by icare, without any tender process, to a company owned by an icare executive and his son.

- (3) Demands the Treasurer immediately sack the icare executive leadership, recover the huge bonuses paid to them and ensure all workers are paid their legal entitlements by Christmas.
- (4) Condemns the Treasurer for covering up the dire situation at icare, by ignoring repeated warnings from the State Insurance Regulatory Authority, Treasury and even the Minister for Customer Service and abandoning an independent review of icare in September 2019.

Folklore has developed in the Labor Party over years and years in relation to the airing of *Four Corners*. Most Labor Party branches in New South Wales meet on a Monday night. We all try to encourage the chair to finish the branch meeting as early as possible so we can rush home and watch *Four Corners* because it is always compelling television. So it was last Monday evening—compelling in the extreme—but also sad, very sad. It was sad not only because everything we saw in that program was foretold in this and the other place in 2011, 2012 and many times since, but also because all the tragedy that unfolded on people's screens was avoidable. We do not like to say, "We told you so", but when it comes to workers compensation and the evil visited by this Coalition Government on ordinary injured working people, "We goddamn told you so."

I am sure it was compelling for the Treasurer. He is the great confidence trickster of this place. Scarcely have I seen him as uncomfortable as members saw him when asked about the issue during question time this week. He is the Paul Keating wannabe. He struts around like Paul Keating. He so burns with the desire to be the Premier that on a clear day in this Chamber we can just make out his Brylcreem smouldering. I bet it was smouldering on Monday night when Adele Ferguson was taking apart his political career. If one did not know him one would feel sorry for him. It could not have been comfortable, sitting there with his wife and kids on national television with the party elders watching, Liberal Party branch members all over the State watching, treasurers and shadow treasurers—his counterparts all over Australia—watching him being dismantled by a very careful analysis done by the media entities involved.

The great tragedy for him is that this is all his own doing. This is his scheme and that is why he is mentioned in every paragraph of the motion before the House. He designed this scheme, too smart by half, so that the board of icare was responsible only to him—not to his Treasury secretary, not to the department, just to him. The allegations could scarcely have been more serious—wage theft on an unprecedented national scale; the kicking out of injured workers; the refusal of claims; the suicides and ruined families; the impropriety of board members; matters being referred to ICAC in relation to a department that is not yet three years old; the ignoring of multiple warnings from the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA], from Minister Dominello and his secretary, from Treasury, from families and injured workers by the thousands all over Australia; inquiries scuttled from within; and financial failures on a monumental scale of a scheme that was in good shape when he inherited it.

Do not take my word for it. It is all there in the PricewaterhouseCoopers actuarial valuation of claims as at 2011. That tells us the true financial scale of the scheme that he inherited. In the face of such incisive allegations that were put right between his eyes, circumstances demanded a careful, considerate, reasonable evidence-based response. That is what circumstances demanded and that is certainly what injured workers and their families demanded. And a careful, responsible and substantial character would have taken with both hands the opportunity to stand in this place or in any other forum to do one of two things—to have said that *Four Corners* and Fairfax had got it wrong. They would have made careful, evidence-based arguments, tabling letters, emails, ministerial directions. They would have tabled reports and facts from all manner of experts to say why Adele Ferguson was not speaking the truth on Monday.

The same character could have said, "Yes, there was some substance to the truth in this plethora of allegations. I am not happy about what went on. The scheme is not perfect. I tell you what, I'll get to the bottom of it. We will lay icare bare, open to all the world. We will get to the bottom of what is happening here." But we had none of that today or yesterday. It was all bluff and bluster. It was all insult and fake news. There was no Paul Keating here; it was all Donald Trump from the Treasurer, who thinks he is going to be the next Premier of New South Wales. My, does he not have a hurdle to jump now? *Four Corners* has put an Uluru in his way. He does not deserve to traverse that rock until he can get over the allegations about him that are floating around.

Make no mistake: He did not attempt to answer those allegations in any way, shape or form yesterday or today. All he had was a rewriting of history—a supposed question about how I might have felt when workers were descending upon Parliament House. If he had been a student of history he would have known that I was not even in this place then. It was the Carr era. The Treasurer stands condemned today. Not only is he condemned but he is also defenceless. If one has no self-defence there is no substantial defence to follow, as I am sure my learned friend will attempt to say in a minute. This is all on him and this will not go away. If he thinks that Fairfax, the ABC, the Leader of the Opposition and Daniel Mookhey are going to go away, let me say this: they have not started yet. I would not like to be in the Treasurer's shoes. It is no wonder he looked so uncomfortable today. [Time expired.]

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:07:22):** This motion is yet another example of the lies, half-truths and spin typical of the New South Wales division of the Labor Party. It is a fake news universe occupied by concealing \$100,000 illegal cash donations prior to the last election and concealing the Chinese communist government's control of its members of Parliament, yet stating in public meetings that they do not like Chinese people with PhDs, like the member for Maroubra did.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Ku-ring-gai will resume his seat. Member for Wyong, what is the point of order?

**Mr David Harris:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 76. The member is not referring to the motion. He is speaking totally outside the leave of the motion. I ask that you ask him to return to the motion.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I accept that the member for Ku-ring-gai wanted to make some introductory comments, but I ask him to return to the leave of the motion before the House.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** It should be remembered that the former Labor Government had two workers compensation regimes. The first one ended up more than \$2 billion in debt. The second one ended up more than \$4 billion in debt. It was going to have to increase premiums by up to 28 per cent, with the attendant loss of 12,000 jobs in New South Wales. In fact, Labor's last workers compensation scheme was so bad that its chair resigned, blaming the parlous financial situation on the two Ministers, Minister Joe Tripodi and the member for Maroubra. The member for Maroubra has a hide to move this motion. He has the temerity to preach administrative virtue when he presided over a scheme that approached insolvency. So lazy is the member for Maroubra that he spoke only five times in this Parliament in 2019. Today is only the sixth occasion on which he has spoken in Parliament this year. He should have stopped where he was last year—

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** He should have stopped at five. Paragraph (1) of this motion is wildly inaccurate, both as to the number of workers and to the amount that they have been underpaid. Paragraph (2) is also inaccurate—

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** —because the matter was referred by the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] to ICAC, and ICAC is not conducting any further investigation. What does Labor know that ICAC does not? If Labor members know something, let them refer it to ICAC, as it is their duty to do. But, of course, all we get is innuendo and no substance.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the third time.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** As for sacking people in paragraph (3), and consistent with the laziness of the member for Maroubra, if he had looked at the legislation which established SIRA, if he had shown any industry—certainly more industry than in his five contributions to Parliament last year—he would have worked out that the executive officers are appointed and dismissed by the board, not by the Minister, the Premier or the Cabinet. The Treasurer has no power to sack the board. But one person who does have the power to sack a board member and President of the New South Wales branch of the Labor Party, Mr Lennon, is the Leader of the Opposition. Apparently Mr Lennon is good enough to be the most senior officer of NSW Labor, yet the member for Maroubra wants to assert this innuendo. As to paragraph (4) of the motion, there is no cover-up. There have been multiple reviews— [*Time expired.*]

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:12:34):** I am pleased to support the member for Maroubra and the motion he has moved in this public interest debate. I draw the attention of the House to the issue of suicide yet again. I have spoken in the past about the issue of suicides that are the result of this terrible, sad, unfortunate and unsatisfactory workers compensation regime. When I raised the matter a couple of years ago, there were multiple divisions and every member was in the Chamber. There were plenty of heads hanging low, and well might they, because towards the end of the five-year period when injured workers were about to be kicked off the scheme, the State Insurance Regulatory Authority—not icare—started taking statistics on how many people were committing suicide and how many people were self-harming. As the shadow Minister responsible for this portfolio between 2015 and 2019, I spoke to dozens and dozens of these—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: As serious as the topic of suicide is, this does not relate to any of the matters raised in the motion.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I know where the member for Ku-ring-gai is going, but the member for Cessnock is talking about suicides relating to workers compensation. The member for Cessnock may continue.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** One of the people who came to see me who was contemplating suicide was from the Ku-ring-gai electorate. She had been unable to return to work and was about to be cut off the system. Another person who came to see me was from the Treasurer's electorate. She had been unable to get a meeting with her local member to discuss her dire situation. The importance and significance of talking about suicide and self-harm was highlighted in the *Four Corners* episode the other day. It comes down to the funds that are available through the workers compensation scheme.

At its heart the workers compensation scheme is pretty simple when referring to funds. We have employers across the State who contribute a premium into the fund and we have workers on the other side who get injured and need to take money from the fund. It is as simple as that. The problem here, and the reason I spoke about suicides, is that we currently have an organisation called icare which is administering the scheme directly under the auspice of the Treasurer—no-one else, just the Treasurer. Within that scheme, from what we saw on *Four Corners* and what the financial reports of that scheme show, are a number of things. Unknown significant amounts of money are going off in bonuses. The executive workforce has also blown out by some 400 per cent and received incredible wages and salaries. Not only that, three years ago the salaries of that executive rose by 7 per cent in a single year while the salaries of the rest of the workforce rose by only 3 per cent. In addition to that, we have a less successful return to work rate now than we did before this scheme existed.

All of this adds up to a significant amount of money—in the billions of dollars—that could be going to injured workers so that they do not get kicked off the scheme, so that they get the treatments they deserve and so that they get the respect and the empowerment they deserve as injured workers in their quest to return to work, to find alternative work or to be looked after following their injury at work. Instead, we see such gross waste inside of the scheme being completely ignored and overlooked by the Treasurer. Fundamentally that is at the heart of the motion today, the *Four Corners* story and the line of questioning that has been put to the Treasurer over recent days—which he has mocked without any regard for the injured workers he is meant to represent. That is why I support the motion.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (17:17:39):** I want to highlight the absolute and complete hypocrisy of the Opposition in this place when it comes to the management of workers compensation schemes. When those opposite were in government they had two opportunities to get the workers compensation scheme correct but unfortunately they botched those opportunities not once but twice. Under the Carr Government they presided over a \$2 billion deficit. Unfortunately when their failure was revealed to them they failed to learn and make changes to prevent that from happening again. Then less than two years later the scheme had blown out to a deficit of almost \$3 billion. So there was a second chance to reassess what was going on and to set the scheme on a proper trajectory. When we on this side came to government the scheme was in a \$4 billion deficit—failure after failure. Failure, thy name is NSW Labor.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the third time.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** And yet those opposite come into this place today to lecture the Government on how to run a workers compensation scheme. Not only do the numbers blow out under their failed workers compensation scheme; the numbers also blow out on their false claims on underpayments. Earlier this year icare disclosed that it had identified historic problems with some initial calculations made by workers compensation scheme agents on pre-injury average weekly earnings and that it had begun the process of a deeper review and rectification. These problems largely predated the current scheme, so they were legacy issues from the old WorkCover scheme. Due to the complexity of the calculations involved and the necessity to get it right, payments will commence over the coming weeks to those impacted after they have been contacted and updated information confirmed.

This Government fixes the problems; those opposite just paint over them and ignore them. Icare estimates now the initial pre-injury average weekly earnings payments will impact less than 20 per cent of workers than was originally predicted. This reduces the potential impact to between \$5 million and \$10 million in total. Icare will remediate any underpayments made as each file is fully reviewed. At the time Treasury was considering an interim review of icare, the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] was already carrying out a comprehensive in-depth compliance and performance review of the insurer in its role as the regulator. SIRA is the regulator for all New South Wales workers compensation schemes, including the nominal insurer and it is appropriate for them to undertake a review—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** And it is SIRA that has raised concerns.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** Did the member's mother not teach her that it was rude to interrupt? Clearly not. Rather than do two reviews at the same time, the Treasury review is proceeding at the end of this year as required under section 32 of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015. Today, with the New South Wales Government's 2015 reforms, the workers compensation scheme is subject to a greater level of scrutiny and

transparency than at any other time in the scheme's history. In addition to having its own independent agency to review its operations, icare is also subject to frequent reviews by the Standing Committee on Law and Justice, budget estimates and other forums. This motion is nonsense and Labor should be ashamed of itself. Labor was in government for 16 years and, despite it being shown that it failed to deliver a workers compensation scheme that remained in the black, it failed not once, not twice, but three times.

This proves that Labor cannot get it right. It is incredibly hypocritical for those opposite to come into this place and attack the Government when it has had to clean up not only Labor's mess of the workers compensation scheme but also the entire mess of the State that it left for us to clean up. I am proud that the people of New South Wales have elected the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government at the three previous consecutive elections. They realise that this Government puts them first and gets on with delivering on its election commitments and what the people want for their communities. We will stick with that. This Government is a government for the worker. Under this Government New South Wales has seen incredible employment. This Government will continue to deliver. Failure, thy name is Labor.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:22:56):** It was difficult to be quiet, so I am on my feet to say something about this. Some of us in this place have a very long memory. I remember being here in June 2012 when then Premier Barry O'Farrell decided to decimate the State's workers compensation scheme. He did so because he has a pathological, ideological hatred of working people in New South Wales. That same pathological hatred is shared by Perrottet. There is no doubt—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: Members should be referred to by their proper titles.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK:** I think he might be the member for Epping this term; it might change next time. While Berejiklian, the Premier, might be the mentee of Barry O'Farrell—I certainly would not want to accuse the Treasurer of being a mentee of O'Farrell—there is no doubt the Treasurer shares that pathological hatred of the working people of New South Wales. And it has to be reiterated in this place because he then took that mantle from O'Farrell in 2015. He introduced into this place in August 2015 the State Insurance and Care Governance Bill, and he did so because he wanted to put the boot into the working people of New South Wales. That is what the Treasurer wanted to do. He did so in his capacity as the finance Minister and what is so concerning about what he did in August 2015 is that he effectively created this agency.

It is his baby. I know he has lots of babies but this one he is actually connected to by an umbilical cord and he cannot sever it. It is his baby and after he became Treasurer on 30 January 2017—a date that Rob Stokes cannot forget—within two months he made sure that the orders for the allocation of Acts were changed to bring it under the auspices of the Treasury. This meant he would have responsibility for it and not the then finance Minister, Victor Dominello. He wanted to continue to be the parent of icare. He wanted to continue to look after the baby that he had created and he is ultimately responsible for the mismanagement that has happened at icare for the past three years.

We all know of the Treasurer's incredible political ambitions. We are all aware how truly ambitious he is. His ambitions will be tied to icare. As icare's leadership and management go down, so too will the Treasurer's political ambitions, and he knows that. He was very resolute during question time today. He was very dogmatic and tried to behave in a confident manner. The Great Pretender is what I call the Treasurer. He tried to portray an air of confidence—although I think it was an air of arrogance—but he knows all too well that he is connected and tied to all the mismanagement at icare. He knows it. He is watching this debate now. He might not be in the Chamber but I can assure everyone he is watching. He is writing down notes and thinking how to react. What will be his next reaction?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Don't flatter yourself.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK:** The problem with the Treasurer is he only knows how to react one way.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** He has got more important things—

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

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK:** He looks for a manual and the manual that he relies upon is the old University of Sydney students' council booklet. That is the manual he relies upon. He is reading it right now, trying to work out how to plan his vengeance. "How do I get out of this?" Guess what, Treasurer, you cannot get out of this one. The Treasurer is way too connected. Minister Dominello knows and others in this place know. On this side of the House we know that he is too connected. He is aware of the mismanagement that has taken place. The CEO of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] has tried to visit him on multiple occasions to discuss the mismanagement and he has sent her away. Why would the Treasurer send her away? That is what the people of

New South Wales are asking. Why does the Treasurer not take charge of the mismanagement that is happening under his agency? The reason is that he stands condemned with the leadership and the CEO of icare. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:27:55):** It is absurd to suggest that the Treasurer has a pathological hatred towards workers. Since 2015 the insurer has made the biggest transformation to workers compensation in over 30 years. It continues to correct the legacy of poor behaviours across the scheme. While icare is the first to acknowledge it has not always got it right, it has focused on remediating issues identified during the core transformation period. This Government has achieved more in the workers compensation space over the past few years than the Opposition ever did. In 2012 this Government commenced the series of measures to improve the scheme and support injured workers to recover and return to work and provide proper assistance to workers with the highest needs.

Fast-forward to 2020 and icare triages new incidents with a success rate of over 87 per cent in allocating new claims on the first day and 92 per cent after the first week. The sooner treatment starts the sooner an injured worker gets back on deck. Access to treatment now takes five days instead of six weeks, thereby reducing costs. The single operating system has made it simpler for customers to lodge claims via an online portal. It has delivered lower employer premiums, better outcomes for injured workers and a sustainable financial model, with premiums held steady at 1.4 per cent of wages on average. At the end of May 2020 the funding ratio is 101 per cent on a like-for-like comparison with other schemes. Labor's scheme had an unsustainable 85 per cent funding ratio.

COVID-19 has posed additional challenges for the scheme and for employers right across the State. We have reduced premiums by \$90 million for 17,600 employers and placed \$69 million in premium payments on hold to support business during this time, saving them \$325 million. That is because of the strong financial management of the icare board. There is more than enough financial capacity to support injured workers for decades to come, unlike under Labor. However, it is not just about raw numbers or financial viability; it is about people. Icare is doing more for seriously injured workers today than at any other stage in the history of the New South Wales workers compensation scheme. That is at the heart of this system—fiscal responsibility with a social conscience. Labor's system had neither of those things. The Government will continue to make improvements to the workers compensation system and address shortcomings. The Government is striving to get the best result for around 3.6 million employees and more than 300,000 employers across New South Wales, unlike the rabble opposite. The motion before us is a farce and the height of hypocrisy from Labor.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:31:17):** On behalf of The Greens, I speak in this public interest debate on the appalling mismanagement of the New South Wales workers compensation scheme. Listening to this debate, I wonder whether we all watched the same show. Considering what we all saw on *Four Corners* on Monday night, the response of Government members is beyond belief. I genuinely question whether they were watching a re-run of *MasterChef*. That show may give us a bit of inspiration and some hope that we are doing good things in the world, but *Four Corners* on Monday night was a disgrace. It clearly showed that market-driven motives are trumping people's lives and wellbeing in this State. We need to stop that.

We need to recognise that this has been ongoing. I acknowledge Opposition speakers who have explained the history of this. I remember the late Dr John Kaye regularly speaking about this issue and I acknowledge David Shoebridge, my colleague in the other place, and his team for their longstanding work. I also acknowledge the union movement, the unions and Unions NSW for continually raising concerns and complaints. Considering that we watched the same show, it is beyond belief to hear Government members say that this is okay and that they are doing a good job. The revelations on *Four Corners* were nothing short of shocking—\$80million in wage theft from 52,000 injured workers while senior executives were paid on average \$660,000 each. There is no justification or excuse for that. This is extreme mismanagement. Some of the highest paid people in the State have participated in the largest incident of wage theft by a government in this country. Government members are trying to justify that as an acceptable situation.

The Greens, along with the union movement and the Opposition, are calling for the icare board to be immediately sacked. It is clear that these failings have happened on the New South Wales Treasurer's watch. It is also clear that the current icare board members are not delivering on their duties. They need to be held accountable. This is impacting the lives of real people. Having watched the program on Monday night, Government members cannot seriously hold their heads high and claim that everything is okay. The best kind of leadership would recognise that this is not okay in our State—it is not okay in any State. The politics of this do not matter. There is something wrong here and we need to fix it.

That is why we are calling for, at the very least, the Treasurer to terminate the icare board and to demand that senior executives return their outrageous bonuses. People are struggling and we will literally see mean and cruel-hearted decisions made to cut minimum rates of JobSeeker and JobKeeper. The Treasurer pretends that he cares about everyday working people yet is not immediately saying, "Let's get some money back from these



executives who are taking huge bonuses when they are not delivering on their duties." It is the largest wage theft scandal in Australia involving a government. But I think it is important that members recognise this is not the end; this is just the tip of the iceberg. If members read the petition on icare that is currently being circulated in New South Wales they will see it states:

- Icare's executive inherited a \$4 billion surplus, which has disappeared in just 4 years.
- Icare secretly tried to cut off payments to thousands of injured workers to make up for their dire financial situation.
- An independent review found that icare didn't follow the law in 46 percent of injured workers' cases.
- Icare sought to introduce a 'gap fee' for injured workers needing to see a doctor and hike employer premiums by 4%.
- Icare's board is chaired by long-time Liberal Party donor and former banker Michael Carapiet.

I could continue, but there are so many dot points that I am going to run out of time. In addition, the petition states:

- Prior to icare being created, there were two people who had an average salary of \$300,000. There are now 45 people with an average salary of \$300,000 and the top seven executives average around \$660,000. A confidential NSW Treasury briefing says "icare's executive team is likely the highest paid in the NSW government sector".

That is why this debate is important. It is an absolute disgrace that the Treasurer is not in this Chamber to respond to the debate and that members are attempting to justify this cruel act. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (17:36:33):** In reply: I thank all the members who took part in the debate this afternoon. What people who are watching this debate today might not understand is that all the Government speakers had prepared notes given to them by the Treasurer's office. There have been three opportunities—on top of the eight opportunities that have been given to the Treasurer—for Government members to come into the Chamber and provide some evidence that the accusations are wrong. But it has been fail, fail, fail, fail, fail—all of them. So we conclude that the Premier does not care and the Treasurer simply cannot defend himself. That is unacceptable when people's lives are at stake.

The member for Manly was on the money when he said the sooner people get back to work, the better. That is the crux of this whole scheme. I sat on the parliamentary inquiry by the joint select committee into the WorkCover scheme. It was apparent that the Government was hell-bent on doing what it calls "chopping off the tail". The long list of thousands of workers who were injured enough to stay in the scheme, who had lifetime care until they retired and went on the pension and who received care were chopped off. The Government wanted to chop off that tail by raising the injury threshold so as to allow only people who are substantially injured to get treatment; anyone else is off after five years.

The Government has designed a scheme where the premiums have gone up but the tail has been chopped off. People who were in the scheme are being railroaded off it and claims have been refused. Imagine going to NRMA Insurance or Insurance Australia Group and saying, "I've got a scheme for you. People are going to pay into your insurance scheme but we are not going to allow claims. If they do manage to get a claim in, knock yourself out: Just refuse it." Who would not jump at running an insurance company on that basis? That is the insurance scheme that we have here, and it is still losing money. What the hell is going on in this scheme? At the end of all this, we must remember the core of the scheme. When I spoke on this issue in this very place in 2012 I said:

We must remember the philosophy that underpins the workers compensation scheme as we discuss these legislative amendments. That is that, if one is injured at work and cannot work, one should be compensated for as long as one cannot work; and that compensation should include payment of one's medical treatments and medical bills for as long as one cannot work. The philosophy includes that sometimes negligent employers should be required to contribute their fair share to that payment of compensation so that the burden does not fall on taxpayers.

I meant it then and I mean it now. Injured workers are at the core of this scheme. They have been let down, and the Treasurer is just struck dumb. [*Time expired.*]

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....36  
 Noes .....43  
 Majority.....7

AYES

Aitchison, J  
 Barr, C  
 Chanthivong, A

Atalla, E  
 Butler, R  
 Crakanthorp, T

Bali, S  
 Catley, Y  
 Daley, M

## AYES

Dalton, H  
Doyle, T  
Harrison, J  
Hornery, S  
Lynch, P  
Mehan, D (teller)  
O'Neill, M  
Scully, P  
Warren, G

Dib, J  
Finn, J  
Haylen, J  
Kamper, S  
McDermott, H  
Mihailuk, T  
Park, R  
Tesch, L  
Washington, K

Donato, P  
Harris, D  
Hoenig, R  
Leong, J  
McKay, J  
Minns, C  
Parker, J  
Voltz, L  
Watson, A (teller)

## NOES

Anderson, K  
Bromhead, S  
Cooke, S (teller)  
Davies, T  
Evans, L  
Gulaptis, C  
Johnsen, M  
Lindsay, W  
O'Dea, J  
Petinos, E  
Roberts, A  
Singh, G  
Stokes, R  
Tuckerman, W  
Wilson, F

Ayres, S  
Conolly, K  
Coure, M  
Dominello, V  
Gibbons, M  
Hancock, S  
Kean, M  
Marshall, A  
Pavey, M  
Preston, R  
Saunders, D  
Smith, N  
Taylor, M  
Upton, G

Berejiklian, G  
Constance, A  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Elliott, D  
Griffin, J  
Henskens, A  
Lee, G  
McGirr, J  
Perrottet, D  
Provest, G  
Sidgreaves, P  
Speakman, M  
Toole, P  
Ward, G

## PAIRS

Car, P  
Cotsis, S  
Lalich, N  
Saffin, J  
Zangari, G

Barilaro, J  
Clancy, J  
Hazzard, B  
Sidoti, J  
Williams, R

**Motion negatived.**

*Community Recognition Statements*

**ASSYRIA DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:45:26):** Assyria Day is an important event for the Australian Assyrian community, who continue to strive for the creation of a peaceful Assyrian homeland as part of the Iraqi Federation. The indigenous Assyrian community in today's modern Iraq, Syria and Iran have been persecuted for generations. They have suffered through genocide and war. They have been torn away from their homeland, but they ensure that their culture and language lives on in the diaspora around the world. The resilience of the Assyrian people in the face of continued injustice and suffering is commendable.

The Assyrian community is continuing to bring global attention to its cause and work to ensure that the Assyrian diaspora can return to Nineveh and be reunited as one nation. Currently the community is ensuring that Assyrian youth learn about the history, culture and traditions of Assyria so that they may maintain their heritage and identity. On this Assyria Day I thank the Assyrian Universal Alliance, especially David David and Hermiz Shahen, and look forward to rebuilding with them an Assyrian homeland.

**SMITHTOWN BASKETBALL COURT**

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (17:49:21):** Last week it was a pleasure to be at Smithtown Park for the opening of the new basketball court. For the benefit of everyone in the Chamber, Smithtown is the home to Australia's greatest drink, Milo. I congratulate the Smithtown Community Resource and Development Committee Secretary Allyson Hickson and President Rebecca Box on driving this project. The committee raised more than \$10,000 towards the \$38,000 cost of the court and was

immensely grateful for the community's support. Matt Oram is the manager of the Nestlé Milo factory at Smithtown. He is a local boy, a captain of St Paul's Catholic College and has travelled the world with Nestlé. He is a champion and leader in the community. He and the factory were able to find \$25,000 to go towards the court. The Mid North Coast Local Health District also contributed \$3,000 via a Healthy Communities grant. It was a brilliant day, great kids, lots of fun and adds to the \$202,000 from the State Government for improving the other parts of Nestlé Park.

#### **TRIBUTE TO GEORGE LUNDY**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:50:22):** Mr George Lundy, former president of the Pagewood Botany Football Club, and my dear friend, passed away late on the evening of 14 May, leaving his family, friends and our entire community heartbroken. George and his delightful wife, Kathleen, and baby sons, Gerard and Stephen, arrived in Australia from Northern Ireland in the 1970s, escaping the oppressive way of life the Catholic minority faced, for a new life in Sydney. George spent his entire life not just as a wonderful husband, father and grandfather, but he gave himself selflessly to the entire community. Whilst his contribution to the community through football was enormous and his dedication to children within the game was awe-inspiring, his contribution to the wider community was just as amazing and not widely known. George's ability to make a community better, inclusive and connected is what I found remarkable about him. His ability to sum up a situation with a one-liner, together with his passion to help everybody, made our corner of the world a better place and made everybody who came to know him a better human being. I offer to the entire Lundy family our deepest sympathies. George Lundy, rest in peace.

#### **WANDA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:51:28):** I thank the incredible volunteers of Wanda Surf Life Saving Club for keeping our community safe for yet another season. The highlights of the 2019-20 season were celebrated at Wanda's annual general meeting on 12 July 2020. Due to the amazing efforts of the volunteers there were, importantly, zero lives lost, 66 rescues and 50 first aids performed during the season. Wanda also set a club record of 387 points and was placed second at the Surf Life Saving NSW championships, making the more than 1,000 members extremely proud. I particularly acknowledge the 2020-2021 executive committee: President Nathan Spinner, Deputy President Todd Lester, Senior Vice-President Mark Sergeant, director of administration John de Cean, director of finance Anne Caterson, club captain Michael Bonnicci, director of lifesaving Michaela Sutherland, director of education Gerard Cafe, director of Surf Sports Greg Pierce, director of facilities Colin Jones, director of member services Nathan Buckley, director of youth Garry McNamara and director of JAG Fiona Sutton. I commend Wanda for keeping our community safe, as it has done since 1946.

#### **NELLIE MUDDLE 100TH BIRTHDAY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:52:35):** Tonight I wish the happiest of days to Nellie Muddle, who will celebrate her 100th birthday this week. I had the great pleasure of meeting Nellie two years ago at a community event, and we subsequently got together for a coffee at one of our local cafes. In her 100 years Nellie has shown an amazing resilience and has maintained her kindness towards others. For many, many years Nellie has marked her birthday as a joint occasion with her son, Raymond, who was born on 30 July. However, after receiving congratulatory messages from the Queen, the Prime Minister, the Governor General and his wife and other dignitaries in honour of her 100th birthday, Nellie's first reaction was, "Well that's lovely, even though they got the day wrong." Her birthday is actually 31 July. I understand Nellie will be taking the great step of celebrating on both Thursday and Friday this week so that both of her "birthdays" will be covered. Happy birthday, Nellie! Wishing you many more years of good health, overwhelming happiness, amazing grace and perfect peace of mind.

#### **MUSICIANS IN HOSPITALS PILOT PROJECT**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:53:29):** A \$39,240 State Government grant is helping improve health and wellbeing in my electorate through the soothing sounds of music. The Musicians in Hospitals (Music and Medicine) pilot project at Coffs Harbour Health Campus is hitting the right note for patients, staff and visitors. This exciting initiative is sponsored by Arts Mid North Coast and funded by the My Community Project program. From bedsides to communal spaces, the Musicians in Hospitals performers are delivering music-making activities to improve the quality of patients' hospital experiences—of course, when COVID-19 restrictions permit. I thank registered music therapist Bonnie Nilsson, coordinator Stephanie Sims, and their merry band of musos: Louise Thompson, Salvatore Rossano, Hayley Egan, Brett Barber, Deb Spillane, Tony Macfarlane, Michelle Booth, Snez Dalceska, Gavin Harwood, Sarah Whitteron and Giri Mazzella.

#### **SAMAR YOUSEF**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:54:31):** I congratulate Wyong High School student Samar Yousef on being selected as a winner in the NSW Central Coast Regional Training Awards. Samar was awarded the

School-Based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year for her Certificate II in Sport Coaching. The awards recognise and celebrate the unique efforts of students, trainees and apprentices across the local government area. Samar became inspired four years ago when she was chosen to do work experience with the Taking Chances program, a life skills program that focuses on using sport as a mechanism. She loved it so much that she started a sport coaching course as a traineeship and now Samar is an assistant facilitator with Taking Chances. I say well done to Samar Yousef for taking the opportunity to participate in the NSW Regional Training Awards and creating an exciting pathway for her future. I wish her all the best.

#### **BILL JOHNSON SNR AND ALBERT NEWTON**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:55:23):** I congratulate Mr Bill Johnson Snr and Mr Albert Newton from the Bilpin Rural Fire Brigade on receiving their 70 years Long Service medals. On 22 July this year I had the pleasure of having a chat with them during lunch at the High Hopes Roadhouse, Bilpin, where those two great RFS volunteers were awarded their medals. We were joined by Minister David Elliott; Rob Rogers, the newly appointed NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner; and NSW Rural Fire Service—Hawkesbury District Superintendent, Karen Hodges. Bill and Albert joined the brigade as teenagers and are well respected in the community. I acknowledge their families too, who have been so supportive over many decades. I thank Bill and Albert for their service and congratulate them again on their wonderful achievement.

#### **APPIN AND MOUNT KEMBLA MINE DISASTERS**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (17:56:16):** Within the space of a week New South Wales marks the anniversaries of two workplace disasters that cost 110 lives—the Appin mine disaster on 24 July and the Mount Kembla mine disaster on 31 July. Although eight decades apart, both disasters are a reminder of the need to put safety first when it comes to all workplaces and also of the hazards that miners face in mines around the Illawarra, which are among the gassiest mines in the country. Last Friday the member for Wollondilly and I attended the Appin memorial service and the unveiling of a stunning memorial to the 14 men who died 41 years ago.

It was a moving service attended by family, friends, former workmates and current Appin miners. This Friday evening I will attend the 96 candles memorial ceremony at Windy Gully Cemetery to mark the 118th anniversary of the Mount Kembla mine disaster. Both disasters cast a long shadow over the then small towns that were home to the victims and their families. I want a safe, strong, sustainable, responsible and well-regulated resources sector because at every mine, at the end of every shift, every miner should return home to their family. The most important thing to come out of mines should always be the men and women who work in them.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:57:26):** Today our shared fight against COVID-19 has brought our communities together unlike at any other time that I can remember. Back in March the Ku-ring-gai community also came together to celebrate 30 years of Clean Up Australia Day. Starting as a simple idea, it is now Australia's largest environmental community-based event. As I have done in previous years, in March I donned gloves, was armed with rubbish bags and assisted the Wahroonga Rotary Club for this year's clean-up. Forty-two volunteers met at Wahroonga Park, including 21 Wahroonga Rotarians, 11 students from Knox Grammar School, and local families and individuals. I thank Wahroonga Rotary Club and Ron Weinberg who marshalled the troops again this year. An estimated 100 kilograms of plastic bottles, plastic wrappers and other bits of rubbish were collected. The park could not have been left cleaner. I look forward to participating again in 2021. I am proud to continue to support the event and I am happy to report another mission was completed successfully as we stepped up to clean up.

#### **WOY WOY PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:58:32):** I say well done to all the students at Woy Woy Public School who took part in a science experiment to determine the best way to clean their hands. The experiment involved students using four petri dishes with agar jelly and touching three of the four petri dishes, the fourth being the control petri dish. Students touched one petri dish with dirty hands, another with soap-washed hands and another with sanitised hands. After sealing the dishes and allowing time to pass the students found that the petri dish touched with soap-washed hands had the least amount of germs, followed by the petri dish touched with sanitised hands. I commend Woy Woy Public School and teacher David Owens for providing the students of Woy Woy Public School with a rich learning experience and for cultivating in them important scientific skills, especially during the current COVID-19 crisis. I look forward to hearing more about future science experiments and caring for our community.

### THANK YOU PROJECT AUSTRALIA

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:59:24):** I acknowledge local Mosman family the Scammells, who launched Thank You Project Australia. Their idea was for every student in Australia to draw a poster, write a thankyou letter or make a gift for our amazing frontline workers to show how grateful we are for their hard work. The initiative was thought up in April over a family dinner, when Gracie, Harry and George decided to write some thankyou letters to our doctors, nurses, teachers and other frontline workers. They hoped that other kids across Australia might join them.

It has been wonderful to see such an outpouring of appreciation for our essential workers during this difficult time. The Scammell family have even caught the attention of Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Prime Minister Scott Morrison. To date, Thank You Project Australia has written over 45,000 thankyou letters, which is an incredible achievement. I thank George, Harry, Gracie, their dad, Dave, and their mum, Amanda—who is also president of the Mosman Public School Parents and Citizens' Association—for their fantastic initiative to give back to the community during the COVID pandemic.

### KELLIE LAUNDERS

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:00:24):** I congratulate Kellie Launders of Cowra, who has been named as the Peter and Betty Barrat Award recipient. The award is presented each year to an outstanding Cowra Show Society member. It is a testimony to the hard work and dedication of those who work behind the scenes to make sure that the show goes ahead. It is wonderful to see such volunteers recognised; they are an integral part of the fabric of our community. Without them, we would not have the opportunity to enjoy much-loved community events such as the annual Cowra Show. It is disappointing that, like so many other shows this year, the 2020 Cowra Show will not go ahead due to COVID-19. I look forward to seeing it return in future years. Once again, I congratulate Kellie on her award.

### BECAUSE WE CARE BOUTIQUE

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:01:19):** Congratulations to Sharyn Burgess, coordinator of Because We Care Boutique, on receiving \$2,000 from the Greater Central Coast program. By nominating a local organisation into the draw, Greater Bank is giving away \$3,000 every month to locals who are helping make the Central Coast greater. Because We Care Boutique at Wyong Neighbourhood Centre is in the process of organising its Wings for Teens to Succeed program, which gives disadvantaged females aged 15 to 18 the opportunity to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

The program will be run at a local school. It will help female students prepare for their future by using art therapy, conversations and shared experiences to give them a sense of worth, while empowering them with the relevant tools and skills needed to achieve their dreams. Consisting of four three-hour workshops, the program includes advice on personal appearance and presentation skills as well as a session with a volunteer stylist, who works with the girls to select an interview-appropriate outfit. Well done to Because We Care Boutique and the Wings for Teens to Succeed program, which will enhance the lives of young females as they enter the real world.

### HOLSWORTHY HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:02:23):** I acknowledge the Holsworthy High School virtual cross-country program that has been running this year. As the cross-country event had been cancelled, the school decided to offer the community a virtual cross-country as a replacement. The school's Student Representative Council is donating a \$10 canteen voucher every week to one student from each school sport house as part of the virtual cross-country fitness challenge. The student who is awarded the voucher must have accumulated the greatest distance for their school sport house that week. It is great to see the school community encouraging the students to continue to be active during this time by creating a fun initiative that involves the whole school community. I commend Holsworthy High School for coming up with this great idea that encourages kids to remain fit and healthy during a time when normal sports or activities may be altered.

### TRIBUTE TO UNCLE TOMMY MILLER

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:03:13):** I recognise the life of Wonnarua Elder Uncle Tommy Miller and offer my deepest condolences to his wife, Aunty Narelle, their family and the wider Wonnarua community. Uncle Tommy was a remarkable man—a much-loved leader who helped so many. The Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council paid tribute to Uncle Tommy, saying that he led:

... by example and with kindness. He was never too busy for anyone in need, and always had a shoulder and an ear in your darkest of times. Not an adult or child in our community was untouched by Uncle Tom and his bountiful love for not only our community but all First Nations Peoples.

I take this opportunity to thank Uncle Tommy on behalf of our whole community for his advocacy, leadership, compassion and care. First Nation Elders are vital and respected members of our community who deserve far more recognition and respect for the valuable work they do. Vale, Uncle Tommy, and thank you.

#### **TIM "THE TORNADO" SEUALA**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (18:04:11):** I congratulate Tim "The Tornado" Seuala on taking the title in his age division at the World Boxing Foundation's Australian Boxing Masters. Tim has shown commitment and dedication to the sport. He trained for over five years prior to this fantastic win. I acknowledge that Tim is an amazing role model and advocate for the sport both in Australia and Samoa. He has trained and won the title in the face of great challenges during COVID-19. I wish Tim continued success in the sport for many years to come.

#### **SAM ALSTON AND TOM KELLY**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:04:52):** I congratulate two up-and-coming actors, Mr Samson Altston and Mr Tom Kelly, both from the electorate of Gosford. They have claimed leading roles in the play *The Credeaux Canvas*. *The Credeaux Canvas* was written by famous playwright Mr Keith Bunin and is set in New York City. It follows the lives of three adults in their twenties who hatch a scheme to sell a forged painting to a wealthy art connoisseur. Samson has grabbed the starring role in *The Credeaux Canvas* after he decided to put aside his professional surfing career to pursue acting. He impressed renowned acting coach Sheila Gray after attending one of her Manhattan classes. Tom is no stranger to theatre productions: he starred in Phil Moore's *A Voyage to Arcturus* and has played roles in productions with the Gosford Musical Society and Tuggerah's Jopuka Productions. *The Credeaux Canvas* will be one of the first post-COVID-19 plays to perform. It opens at Sydney's El Rocco Room very soon. Well done to Samson and Tom. I follow both of their acting careers closely. I wish them good luck.

#### **THE HILLS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:05:50):** The Hills Sports High School at Seven Hills is a specialist public high school down the road from my electorate office that educates over 870 students. Many pupils are locals from Seven Hills, Toongabbie and Prospect. There are also future sporting stars from across the areas of Blacktown, Cumberland, The Hills and Parramatta. I acknowledge the 2020 school leaders for their fantastic efforts across the academic year so far. Well done to school captains Accelia Morgan and Samuel Pinomi, as well as school vice captains Mitchell Chester and Piraya Sangprajak. I thank the great P&C for its ongoing support of the community of the The Hills Sports High School, including president Renea McLachlan and vice president Jo McWhirter. I thank principal Mitchell Struyve and his dedicated teachers and coaches for their efforts in training our local sporting champions of the future at the school's terrific facilities at Seven Hills.

#### **EID AL-ADHA**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (18:06:49):** On Friday 31 July Muslims around the world will celebrate Eid Al-Adha, which is a celebration and commemoration that goes back to the days of Abraham. It is one of the holiest days on the Islamic calendar. This year has been very different and very difficult for many communities in the way that they celebrate and commemorate. I thank the Australian National Imams Council for the leadership it has shown to make sure that people adhere to social distancing, to ensure that mosques run their services online and to ensure that people practice their faith in the safest possible way. These are very holy, special days. Normally one would be at the mosque. I will be one of 20 lucky people to attend the Lakemba Mosque, as I usually do. The service will also be streamed. Normally one would then go to a big family lunch or event, but that will not take place. My wishes are for an Eid Mubarak to the entire Muslim community. I wish them all the very best. Be careful, be safe, look after one another and make sure that all of the social restrictions are adhered to.

#### **TRIBUTE TO PHILLIP LANGLEY**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:07:56):** I acknowledge the recent passing of an outstanding person in my electorate of Davidson, local resident and volunteer Phillip Langley, who recently passed away at the age of 82. Phillip was committed to a variety of causes and community groups. He became a scout leader at East Killara, served on the East Killara Uniting Church Council and helped to establish a music club and a men's tennis club at East Killara Uniting Church. Due to his passion for bush regeneration, Phillip was a member of the East Killara Bushcare Group for 30 years. He was the secretary and treasurer of East Killara Neighbourhood Watch and was a committed member of the Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment community group. Phillip will be remembered by many for his lifelong dedication to our local community.

**DOROTHY MARTIN**

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:08:47):** I congratulate Dorothy Martin of Georges Hall on her 100th birthday. Dorothy is Sydney born and bred and grew up in Earlwood. She is the proud mother to three children, grandmother to six grandchildren and even prouder great-grandmother to 10 great-grandchildren. Dorothy's claims to fame include being a talented pianist and dressmaker, a life member of the Illawarra Catholic Club and an active member of Voice, Interests and Education of Women for over 30 years, for which she was recognised with an award by former New South Wales Governor Marie Bashir. In these unusual times, where face-to-face meetings and visits are not possible, I joined with others to celebrate Dorothy's birthday over FaceTime. Residents and staff at Georges Manor, two of Dorothy's children and I celebrated over afternoon tea. I thank Carmel Cohen and Advantage Care at Georges Hall for initiating the FaceTime call to celebrate Dorothy's 100th birthday.

**TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER BATES**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:09:52):** I pay tribute to Maitland's Jennifer Bates, who lived a short but jam-packed life full of volunteering, career highlights, international travel, hobbies and a love for her family and husband, Jordi. Most of all Jen had a passion for making the world a better place. Jen's parents, Kathryn Bennet and Ken Phelan, have worked to keep her legacy alive by raising funds in support of her passions. To honour what would have been her fortieth birthday this year, Kathryn established the Let's Do It For Jen fund to raise money for the Beyond Zero Emissions [BZE] Diversifying the Hunter project. Jennifer was closely involved with Newcastle's BZE projects, particularly its first bulk purchases of solar storage batteries by consumers in Australia. The fundraising push in the name of Jennifer Bates, her life cut tragically short, raised \$15,670 toward the first project under the Million Jobs Plan. This is an amazing achievement and a fitting legacy for a remarkable and inspirational woman. Vale, Jennifer.

**GERRINGONG RURAL FIRE BRIGADE**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (18:10:54):** I congratulate the following members who were elected at the Gerringong Rural Fire Brigade's recent annual general meeting [AGM]. There was a changing of the guard as captain Andrew Downes decided to move on from his position and senior deputy captain Adam Walmsley was unanimously elected as the brigade's newest captain. We would like to thank Andrew for his strong dedication and leadership over the past three years. He will remain a valued member of the executive, now performing the role of senior deputy captain.

The following members were elected: captain, Adam Walmsley; senior deputy captain, Andrew Downes; deputy captain, Robbie Marczan; deputy captain, Shane Wicks; deputy captain, Greg Ball; deputy captain, Don Watson; president, Phil Vernon-Rogers; secretary, Chris Wade; treasurer, Jenny Stubbs; and members representative, Craig Keller. Congratulations to all the members who were elected. I say a big thank you to those who have performed their roles over the past 12 months. The AGM was attended by the NSW RFS Illawarra District Director Greg Wardle and Kiama Municipal Mayor Mark Honey. All of these members do an outstanding job for our community and we thank them for their service.

**TRIBUTE TO DR HARRY NESPOLON**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:11:58):** I acknowledge the life and the death of Dr Harry Nespolon, the practice owner of Neutral Bay Medical Practice—the medical practice my family and I use. Dr Nespolon was also the President of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners [RACGP]. He sadly passed away on Sunday only nine months after a pancreatic cancer diagnosis. I extend my sympathies and condolences to his family, Lindy, Hannah and Ella, and of course to his many friends and colleagues at our practice and across the entire GP network. He was instrumental as president of the RACGP, particularly during the COVID pandemic, in pushing for expansion of funding for GPs to ensure that they could meet the needs of communities but also to ensure the expansion of telehealth. I know many people, including me, have relied on that during this time. He was a compassionate, warm and kind man. He took great care of my daughter when she was quite young. Vale, Harry Nespolon.

**JUNEE PRESCHOOL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:12:53):** I celebrate the students and staff of Junee Preschool and their work to mark Loud Shirt Day. Loud Shirt Day aims to raise awareness of children with hearing loss by encouraging people to wear their brightest colours. To celebrate this important day students recorded a special rendition of the song *True Colors*, with the children using sign language to the song lyrics. Junee Preschool aims to incorporate Auslan into its everyday routines, meaning its little learners, including those who have hearing loss, start their education journey understanding different forms of communication. Well done, Junee Preschool, for this moving effort to raise awareness.

### LAKEMBA ELECTORATE VOLUNTEERS

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (18:13:45):** I pay special tribute and thanks to all of those who volunteer in our community, particularly those who are volunteering in the assistance of weekend sport. As we know, weekend sport has been put on hold for a fair time and things have not been as usual for training and so forth, but as of late they have come back. It has been wonderful to see our local parks filled with the chitter-chatter and the sporting prowess of our young people but also the older people—do not forget the over-35 competitions. We often do not thank the volunteers enough. I recognise the volunteering Minister is present in the Chamber and I know he makes a special effort to acknowledge the volunteers. It is the lifeblood of our community when people are willing to give up their time and expertise to help others. It is one of the most special things about our Australian society. One of the nicest things to see as a local member of Parliament is people who are willing to give up their time to try to make other people's lives better. Once again I thank volunteers across New South Wales but especially in the Lakemba electorate.

### ARTEXPRESS EXHIBITION

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:14:48):** I congratulate three students from North Shore who were chosen to have their 2019 HSC visual arts projects exhibited at the 2020 ARTEXPRESS virtual gallery exhibition. The ARTEXPRESS exhibition provides exposure to start careers and is incredibly important to allow the best students to receive recognition for their work. I congratulate Elliott Christmas from Mosman High School on his collection of work, entitled *Careless Consumption*. The work highlights society's overuse of plastics in modern packaging and is presented in oil on canvas, graphite on paper and ceramics. I also congratulate Sophie Zhang from North Sydney Girls High on her work, entitled *IMAGINE if you could buy freedom*. Her stunning use of oil on canvas plays upon the associations of gold with commerce, celebrity and wealth, in jarring contrast with the plight of refugees. It challenges the viewer to reconsider their understanding of the true value of freedom and its cost. Chloe Lambert from Queenwood was also acknowledged for her work, entitled *An Ethereal Escape*. It explores the relationship between life, death and the inextricable and beautiful link between the two through a series of striking photographs. I congratulate the immensely talented students.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:15:50):** Recently I had the pleasure of unveiling a collaborative artwork created by seven Indigenous students, Wagga Wagga artist Tyronne Hoerler and the local police. It is proudly displayed at the Gundagai Police Station. The artwork is a visual representation of the community's strong relationships. It is a testament to what can be achieved when different groups come together to understand and trust one another to make a strong statement against domestic violence. Unfortunately, Aboriginal people, particularly Aboriginal women and children, are more likely to be the subject of domestic violence. The initiative has been fantastic in forging a great relationship, breaking down barriers and raising awareness about domestic violence while celebrating Indigenous art. I am very proud of the Gundagai community and what it has achieved with the collaborative project.

### UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (18:16:49):** I congratulate my old alma mater, the University of Wollongong, on incorporating the Ramsay Centre's degree on Western civilisation. I have seen the tragic death of academic freedom across the State and country. We must ensure that in our universities, free speech, democracy and academic freedom are encouraged. I congratulate the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong, Professor Paul Wellings, and the council on taking this important step to ensure that all sides of the academic debate are recognised. Our country's constitution does not mention free speech; nor, rightfully, do we have a bill of rights because often it is not what is in it but what is left out. It is often left to judges to decide for our community and we are more than able to do that. Most importantly, it starts with a fair dinkum debate. I believe in free speech. I am a passionate advocate for free speech but, most importantly, I am passionate about research and development that allows people to express their minds freely, without any administrative fetter.

### KINDY SQUAD START

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—** I was delighted to attend the official launch of Bankstown Sports Strikers Football Club's Kindy Squad on Saturday 25 July 2020, at The Crest Sporting Complex in Bass Hill. I was very pleased to see sporting initiatives commencing, despite these difficult times. I also had the lovely opportunity to see the club's new outdoor storage facility which I was able to assist with funding through a Community Building Partnership [CBP] grant. In 2017 the club successfully obtained a CBP grant of \$50,000 for the construction of a new outdoor storage facility and the refurbishment of the canteen area. I am always happy to support my local community sporting clubs. I acknowledge the efforts of Bankstown Sports Strikers Football



Club's executive including President John Dácciaro, Secretary Mark Merlino, Treasurer Andrew Skaltsounis, and Club Coach Phil Watson, in ensuring a successful start to the season. I wish the best of luck to the Bankstown Sports Strikers Football Club in the upcoming season.

#### **INTERNATIONAL CLEANERS DAY**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**— I was pleased to join the hardworking and dedicated cleaning staff at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital for International Cleaners Day on 15 June 2020 and attend a rally organised by the Health Services Union (HSU NSW) in recognition of the important role of cleaners within our healthcare system. There has never been a more important time to express our gratitude for the valuable contribution of cleaners in our community, and I acknowledge the efforts of those who have been working tirelessly under immense pressure in recent months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I commend the Health Services Union under the leadership of Secretary Gerard Hayes for their great work in strongly advocating for the interests of our hospital cleaners and I was pleased to join them to bring public attention to the often invisible role of their work. I acknowledge the attendance and the support of Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital General Manager Peter Rophail, as well as all the wonderful Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital cleaners. I also acknowledge cleaners in other health facilities in the region for their hard work and their important contribution towards keeping our community safe. Happy International Cleaners Day!

#### **ORANGE PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**— I recognise the Orange Prostate Cancer Support Group, an affiliate of the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia. The group formed 20 years ago and consists of 40 members led by the current executive of Chairman Ray Manchester, Secretary Charles Everett and Treasurer Barry Moore. Meeting monthly, they aim to provide comfort, advice, companionship and counselling to newly diagnosed, and survivors, of prostate cancer. They also welcome carers, wives, partners and friends of those diagnosed. They address groups about prostate cancer, hold information stands at the Australian National Field Days, shopping centres and other special events. They also raise funding for specialist equipment at the local hospital. In the life of the group's existence, they have seen the number of urological surgeons grow from just one, and no support services, to four surgeons and the opening of cancer services at the Hospital. Salient and sobering facts of prostate cancer are that each year in Australia 20,000 men are diagnosed, 3,500 men die from it, 200,000 men live with it and 1-in-7 men are affected by it. Congratulations to all involved in the group for providing awareness and ongoing support of those touched by prostate cancer.

#### **CENTRAL WEST**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**— I grew up in Dubbo for the first 17 years of my life so regional and rural NSW holds a very special place in my heart. I am fortunate that my career means I get to visit rural and regional NSW regularly. Recently I travelled to the Central West, Orana and Riverina regions to speak to councils and residents regarding how they were faring – particularly during the COVID-19 crisis. Everyone I came across had this 'water off a sheep's back' attitude that country NSW has become synonymous for. Often people in Sydney forget the critical role rural and regional New South Wales plays in our everyday lives. The majority of the fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs and grain that we pluck off the supermarket shelves originates in rural and regional New South Wales. It makes it way from paddock to plate due to the hard work, perseverance and dedication of farmers and those who grow and manage the produce. There's been a lot of time for reflection over the past few months and it wouldn't go astray for us here in Sydney to take a minute or two to acknowledge the contribution of rural and regional New South Wales.

#### **RICARDO LONZA**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**— I often say that if there is a koala in the neighbourhood, Ricardo Lonza will be able to find it. A passionate wildlife advocate, Ricardo has led the charge to protect and preserve Campbelltown's precious koala colony. He has rescued countless koalas that have been hit by cars or attacked by domestic pets. He also done the same for other native wildlife like kangaroos and wombats. The Campbelltown koala colony is unique in the fact that it is the only disease-free colony in the state. Recently I, along with several of my colleagues, met Ricardo at Smith's Creek Reserve in East Campbelltown, where a koala named Kayla had taken up residence high in a tree. No matter how often it happens, every time I see a koala in the wild, I am always taken aback. We are so lucky to be able to have such beautiful animals literally living in our backyards. Our local colony in Campbelltown faces an uphill battle when it comes to not only surviving but also thriving. But it certainly helps to have people like Ricardo in their corner.

#### **ANDREA ROWSELL ACADEMY OF DANCE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**— I congratulate Old Bar locals Mia Paske, Mahalia Adamason, Coco Soloman, Will Hellsted and Taree local Jasinta Birchall, who were given the opportunity to

receive one-on-one mentoring from the Australian Ballet. It is an experience the students from Andrea Rowsell Academy of Dance will never forget. The free virtual mentoring program included online mentoring with an Australian Ballet artist or teacher and the opportunity to engage with the Australian Ballet community. The dancers then recorded their final performance and sent it to the Australian Ballet, all receiving a copy of their recording of their sessions as a keepsake. The girls had this year made the finals of prestigious NSW ballet competitions held by the Royal Academy of Dance. For Mia and Mahalia it was the Isobel Anderson Memorial Awards and for Jasinta and Coco the Joan and Monica Halliday Awards. However days before the finals, the competitions were cancelled due to COVID-19. Will has been part of Interstate program with the Australian Ballet over a number of years. Following the three week program, the Andrea Rowsell Academy of Dance have been invited to select for more dancers to take part in the same program.

#### **TAREE GREYHOUND ASSOCIATION**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**— I congratulate Taree Greyhound Club on its recent first TAB meeting. The club will be able to conduct up to 26 TAB meetings a year. Wednesday 17 June was the biggest day in Taree Greyhound Club's history that stretches back more than 60 years and was a first for Greyhound Racing on the Mid North Coast. Since being granted the TAB meetings in January the club has been busy upgrading the track to comply with TAB racing standards. The upgrade included new kennelling, automatic starting, a new semaphore board and electric timing was assisted with a NSW State Government Grant of \$190,000 which the Association is extremely grateful for. Greyhound Racing NSW board member, Kevin Gordon said that there will be millions of dollars' worth of prizemoney staying in the region and knows that local trainers are really excited. I would particularly like to congratulate Taree Greyhound Racing Association members Peter Daniel, Darren McGeachie, Marilyn Turner, Sharon Grey and Mick McGuire who have worked so diligently over recent months to see the TAB meetings come to fruition.

#### **SPACE COMPANY CHOOSES BLAND SHIRE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**— In some very exciting news, Bland Shire has been chosen as a base to launch remote controlled airships into the Earth's stratosphere. The airships are about 20 metres in diameter and live up at around 23 kilometres in the sky above controlled airspace. They will be used to assist in patrolling borders, illegal fishing, erosions, farming and assisting in overseeing firegrounds. The Bland Shire has been chosen due to its flat terrain and farmland making the ideal spot for any potential landings. Thunderstruck Space has said it will work with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority and communities to assure the residents that privacy will not be compromised. This is a fantastic project for Bland Shire and I'm thrilled that they will be involved in such an important venture.

#### **BROOKE BAILEY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**— Congratulations to Glenmore Park resident Brooke Bailey for receiving the Senior Sport Star Award for March by the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation for her skills and development in Oztag. Brooke has been playing Oztag in the local Nepean competition since the age of five and has grown to play at all different representative levels through her junior years and senior years. Some of Brooke's greatest achievements include being selected to play in the Girls 16's Australian Team and also holding the role of Captain at the World Cup where her team were undefeated World Champions in 2018. She has also represented the Girl's 17's Team in 2019 and was recently named in the current Girls 18's 2020 team to play the Trans-Tasman Series in New Zealand come April. Brooke has set herself several phenomenal goals to continue her journey in Oztag and play in the Australian teams with the hopes of participating in the World Cup in Ireland in 2021. Her ultimate goal is to one day represent Australia in Rugby 7's and fulfil her long standing dream of going to the Olympics. Well done Brooke!

#### **CAMERON SHAMSABAD**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**— I wish to congratulate St Clair resident Cameron Shamsabad who was recently awarded first place in the highly prestigious Governor General's Prize. The Western Sydney Law Graduate has a passion for law and its history, with dreams of one day becoming a barrister. Completing his Bachelor of Laws degree last year, he submitted an essay to the Governor General's Prize along with hundreds of other entrants. His essay focused upon the Australian Senate and its role in the Australian Government system. One week later, Cameron received the exciting news of his success as the winner of this year's top prize. He is the first Sydney student to win the competition in its 15 year duration. He is also the first lawyer and second member of his family to attend university who are all incredibly proud of Cameron's achievements. Cameron is now undertaking his Master of Laws, with ambition to undertake a PHD at some point in the future.

### BYRON WRITERS FESTIVAL SCHOOLS PROGRAM

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**— I commend the Byron Writers Festival for launching the annual Schools Programs online. Due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the cessation of non-essential public gatherings the Byron Writers Festival made the difficult decision to postpone the 2020 Festival. Whilst this is sad news, the Writers Festival have been able to uphold their belief that storytelling, ideas and connection matter more than ever at a time like this and they are reimagining how they might connect writers and thinkers with their audiences this year. This year the Schools Program will feature some of Australia's most entertaining writers and thinkers streamed on-demand into classrooms. The event is free for both primary and secondary schools across the Northern Rivers. I thank Edwina Johnson and her team of dedicated organisers for their support of the arts and for ensuring this iconic Byron Bay tradition continues despite numerous challenges.

### MULLUMBIMBY & DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**— I congratulate the Mullumbimby & District Neighbourhood Centre for their success in being awarded \$20,000 through the inGrained Larger Grants Program. They were one of six Northern Rivers social and environmental not-for-profit organisations to be successful in this year's program. Since April the Mullumbimby & District Neighbourhood Centre have made and distributed nearly 5,000 meals to people in our community. Mullumbimby & District Neighbourhood Centre project was chosen because of their contribution to social connection in our region. With the \$20,000 from the inGrained Foundation the Mullumbimby & District Neighbourhood Centre say they will launch a nutritional food relief and food sustainability project for community members experiencing financial difficulty and/or social isolation, in which participants can connect and engage in food preparation together.

### JANET CINCOTTA

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**— It is with great pleasure that today I honour Janet Cincotta, Barham's very own weed warrior. One day Janet noticed the dreaded bindii seemingly out of control on her town footpath and started pulling it out every time she passed by. Now nearly three years on, each morning this sprightly 83 year old, grabs her basket and heads out to do bindii maintenance of the nature strips, laneways and carparks of Barham. Janet's motivations are simple, she likes a tidy town and by combining her love of gardening and being outdoors the two hour stroll each day is no chore at all. Janet has no immediate plans to cease this morning ritual, particularly now that she feels she is getting on top of the problem by getting the seeds first. It is dedicated residents like Janet that help small regional towns retain a sense of community and town pride, never asking for recognition but recognition is what they deserve. Thank you Janet.

### THEO SCHOLL

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)**— I offer my congratulations to Theo Scholl of Rappville, who recently was awarded the new school-based Trainee of the Year at the North Coast and Mid North Coast Region NSW Training Awards. Theo, who is undertaking his Higher School Certificate this year, is in his final year of a two year school-based traineeship with Richmond Valley Council while he studies Certificate II in Warehousing Operations. And if this wasn't enough to keep Theo busy, he is also a valued volunteer with the Rappville Rural Fire Service Unit and with his RFS team worked tirelessly to save property during the horrific bushfires that decimated the small Rappville village in late 2019. I wish Theo every success with finalising his Higher School Certificate and with everything that he turns his hand to in the future.

### INGLEBURN RSL

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)**— Community spirit and leadership go a long way in hard times. The Ingleburn RSL Auxiliary has shown that when times are tough, dedicating yourself to those already struggling can make a world of difference. The Ingleburn RSL Auxiliary continues to lead the way in our community and continues to support our very deserving current and former servicemen and women. Auxiliary members have compassion and the drive to serve others and change lives. Every opportunity to work alongside fellow Ingleburn Auxiliary members is an honour and I look forward to seeing what the Ingleburn Auxiliary will achieve in the near future. I congratulate Pauline James OAM, a local community member and State Co-ordinator of RSL Auxiliaries, President Barbara Lees and the executive for their leadership and dedication. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ingleburn RSL Auxiliary continues to put the needs of others first and reminds everyone that we are all in this together. The volunteers of RSL Auxiliary are selfless in their actions and deserving of all the praise they receive.

### WILTON PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**— I would like to thank the staff and students of Wilton Public School for welcoming me on recent visit to the school. I was at the school with Education Minister Sarah Mitchell to be part of an announcement for a major upgrade to the school. Principal Debra Gray and her staff made us feel very much part of the school environment. We were even welcomed to the school technology section by a group of robots which were controlled by the students from their iPads. The display in the library was also most impressive and colourful. It was apparent that there was strong learning and participation ethic in the school. Students were eager and engaged. Congratulations to Debra and her staff for providing this positive environment. The upgrade can only assist in continuing the quality education that the school is providing.

### BOWRAL UNITING CHURCH

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**— I would like to congratulate the Bowral Uniting Church for providing the Bowral Uniting Pantry. This is open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, from 10am - 1pm. The pantry offers a free service to the community, with fresh fruit and veg, as well as non-perishable food and toiletries available. There is also have a free take away lunch on Wednesday from 12pm. This is an important service to the community and is a way of. There is always a strong sense of community at the venue and strict COVID-19 protocols are in place at the pantry. Thank you to Rev Michael Earl, who has previously worked at the Wesley Mission in the heart of the CBD of Sydney, and the team in Bowral. Your kind gesture is much appreciated by the community.

### MARYLAND FLETCHER FOOTBALL CLUB

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**— Maryland Fletcher FC is the largest football club in western Newcastle. The Club began as Plattsburg Maryland Junior Football Club and commenced play on the Col Curran fields in Hope Street, Wallsend. In 2015 the Club made the move to the brand new Kurraka Oval at Fletcher. The Club changed their name to Maryland Fletcher FC to better represent the area the Club is now in. The proud Maryland Fletcher FC recently celebrated 45 years of their club's history. The Club proudly unveiled a brand new photographic mural in the home dressing sheds. The mural consists of photos from their very first season in 1975 all the way through to the current day and features some very important people in the Club's history. Congratulations to Club Life Members, Joan Taylor, Llyal Burrell, Stan Elliott, Bob Gumb, Chris Hall, Pat Halliday, Doug Kemp, David Guthrie, Dave Carter, Roz Carter, Warren Beckett, Robert Banks, Noel Gleeson and Tony Macpherson. Congratulations also to 20 year Playing Life Members Scott Sid James, Joel Newton, Bill Elgey, Darrell Penman, Kynan Lindus and Matt Sharpe.

### ZARLI RIVERS

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**— Earlier this year, Glendale East Public School students were tasked with a project entitled "All About Me". Year 4 student Zarli Rivers was inspired to make a blanket after seeing a homeless person and her desire for them to be kept warm. The blanket has been made to include reference to things that are important to Zarli, such as dogs and dolphins to show her desire to be a vet; two rabbits which she has as pets; the world with two people holding hands representing her wish to make the world a better and happier place; an eye to represent how observant she is; purple butterflies signify her wish for joy and happiness; green turtles show her ability to overcome struggles and obstacles; an Aboriginal flag and a Scottish flag representing her ancestry. Zarli was assisted by her sister Keeley, brother Emmett and mum Corinne. Zarli was joined by Senior Constable Maurice McSpadden from Newcastle Police Station to present the blanket to Karen from the Matthew Talbot Centre. Well done Zarli. What a wonderful gesture and a great example of pulling together to help those in our community who are in need.

### ST JOHN AMBULANCE FAIRFIELD CBP FUNDING

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**— On Monday 22 June 2020 I had the great pleasure of attending the newly refurbished premises at our local St John Ambulance NSW Fairfield Division. It was fantastic to catch up with Superintendent Abnob Putros and his team and to discuss the newly renovated facilities at St John Ambulance on Vine Street, Fairfield and learn how they will be of tremendous benefit for local volunteers and our community for many years to come. Works were completed as part of the 2019 Community Building Partnerships program which enabled St Johns Ambulance to complete an array of improvements to the facility including refurbishments to the ceilings, doors, walls, plumbing, flooring, windows, security, structural repairs, paint, joinery and storage facilities. I have no doubt these facilities will go a long way to support the professional development and training of so many volunteers in our community and beyond. On behalf of a very grateful electorate, I would like to extend our sincerest appreciation and admiration to Superintendent Abnob Putros and his dedicated team for their continued efforts and support for our community and beyond.

### CORE COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**— On Friday 6 March 2020, I had the great pleasure of attending CORE Community Services "No More Butts" campaign which aimed to encourage tobacco smokers to make positive changes in their lives while assisting them along the path towards quitting smoking for good. CORE has identified the high prevalence of smokers within our community and they want to do their part to raise awareness throughout the region while assisting those who want help to quit. This is a fantastic initiative, given statistics indicate that smokers are 20 times more likely to develop lung cancer, 4 times more likely to have a heart attack and twice as likely to have a stroke than non-smokers. It was great to see so many people in attendance to support this fantastic initiative on the day and to see so many energised volunteers and support workers ready to make a positive change throughout our community. Congratulations to everyone at CORE for committing to such a terrific new campaign and for hosting a successful launch on the day. I would like to commend the community members and ambassadors of the program for their dedication towards making this initiative a tremendous success.

### KIRRAWEE KANGAROOS FOOTBALL CLUB

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**— I am delighted to advise the House that the Kirrawee Kangaroos Football Club have received a \$4,000 grant from the Acting Minister for Sport, the Hon Geoff Lee MP. Earlier this month, the Kangaroos kicked off their new Kanga Joeys program, which is being facilitated by the grant. Kanga Joeys is an introduction to the wonderful world of football for children aged 3-5 years and not old enough to join the Sutherland Football Association competition. The funding has enabled each child to have a soccer ball and for coaches to be hired. The initiative is also a gateway to increase Club membership from the under 6's, and hopefully, through to the over 45's in the future, as football encourages physical activity and develops interpersonal skills. None of this is possible without the hardworking volunteers behind the Kangaroos who work tirelessly to promote a love of football in our community. I recognise the dedicated Executive Committee including President Glenn Johnson, Vice President Greg Sharkey, Secretary Kelly Manna, Treasurer Matt Kirby and Registrar Nicole Royan. Again, I congratulate the Kangaroos on the Kanga Joeys initiative and look forward to seeing the program in action.

### OLD FERRY ROAD RESERVE

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**— I am delighted that Illawong residents and visitors now have safer and easier access to the Georges River following an upgrade at Old Ferry Road Reserve. Jointly funded by the NSW Government's Boating Now program and Sutherland Shire Council, this over \$1 million investment includes a new launching ramp for small craft such as kayaks, canoes and surf skis, enabling recreational enthusiasts to make the most of our beautiful waterways. At the official opening of this wonderful facility, Sutherland Shire Council Mayor Carmelo Pesce, Councillor Steve Simpson, Councillor Peter Scaysbrook and I were joined by members of the 1st Wearne Bay Sea Scouts. With 74 members and growing, this scout group will be a user of the facility, launching their kayaks from the new ramp and fishing from the jetty. It was a pleasure to meet leaders Simon Thomas, William Murray, Victoria McGloin, Susan Smith and members Braith and Rhett Thomas, Jamie and Sophie Collins, Sophie and Jonathan Lamb, Max Chen, Cameron Vandy, Jamerson Byron and Caitlin McGloin. I invite all members of our community to take advantage of this outstanding facility and explore the natural beauty of our Shire.

### BUDOKAN JUDO CLUB

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**— I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Budokan Judo Club, who have been one of NSW's most successful Judo Clubs since its inception two decades ago. The club has recently been recognised as the 2014-18 NSW Judo Club of the Year and the 2020 Hills Shire Community Group of the year. It was recently my pleasure to announce \$6,000 worth of funding for the provision of uniforms, Judo equipment and organisational software, to ensure the club can continue to operate successfully. 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 had a great deal of success in recent years, with strong results in state and national competition. The most notable achievement in recent years being the qualifying of Nathan and Joshua Katz for the 2016 Olympics. It is through government programs like these Local Sport Grants that both elite athletes and the social participant can reach their potential. My thanks and congratulations go out to the committee of Rob Katz, David Colman, Sean Brothers, Kerrye Katz, Peter Jennings, Kate Peake, Franz Tandean, Scott Young and Andras Koltai.

### CASTLE HILL BMX CLUB

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**— I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Castle Hill BMX Club which exists within my electorate of Castle Hill. The club has a dedicated membership and support base, and a big crowd can always be expected at their race meets. Given these big crowds and the open air nature of the sport it was recently my pleasure to announce \$11,334 worth of funding for the provision of an undercover

shaded area outside the canteen and clubhouse at the local track, so as to ensure the appropriate sun safe amenities are available to all. This was part of the State's \$4.6 million Local Sport Grants Program, of which Castle Hill was the beneficiary of \$50,000. Congratulations to all involved in the club, which I know relies on its generous volunteers and supporters to keep the club operating. Special mention to the committee of Owen Douglas, Jason Alderton, Greg Donaldson, Jon Edwards, Jess Fox, Euan Rowlands and Niall Stevenson.

#### **VICTOR BARTLEY**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**— Wiradjuri man Victor Bartley says he had a profound experience as a soldier in the Vietnam War, with his time in the Army finally showing him what life would be like without racism. Growing up in Wellington and Bourke, Victor and his family were ostracised for their Aboriginality. Victor was 20 when Aboriginal people were finally recognised as Australian citizens but he still had to lie about his nationality to be accepted into the Army. As a soldier, Victor says he experienced life as an equal and without racial division for the first time, which changed the course of his life. Victor is now proud to serve on the Bourke Shire Council and as RSL president, and uses his experience in the Army to help others move past the stigma of racism and become the best version of themselves.

#### **JULIE DOWLEANS**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**— Wee Waa's Julie Dowleans has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to the community. In Julie's family, taking time to volunteer has always been part of life and she has been involved in many Wee Waa organisations over the years including the Lions Club, Wee Waa and District Historical Society and Namoi Echo Museum, Garden Club, Wee Waa Community Care Service, 2MaxFM 91.3 Community Radio Station and Meals on Wheels. Julie also assists individuals who need help with daily tasks and is always looking to make their lives a little bit easier, helping people who needed transport to Tamworth for medical appointments, shopping trips or special occasions. I thank Julie for her service to the Wee Waa Community and congratulate her on receiving the OAM.

#### **BRENNAN FAMILY**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**— Family business is the heartbeat of any regional centre, and in Dubbo the Brennan name is one that stands out. In 1976, Frank Brennan opened Mitre 10 in Dubbo after his father had successfully run a hardware store in Cobar for many years. When Frank decided it was time to scale back his involvement, it was his son Michael Brennan who continued the family legacy with a motto of "being local and a part of the community". That sense of community never abated, and I think everyone in Dubbo, as well as a significant number of people from across the central west, has made a trip to Brennan's at some point. On June 30 of this year, 80 years of Brennan family involvement in the central west hardware industry came to an end when the Petrie family from Mudgee, who have operated stores for many years, took over as owners of the Dubbo franchise. I wish the Brennan family well in their future endeavours, and thank them for their contribution to the Dubbo community, and wish the Petrie family all the best as they diversify and expand their business network.

#### **ASHFIELD BLESSING BOX**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**— The Ashfield Blessing Box at Ashfield Baptist Church has been stocked by generous members of the Ashfield community providing support those doing it tough during the pandemic. The inner west has been hard hit by this pandemic, thousands are out of work, with many inner westies struggling to make ends meet, keep a roof over their head, and put food on the table. I have been awed by the extraordinary generosity of local residents who are working to make sure no-one in our community is left behind. Ashfield Baptist Church has repurposed an old wardrobe, turning it into a community pantry stocked with non-perishable items such as pasta, rice, and tinned food. It is just one of the many pop-up pantries sprouting across inner west suburbs. The blessing box has signs in several languages to let members of CALD communities know that free food, toiletries, and supplies are available to anyone who needs it. Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers at Ashfield Baptist Church for making the Ashfield Blessing Box a reality and thank you to all the local residents and households you have given so generously during the pandemic.

#### **INNER WEST URBAN PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**— Congratulations to Charlie Moore in Year 8 at Marrickville High School, who has won the secondary prize at Inner West Urban Photography Competition with his photograph titled "Old and New parallel". The Inner West Urban Photography competition encourages inner westies of any age and ability to our unique built environment and heritage through art. Charlie's winning black and white photo of the Whipple Bridge in Lewisham depicts the underside of silhouette of the historic railway line trusses. The judges commended Charlie's "adventurous photo" for "its good use of similar elements to create a repetitive rhythm and strong contrast of forms." Charlie also received a highly commended for his 'Pipeline' photograph of a graffiti covered stormwater pipeline in the inner west. Congratulations also to Evan Black and Max Hepburn

who were finalists in the secondary school category and Jesper Svensson who won the primary school category with his photograph 'I have a dream.' Thank you to all the students who took part in the competition and the wonderful teachers who supported their entries.

#### **SAVE MURWILLUMBAH DISTRICT HOSPITAL ACTION GROUP**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**— I wish to thank the Save Murwillumbah Hospital Action Group for their hard work distributing our community petition to the NSW Parliament to prevent cuts to the staffing levels at the hospital's Emergency Department (ED). When I first got wind of the Northern NSW Local Health District's plan to possibly cut 3.08 full-time equivalent nurses from the ED, I made a call to arms and the local community responded with action. We had a partial win with the proposed cut reduced to 1.08 FTE nurses and a firm undertaking that no decision will be made during the current public health emergency of COVID-19. I congratulate the Murwillumbah Branch of the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association, the doctors and all health staff for standing firm against the staffing cuts. I thank the local business community, particularly Red Box Gym owner Gedalia Rubenstein, who had petitions in their shops and businesses. Uki-based lawyer and mum Kylie Rose and her fellow volunteers in the Save Murwillumbah Hospital Action Group, have done the foot slogging on the ground. I thank Kylie, Pru Jones, Carolynn Tabakhoff, Paula and Barry Miller, Viv and Craig Bryant, Ella Byrne and Jim O'Regan.

#### **NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR LISMORE'S GREAT WAR MEMORIAL**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**— Vietnam Veteran and Life Member of the RSL City of Lismore (NSW) Sub-Branch Ken Jolley OAM late last year visited the National ANZAC Centre in Albany, Western Australia, saw all the war memorials in a projection reel and wondered 'why not bloody Lismore?' In something of a coup, I was able to negotiate for Lismore's first memorial for the Great War to be permanently showcased in the Centre's multimedia experience. Ken, with support from businesses like James Poulos' Richmond Sand & Gravel, has been restoring the memorial since it was returned to its original site near the Lismore Showground in North Lismore. This location is significant because the showground was the site of a transit camp for newly enlisted men before they boarded trains at the North Lismore Railway Station for Army training camps. The obelisk, first erected in 1926, honours 145 Lismore district men who made the supreme sacrifice. Fellow Vietnam Veteran and RSL Chaplain The Reverend Graeme Davis OAM CSM officiated at a ceremony to mark the restoration. Other veterans present included Bob Mowle, Patrick Steere, Cec Harris, Graham Bruton; and Chris McKee, representing the family of Victoria Cross winner Paddy Bugden.

#### **CASSIE MACBEAN**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**— I recognise Cassie MacBean from Invergowrie for her commitment to the health and wellbeing of rural and regional New South Wales. Cassie is in her final year of medicine at the University of New England and is looking forward to taking up an internship in rural New South Wales next year. Cassie has particular interest in bridging the gap between rural and metropolitan healthcare and improving the mental health services provided to drought-stricken communities. I commend Cassie for her commitment to rural and regional New South Wales and wish her all the best in her future endeavours and career.

#### **GLEN INNES LEOS CLUB**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**— I recognise the Glen Innes Leos Club for raising funds for a wide range of organisations including the Australian Lions Childhood Cancer Research Foundation, Dolly's Dream, school breakfast clubs and more. The Glen Innes Leos Club is a club composed of young members from Glen Innes High School who recently met for the first time since restrictions were imposed to discuss how to best distribute the funds they have raised. Outstandingly, more than \$200 was raised through the collection of aluminium cans and \$3,800 was raised through the Leos catering van and fundraising projects. I commend the members for their hard work and dedication and thank them for their ongoing efforts in raising funds for these worthy causes.

#### **UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**— At a time when personal protective equipment, or PPE for short, is at a premium, the University of Newcastle are rising to the challenge by providing more for the Central Coast community. I want to thank the university's Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment who have worked to supply more than 2,000 face shields to the Central Coast Local Health District. This has been achieved using PET plastic that usually goes towards printing flexible solar panels, and also received support from a Central Coast company called Guru Labels. It is amazing the opportunities available to local students to study in our local community through the Ourimbah campus of the University of Newcastle. My wife studied nursing there and graduated a few years ago. I want to thank Dr Brok Glen, Dean of the Central Coast campus and all local staff.

### CHERTSEY PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**— Last Thursday I had the pleasure of visiting the Leagues Club Field construction site. This is a \$10 million transformation of what is easily the most visible public space in Gosford. Historically, Leagues Club Field has only been used for circuses and soccer practice, but it is being transformed into a world-class park and playground. Part of the construction work involves the installation of 14 totem poles by the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council. Thanks to a fantastic partnership with Chertsey Primary School, these totem poles will be decorated with hand prints of local children. I want to thank school Principal Sarah Baldwin for accepting my request that her school participate in this public art initiative. Each of the 180 students at Chertsey will do their very own "hand trace" to be copied on to the totem poles, Mister Speaker. Chertsey Primary School is such a fantastic school in my electorate. Every single student learns sign language at Chertsey and it is really symbolic that hands which are used to communicate are also going to be featured on the totem poles in the new Leagues Club Field.

### BILLY POLLARD

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**— I congratulate Asquith Magpies legend Billy Pollard. I first met Billy and his parents, Paul and Janine, when he was in year six. He was the proud recipient of the 'Matt Kean MP Award' at Hornsby Heights Public School. Only weeks later we met again as I presented him with a NSW Government State Representative Award. Billy has continued to develop his impressive skill set and has emerged as one of the states rising Rugby Union and Rugby League stars. Billy was part of the victorious 1st XV (Fifteen) Barker Rugby side in 2018 and captained the side to another win in 2019. During both of these breakout years, he was selected to play for the NSW and Australian Schoolboys. This is the highest honour available to a schoolboy rugby player. Billy travelled to the UK to play against Scotland and Ireland in 2018. In 2019, the Australian Schoolboys side ended a seven year drought defeating our Trans-Tasman rivals in New Zealand. After all his success, Billy has landed a four year contract with the Brumbies and Rugby Australia. I can't wait to see Billy's progress with the Brumbies and to keep following him throughout his rugby career.

### HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**— I would like to congratulate Hornsby Ku-Ring-Gai Community College for achieving 95 years of service to the Hornsby Community. Since opening their doors in 1925, they have gone on to teach a number of classes to a wide range of students, who are always eager to learn in a supportive and uplifting environment. Terry Appleby, Lesley Burt, Ted Nabung and the entire team of staff and volunteers do an amazing job in equipping the students of today with the skills of tomorrow. The college specialises in disability services, mental health and the treatment of victims with domestic violence and aims to refer students to employment and support services within the area. The heart of this organisation is the need for community, as their student's transition into the work force, and I believe this is what makes them truly special. This organisation truly has been fundamental in providing education and training for members young and old within the community, and it is a group I am always proud to be a part of. I look forward to seeing the college prosper through their 100th year and further into the future. Well done team.

### HAYMARKET CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CHINESE NEW YEAR

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**— Earlier in the year I had the pleasure of attending the Haymarket Chamber of Commerce's Chinese New Year celebration, along with the Premier and the Minister for Customer Service. The Haymarket Chamber of Commerce represents a very active business community network, working closely alongside the City of Sydney Council to achieve the best results for businesses in the area. The Chamber represents a wide array of businesses, including banks, restaurants and other professional services companies. The Chamber hosted a spectacular Chinese New Year Banquet to celebrate the Year of the Metal Rat. Chinese food is one of my favourite cuisines and I was at no shortage of delicious food with the 12-course banquet on offer. It was a fantastic night, and a great chance to welcome in a new year. Thank you to the Haymarket Chamber of Commerce for inviting me along to the celebration, and I hope everyone has had a lucky and prosperous year so far.

### SUTHERLAND SHIRE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**— I had a great time visiting the Sutherland Shire Football Association recently with the fantastic opportunity to meet their Representative 1st Grade Women's Team as well as players from all their Member Clubs. Thank you to the Sutherland Shire Football Association for hosting the event, it was wonderful to meet the team. There was an exciting atmosphere with everyone in high spirits as they celebrated Australia and New Zealand winning the rights to host the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2023. I look forward to this event and am thrilled Australia has the opportunity to host such a prestige event!



### **SUPPORT FOR BLACKTOWN GROUPS**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**— I take this opportunity to acknowledge the recent support received by community organisations in Blacktown Local Government Area suburbs, within the Seven Hills electorate. The students, parents and staff of Vardys Road Public School at Kings Langley will benefit from a \$15,000 Premier's grant for new works at the school. The hard-working Vardys Road P&C were successful in gaining funds towards the partial construction of an electronic gate, or the sensory playground at the School, after requests from both students and staff. Seven Hills North Public School will benefit from a \$15,000 grant from the Premier for landscaping works around the School's playground. Well done to the Seven Hills North P&C for their success in securing this grant. Karabi Development Services was also successful in their application for \$15,000 to upgrade their kitchen and buy new equipment. This grant will assist Karabi in working with social housing communities in the Seven Hills electorate – well done to the team at Karabi for all of their hard work.

### **WEAR THE CHANGE FUNDRAISER**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**— I draw the attention of this parliament to amazing work of fundraisers who participated in the Wear the Change Fundraiser organized by The Social Outfit in Newtown. The event took place during Refugee Week to raise funds for The Social Outfit's non-profit community programs which support refugee and migrant women with training, education and employment pathways in the fashion industry. I was pleased to be able to take part in the Wear the Change challenge by wearing an ethical fashion piece styled differently every day for a week. Over \$50,000 was raised from the event and I'd like to congratulate and acknowledge the incredible people who took on the challenge to raise funds. In particular, I'd like to congratulate to top fundraisers including Annabel Crabb, David Hardie, Jo Taylor, Jess Miller, Kate Clugston, Eloise Rapp, Rebecca Huntley, Ranya Alkadamani and Camilla Schippa. The top fundraising teams include the Social Outfit, Good Day Girl, the Social Impact Hub and Headspace Miranda. A special congratulations to The Social Outfit team member Kate Clugston for all her work on this stylish initiative.

### **MARONITE CATHOLIC SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA GALA DINNER**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**— On the 7th of February I had the pleasure of attending the annual Gala Dinner held by the Maronite Catholic Society of Australia. The Maronites have a long history in Australia, arriving from Lebanon as early as the 1850s. From there, churches were established in Sydney, Melbourne, and across Australia. The Maronite Society have also established aged care facilities, preschool and childcare centres, as well as high schools, in furtherance of the message of their faith. I am lucky to have a fantastic relationship with the Maronite Catholic Society. It was an honour to be invited to the Gala Dinner under the patronage of His Excellency Bishop Antoine Charbel Tarabay, and I thank the Society's President, Dr Anthony Hasham, for inviting me to the evening. I wish the Maronite Catholic Society the very best for the year ahead, and look forward to continuing to work alongside them.

### **ROSSI'S FRESH GROCER**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)**— Last week while visiting local businesses in my electorate, I met with the owner of Rossi's Fresh Grocer, Stephen Rossi. Stephen opened his shop back in December 2015. Located on North Rocks Road, North Carlingford, Rossi's Fresh Grocer now a local icon with many in the neighbourhood accessing their fruit and vegetable groceries there. Rossi's Fresh Grocer is small but compact and has a huge variety of fresh fruit and veggies of the highest quality. They also have an appetising deli section, with ready-to-eat meals, delicious cheeses and the finest Italian groceries. They also added an espresso bar that starts serving coffee at 6:30am. Throughout the pandemic, Stephen and his team made sure that their customers had access to goods by combating isolation with the implementation of a new delivery system. Unlike so many of the businesses I spoke with, Rossi's Fresh Grocer has been fortunate not to suffer any significant downturn – rather, the reverse. The fresh produce he sells is needed by locals in both good times and bad. I'm glad I got the chance to speak to Stephen, and I thank him and his staff for providing for the community over the past five years.

### **LIFEGUARD OF THE YEAR - MAX MILLIGAN**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**— I congratulate the Port Macquarie-Hastings Lifeguard of the Year for 2019-2020 Max Milligan for his instrumental contribution to surf lifesaving. Max Milligan is a 19-year-old graduate of MacKillop College and has served as a lifeguard, valiantly protecting our beaches in Port Macquarie. In 2017-2018 season, Max was awarded Rookie Lifeguard of the Year before joining the casual guard patrols for the last two seasons. Recognised as a top performing lifeguard in the Mid North Coast, Max remains dedicated and committed to serving our community ensuring our locals and visitors are safe while enjoying a day at the beach. Last season was particularly a turbulent one to be a lifeguard with an incident occurring on Christmas Eve with two people being rescued at the same time. While Max is preparing to undertake commerce law at the

University of NSW in Sydney, studying Commerce and Economics he is adamant on returning home during the summer to resume his love of servicing our community through his surf lifesaving activities. Congratulations again Max and best wishes for your future endeavours.

#### **PORT MACQUARIE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE'S FOOD CONNECT**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**— I extend my gratitude to the amazing volunteers of the Port Macquarie Neighbourhood Centre for remaining open during COVID-19 to deliver the vital Food Connect service for those in our community experiencing financial hardship. We all understand the devastating impacts Coronavirus has had on our regional communities as people face unemployment and financial stress due to the Government imposed restrictions aimed at keeping our most vulnerable safe. During this period the Port Macquarie Neighbourhood Centre's Food Connect was at its busiest providing food to those who would otherwise forgo a meal. Food Connect was transformed at the height of the pandemic in Port Macquarie to a temporary drive-through service providing rescued food safely to our most disadvantaged. OzHarvest was at the forefront of the operation during the pandemic, purchasing food to supplement the allocation of rescued food ensuring no-one went without and assisting with pick-ups and deliveries. I would like to extend a sincere thank you to Food Connect's Julie Trowbridge, Lynn Maltman and Vicki White along with Tracy Colgan from the Buttery and OzHarvest for delivering this outstanding service to our community.

#### **SHARE THE DIGNITY DRIVE**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**— Twice a year, Share the Dignity conducts a national drive to collect pads, tampons, menstrual cups, incontinence pads and other items to help homeless and displaced women manage their menstrual period with dignity. The March 2020 Share the Dignity Drive was cut short due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic on Australian soil. As a result of COVID our nation is lurching into its deepest recession since The Great Depression and more and more people are struggling simply to eat and keep the lights on. The number of women experiencing homelessness and fleeing domestic violence is greater now than ever. This 'period poverty' can affect health, hygiene and self-esteem. It robs women of opportunities, and their dignity. For these reasons I am delighted to again support the Share the Dignity Drive. My Maitland electorate office is registered as a drop-off point for donations. However, given the COVID-19 pandemic, I encourage people to visit the Share the Dignity website and lodge an online donation, or visit their online store and make a purchase where all profits go towards the mission to end period poverty. The website can be found at [sharethedignity.org.au](http://sharethedignity.org.au)

#### **THANK YOU NIC QUINN**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**— Just over a week ago my electorate of Maitland was rocked by the news that a visitor to the area, who later tested positive for COVID-19, had attended one of our most-popular pubs. Maitland is not a stranger to COVID. To date we have recorded a total of 32 cases. But we've managed to avoid a positive test in many weeks. The matter hit national headlines and anyone who had attended the East Maitland Windsor Castle Hotel at the same time as the visitor was advised to undertake a test for COVID-19. Amid the melee of news bulletins and frightened Facebook posts, one man stood calm, rolled up his sleeves and went above and beyond any expectation. That man was Nic Quinn, the owner of the Windsor Castle. Nic wasn't required by NSW Health to close his pub, but he did – he shut the doors and ensured the premises received a deep clean. He sent his staff for COVID-19 testing. And he personally called every patron who was at his pub during the period in question. Congratulations on your fine leadership, Nic - your patrons, and your community thank you. You're an example to us all.

#### **MILLERS POINT COMMUNITY RESIDENT ACTION GROUP**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**— On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I acknowledge the contribution of the Millers Point Community Resident Action Group (MPCRAG). MPCRAG provides a stable community focus in this area, which has experienced massive demographic and development changes in recent years. There are many new residents in both high rise and the heritage homes. The MPCRAG informs local residents about events and developments that will impact on residential access and amenity, providing a connection point between agencies like Barangaroo Delivery Authority, Property NSW and the City of Sydney. They've provided local input to plans and service delivery, building on local knowledge with a focus on improving the area for those who live there. This ranges from contributing to plans for redevelopment of the Fort Street Public School to pedestrian crossings and a local public swimming spot at Barangaroo Reserve. Active and engaged residents are important participants in planning and development, and essential if a precinct is to be a great place to live, work and visit. I congratulate the engaged and involved members of the Millers Point Community Resident Action Group for their commitment and contribution.

### **PYRMONT ACTION GROUP**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**— On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I wish to recognize the remarkable contribution of Pyrmont Action to the amenity and liveability of this precinct. Established in 2003 when Pyrmont was undergoing redevelopment with many new residents living in new buildings without established networks, Pyrmont Action began with a campaign to get adequate broadband infrastructure. Since then it has played a vital role in building community connections and ensuring that government agencies take residents' need and concerns into account. The group is a strong advocate for public transport to address the serious traffic congestion that result from Pyrmont's topography and location, and keen advocates for pedestrian links through Darling Harbour. Pyrmont Action has and continues to contribute to major planning and development like the Bank Street foreshore, Fish Market, Wattle Street depot and Bays Precinct visions and plans, and now the Pyrmont Peninsula Planning Review. They have worked with the City of Sydney to upgrade the Pyrmont Community Centre so it can cater to emerging community needs. I congratulate the active and engaged residents who contribute their time and skills to make their precinct a great place to live, work and visit.

### **FRIENDS OF CALLAN PARK**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**— Today I recognise the Friends of Callan Park, a remarkable community organisation that has worked tirelessly and successfully to protect and preserve Callan Park over the last two decades. Since the very first rally to save Callan Park in 1998, the Friends have recorded many wins. Few have been as significant as the historic investment of \$10 million which was announced this month. Today in this place I would like to acknowledge the following community members – some of whom are sadly no longer with us - for their efforts over the years: Hall Greenland, Dr Jean Lennane, Dr Alicia Lee, Adrienne Shilling, Jill Braid, Terrill Riley-Gibson, Cheryl Arnold, Peter Wright, Doreen Marsh, Brian Jones, Roslyn Burge, Carole Allen, Margaret Armstrong, Cynthia Nadai, Romy Baker, Sue Steedman, Peter Gray, Craig Channells, Roger Parkes, Paul Power, Lyn Latella, Vera-Ann Hannaford, Ann-Therese King, Fergus Fricke, Peter Longhurst, Philip Marsh, Dan Sturrock, and Inner West Councillors Rochelle Porteous and John Stamolis. I speak on behalf of everyone in our community when I thank the Friends of Callan Park, their members and volunteers who have powered two decades of advocacy and action to defend Callan Park.

### **FAIRFIELD POLICE AREA COMMAND**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**— The Fairfield Police Area Command have been busy keeping our community and state safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recently they joined their NSW Police colleagues from across the State to patrol the New South Wales - Victorian border, helping to stop the spread of COVID-19. It has been a difficult time for all of those who live near the Victorian border, with movement significantly curtailed. The professionalism of our law enforcement has been crucial in ensuring public safety and the continuation of life in as normal of a manner as possible for those living near and needing to cross the border and in our Western Sydney community. Fairfield PAC Officers have also continued their regular law enforcement duties during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their commitment to their duties during this turbulent period is laudable. They have continued to serve our community during this time of heightened angst in a capable manner, protecting our families and our community. Thank you to the officers, both sworn and unsworn, for your service and dedication.

### **ASSYRIA DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**— Assyria Day is an important event for Australian Assyrians, who strive for and assist in the creation of a peaceful Assyrian homeland. The Assyrian community in today's modern Iraq, Syria and Iran have been persecuted for generations, they have suffered through genocide and war. They have been torn away from their homeland, but they ensure that their culture and language lives on in the worldwide diaspora. The resilience of the Assyrian people in the face of continued injustice and suffering is commendable. The Assyrian community is continuing to bring global attention to their cause and working to ensure that the Assyrian Diaspora can return to Nineveh and be reunited as one nation. Currently the community ensures that Assyrian youth learn about the history, culture and traditions of Assyria so that they may maintain their heritage and identity. This year Assyria Day, like so many events had to be celebrated online due to COVID-19. It was an honour to join David David, Hermiz Shahen, Joseph Haweil and Albert Shlimon from the Assyrian Universal Alliance – Australian Chapter, for this event to remember the history of the Assyrian struggle and map the way forward to the rebuilding of the Assyrian homeland.

### **NEWY BURGER CO.**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**— In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Newcastle community has seen a silver-lining; everywhere we look, we see people sharing their strength, resilience and compassion. There is no better example of this than Newy Burger Co. In the early phases of COVID-19

restrictions, the selfless team at Newy Burger Co. hit the ground running to co-ordinate the distribution of 'Kindness Boxes'. Available to anyone in need, the boxes contained things like pre-cooked meals, grocery items, baked goods and fresh fruit bolstered by donations from local businesses and the community. It is great to see that whilst small businesses in Newcastle have been hit hard financially by the COVID-19 pandemic, they are still willing to give to those less fortunate. The selflessness of these individuals and businesses against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic have made myself and my community even prouder to call ourselves Novocastrians.

#### **LIFELINE CENTRAL COAST**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**— Thank you so much Lifeline Central Coast for all you have done to support the Central Coast community and beyond during Covid-19. The adjustments by staff and volunteers alike have seen call answering increase from within 70% to 90%. We understand volunteers have had to step back due to their personal circumstances. We celebrate the volunteers who have been able to step-up, adapt and perform professionally during this time. The isolation and social impact of Covid-19 on those living with and without mental illness has seen incoming calls skyrocket. The heart-deep smiles, warmth and raised eyebrows of the team that were working when I popped in really reflect the coping love that has been delivered to the people who have reached out to Lifeline during the last few months. Congratulations and much gratitude to all of you who have assisted in morphing the retail sales online and also to delivering training online to support Lifeline who suffered a huge income drop as we initially shut down. If you ever need help, please never hesitate to call Lifeline on 131 114 - they are passionately committed to supporting you.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 18:20 until  
Thursday 30 July 2020 at 9:30.**