



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 30 July 2020

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 30 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 of motions given]

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2019-2020

Debate resumed from 4 June 2020.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (09:45:04): It is a pleasure to speak to the budget today on behalf of my community. I note that we are debating a budget that was delivered more than a year ago. Although we are in unprecedented times, the fact that there has been no substantial debate on this budget in this House goes to the heart of how this Government operates and what is deeply wrong. We should be debating the 2020-21 budget; however, we are not. Unemployment is set to reach double digits, the highest rate of unemployment since the Great Depression, and is disproportionately impacting women and young people. This is a problem across all of New South Wales but it is particularly acute in the Coogee electorate.

My electorate is 53 per cent women, which is 2 per cent higher than the State average, and almost 35 per cent are under the age of 35 and are just at the beginning of their careers. The Coogee electorate is also home to thousands of students, many of whom attend the University of New South Wales. They have not only lost their casual jobs but are uncertain if their tutors and lecturers will still be employed when classes resume as normal. That is why addressing what was and what was not included in the last budget is even more imperative. As we look forward—and I cross my fingers that the next budget is better and brighter—we must secure the jobs we still have and create new jobs for the future—and not just jobs for "da boys". Had the Government delivered in its budget the promises it made in my electorate, it would have created a variety of jobs—jobs that are needed now more than ever.

Since my election I have raised in this place the issue of capacity and infrastructure problems in high schools across the Eastern Suburbs. This is a problem that the Government has admitted exists and that the former member for Coogee committed to resolving by promising major upgrades to both Randwick Boys and Randwick Girls high schools in 2018. Although I have previously made this point, I pay particular attention to the word "major". As described in the budget, major works are those that cost in excess of \$250,000. In the 2019-20 budget the upgrades to Randwick Boys and Randwick Girls high schools were grouped together and classified as "minor" works. I am sure it is no surprise to members in this Chamber that this decision was met with disappointment and concern by the staff, students, community members, parents and local residents. The decision to downgrade the upgrades is cause for significant concern among the community.

Even more concerning than the downgrades is the Government's attempt to use a first-year accounting trick to sneak further underfunding under the radar. Randwick Boys and Randwick Girls are two separate high schools; they serve completely different needs and even have different catchments, yet they have been included as the same line item in the 2019-20 budget. This means that not only have the promised upgrades been downgraded from major to minor but also the funds for those upgrades now have to be divided between two schools. As such, the absolute maximum each school would have access to is \$125,000 for upgrades in the next financial year—hardly enough to buy paint for either school, let alone pay for the people to paint it. To put this in terms that the Treasurer might understand, with this money each school could now afford to hire a top icare executive for less than 10 weeks.

Do the Premier and education Minister have such little concern for the people of Coogee that they believe that less than \$250,000 divided between two schools is enough to solve significant infrastructure problems or was the \$250,000 just earmarked in order to engage consultants to inform the Government as to what the planned works should be? Regardless, classifying the works in the budget as minor is a slap in the face to the Eastern Suburbs community, students and staff who desperately need those upgrades, which were promised now more than two years ago. But what is the backflip about? Underhanded accounting shows us that the Government does not care about schools in New South Wales, especially in the suburb of Coogee. In order to try to get to the bottom of this budgetary mistake, I have asked quite a few questions on notice to try to resolve the issue and get things going so that the Government fulfils its promise.

One such question was what planning was being completed in regard to those upgrades that were promised more than two years ago. I was simply informed that planning is currently underway, with no time line at all provided. I also asked the Minister whether there was any possibility that this project, promised years and years ago, was able to be fast-tracked as part of the COVID-19 economic recovery. The Minister advised me that the project did not meet the criteria as the development application had not been approved. Perhaps if the Government had actually thought about delivering to the eastern suburbs beyond vague platitudes and the planning process had been underway—again, we are now into its third year, so two years, with no end in sight—then this project might have been already fast-tracked to deliver on the much-needed upgrades for this community.

Fast-tracking those works and fulfilling the Government's promises for major upgrades would also create much-needed jobs: jobs in the education sector as well as in construction. Again, at a time when we are going to see double-digit unemployment rates, it is more important than ever that the Government fulfil the promises that it made. Once again I am here—and I have been here so many times since I was elected—to represent the Randwick boys and Randwick girls school communities, who are frustrated with the ongoing delays to their upgrades and believe that this Government is not listening to concerns. Once again I am using my voice to represent my community and, as so many times before, I fear it is falling on deaf ears.

Another surprise when I first read the 2019-20 budget was to find that the line item for the total cost of the light rail was missing. That seemed a significant oversight. Was the Government actually acknowledging its lack of fiscal responsibility and inability to plan major infrastructure? Was the Government admitting it had no idea what the project actually was going to cost the people of New South Wales? Thanks to the Auditor-General's report released in June this year, we now know that the CBD and South East Light Rail so far has cost the people of New South Wales \$3.147 billion. That is more than \$1.5 billion over budget or, if the Government would like it presented more simply, roughly double.

In the report released in June this year, the NSW Auditor-General found that the CBD and South East Light Rail cost had actually risen since the Government revealed the final cost in December. The Auditor-General revealed that in those six months the final cost had risen by \$150 million. The figure of \$150 million might seem like an astonishingly large amount of money, but in light of the mind-boggling level of budgetary incompetence shown by this Government it seems like it could be a bit of a rounding error. In 2012 a Transport for NSW report called *Sydney's light rail future: expanding public transport, revitalising our city* the Government revealed it would build a new light rail line from Circular Quay along George Street to Central Station, across Moore Park, Anzac Parade, with branches to Kingsford and Randwick. The original price: \$1.6 billion. By 2014 the figure had become \$2.1 billion. The Auditor-General found that it was a result of mispricing and omissions in the business case.

What else did mispricing and omissions lead to? A lawsuit led by Acciona, the Government's chosen construction company. Acciona sued the Government for misleading and deceptive conduct in April 2018. The lawsuit was related to the cost of digging up and replacing Ausgrid powerlines, according to the Auditor-General's report. Connecting the dots here, the Government was not honest with the costs upfront—not to the people of New South Wales and not to the chosen construction company—and that cost the taxpayers of New South Wales millions and millions of dollars. To borrow words from the member for Maroubra, governments have one overarching mission: to make communities better, to improve people's lives and to increase services for the people who pay their wages. The CBD and South East Light Rail has done the absolute opposite for the people of New South Wales and it has destroyed communities in the Eastern Suburbs and in my electorate.

Its construction was a blight on the city and sent hundreds of businesses broke. The project has also seen 800 fig trees removed, which were planted to acknowledge our diggers who went to war for us. Noise levels during construction often reached 90 decibels at night, which is in breach of regulations. Now it is complete the light rail still makes more noise than it is worth. My office continues to hear from residents of Wansey Road and High Street, both in Randwick, who report that windows and doors shake when the light rail passes and the tram screeches when coming into the stops throughout the day and night, keeping shift workers from the hospital awake during the day and everyone else awake at night.

The journey times from Randwick to the CBD are still five to 10 minutes longer than promised. For the convenience of taking five to 10 minutes longer and double the time of an express bus to the city, how are the people of the eastern suburbs now being rewarded? They will have 16 bus routes taken away from them plus another 11 rerouted to force people to use the light rail, which nobody wants to use. What is remarkable is that one of the Liberal Party promises during the 2019 State election campaign was "Fixing our transport system—investing \$19 billion in new infrastructure to fix our transport so you can spend less time travelling". The light rail is making journey times to the CBD significantly longer. By getting rid of 16 bus routes, the journey times will be even longer. The Government is not fulfilling the promise that it made.

In 2007 *The Australian* newspaper reported that the transport Minister tried to drop the project, which shows how terrible it was. The article explained that the Minister described it as a "dog of a project". The article also reveals that the project was continued because the contract had been signed in such a rush that every alteration would cost the Government five times as much as it should. The Minister went on to say that since being elected the Government had received thousands of complaints about the light rail during construction, during testing and now during operation. My prediction is this: The true cost of the light rail will continue to go up as the Government tries to resolve problems that were never resolved during construction.

The project should never have been built. If the Government had consulted with the community properly, the alterations to the route, the track, the location of stops and the connecting of transport modes would not have been necessary. The end-up facility trips, the number of vehicles, the speed of vehicles and the frequency of services are just some of the issues that continue to be raised. The project was already \$1.3 billion over budget so the Government knew that it could not afford to make the changes so it avoided any consultation on issues raised during the project. Ignorance might be bliss for the Government but it means misery for the people of New South Wales, and even more misery for the people whom the Government claims to represent and for the people in my electorate.

It seems that the New South Wales Liberals, much like their Federal counterparts, are unable to count. During the 2019 State election campaign the Liberal-Nationals Government promised many things that it has failed to deliver, but one promise in particular was to increase funding from \$147 million to a total of \$330 million for separated cycleways over the next five years under the Active Transport (Walking and Cycling) Program, including funding for eastern suburbs cycleways. Despite that promise, the 2019-20 budget allocated only an additional \$16.8 million for the program—an amount that is far short of the average of \$36.6 million needed each year to meet the amount promised by the Government. That must be why Randwick City Council has had not one but two grant applications for cycleways rejected by the State Government in the past year.

One would think that during a pandemic when people are looking for work and hundreds of thousands of people who would normally be driving to work are now staying at home—with the exception of the newly remade Minister Harwin, who decided to mosey up the coast—it would have been the perfect time to begin infrastructure programs that involve disruptions to traffic on our roads. Alas, apparently the Government does not have the same thought because it has repeatedly rejected every proposal that Randwick City Council has put forward for funding new bike lanes. Every promise that the Government has made, whether for the electorate of Coogee or New South Wales, is all smoke and mirrors; it says one thing and does another.

Another glaring omission from the budget was the return of the 378 bus route. Buses are vital in the eastern suburbs. I have made that point many times in this place and I will continue to make it until Government members get their hands off our buses. Through groups such as Save our Buses, the eastern suburbs community has for years strongly advocated the importance of local bus networks. Grassroots groups such as that have seen the damage done by the Government to public services; they do not want the same damage done to their community. Local people know that the erosion of public services and public amenity can damage the fabric of their community. They know firsthand that the entire community—the elderly, parents with prams, schoolchildren and workers—will suffer due to the removal of bus services.

Local routes used by everyday people are often the first to go. People take buses, such as those on route 378, to go to doctors, supermarkets, libraries and hospitals. Bus route 378 provided the people of Bronte and Waverley a direct connection between their suburb and the CBD. The removal of the bus route has also meant that locals who are now struggling to get to healthcare services at St Vincent's Hospital can no longer access services and facilities in Paddington, Surry Hills, Darlinghurst and the CBD. We know that it is a big issue because the 378 bus was originally removed as part of the region 6 privatisation and because region 9 is slated for privatisation. Twenty thousand people signed a petition to stop further bus privatisation, which was heard in this Chamber. We know that the 378 bus is a big issue because it was an election issue.

The former member for Coogee even promised to bring it back. On his website the unsuccessful member stated that he would reinstate it; I have a copy of that document. He committed to it in public speeches, media opportunities and in direct mail to voters that was printed on Liberal Party letterhead. Yet, when the 2019-20 budget was released just a couple of months later, no funding had been allocated to the State Transit Authority for returning the bus route. There was no mention of the sale of region 9 buses. In this budget, the Premier and the Liberal Government are quantifiably breaking key election promises to the people of the Coogee electorate and New South Wales. They said that there would be no further privatisation and that the Government would increase existing bus services in the eastern suburbs and return the 378 bus route.

On 30 May 2019 I asked a question on notice to the transport Minister: When will the Government re-establish the 378 bus route following the commitment made in the 2019 State election? On 4 July 2019 I received an answer in which the Minister committed to returning the 378 bus from Bronte to the CBD. The

Minister also mentioned that Transport for NSW would finalise services to be delivered in the next 12 months. It is now July 2020 and I inform the House that the bus has still not been brought back—another lie.

The Government had no intention to deliver any new services within 12 months of the election. We know that because less than seven months after the election, the Government announced the privatisation of three bus networks, including region 9, in the eastern suburbs. We now know the depths to which the Government will stoop. It lied about the return of the 378 bus route and its plans to privatise region 9 buses and it also lied to the people of the Coogee electorate about its plans to cut more buses from the network.

The eastern suburbs once had the best bus services in New South Wales but they have been decimated slowly by the ideologues sitting opposite. They are obsessed with privatisation, addicted to secrecy and perpetually lie to the people of New South Wales. The removal of 28 bus routes from the eastern suburbs will impact every person in my electorate—commuters and bus drivers. There will be fewer services, fewer jobs, fewer routes and fewer bus drivers. I reaffirm what I said when I became the candidate for Coogee: I will always commit to fight to ensure that my community and all communities have access to public services that they need, which includes bus route 378.

I started my speech by pointing out the obvious: We are in unprecedented times and the Government's fundamental role in creating jobs is now more important than ever—not just jobs for "da boys", but also jobs for women, jobs for men, jobs for the young and jobs for the older. It is my hope that the Treasurer and the Government can grow a conscience and fulfil the promises that they have made to the Coogee electorate. I hope that they will fulfil the promises of major upgrades for Randwick Boys' and Randwick Girls' high schools—two separate high schools. Fast-tracking the development would go some way towards not only creating jobs but also investing in our future. [*Extension of time*]

Committing to retaining 27 or 28 bus services and re-establishing the 378 route would also create jobs. Job creation must be our mantra. I hope that the 2021 budget delivers more than the 2019-20 farce did.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (10:05:44): Today I speak on the extraordinary contribution the Government has made not only to my electorate but also to rural and regional areas across the State. This Government has gone from fixing the mess it was left after 16 years of neglect by Labor to now being able to fund the community initiatives and ideas that make rural and regional areas thriving places to live. It is fair to say the bush has never seen so much investment. The Stronger Country Communities Fund has poured more than \$35 million into my electorate alone.

Mr Geoff Provest: How much?

Ms STEPH COOKE: The Cootamundra electorate alone has received \$35 million. This fund is all about bringing to life projects that make our rural and regional communities more livable. It has made it possible to screen movies, build adventure playgrounds, have change rooms for female footballers and build barbecue areas.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: That is such a great investment.

Ms STEPH COOKE: It is a great investment, absolutely. This investment is the latest push from this Government to bridge the rural-urban divide. Last year's budget truly was a budget for the bush, with a record of more than \$300 million committed to the Cootamundra electorate alone. Our Government made many bold commitments during the election campaign, and I am proud that more than one year on we are keeping those promises and delivering for people in all parts of the State without the addition of a single tax. In fact, we are cutting taxes, with the payroll tax threshold raised—a policy that small- to medium-sized businesses have pleaded for and which the Labor Government threatened to rip up in the faces of hardworking Australians, threatening jobs and stalling economic growth. Thankfully, the voters of New South Wales saw through the spin and last year they returned a Government whose economic management recognises the diversity in regional economies.

I continue my contribution to this take-note debate by outlining some of the many legacy items that appeared in the 2019-20 budget for the electorate of Cootamundra—the seat of small communities. Our largest city is Cowra, which boasts a population of just over 10,000 people or about 3 per cent the size of Parramatta. But we have never let our size stand as a barrier to growth and progress. The projects that are funded and those that I continue to fight for are indicative of the forward-thinking nature of this electorate and the confidence the Government has in its future.

Without water there is no life. There are no rivers and creeks, no crops, no stock and ultimately no human beings. The drought, which has been declared as the worst on record, has had a tight grip on the nation and our State over the past several years. I am proud that the largest standalone investment in the future of our electorate is a visionary bold step towards greater water security. The 2019-20 budget estimates contained a \$32 million

commitment to investigate the raising of the Wyangala Dam wall. Backed by our \$4.2 billion Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund the NSW Nationals have committed \$650 million to see this project through.

Mr Geoff Provest: How much?

Ms STEPH COOKE: It is \$650 million. I think that is almost the investment in The Tweed Hospital. In October 2018 the results of a thorough investigation into water security options for the Lachlan region were released. Raising the Wyangala Dam wall was a key recommendation. The study was completed in two phases by WaterNSW. Raising the Wyangala Dam wall by 10 metres was investigated against constructing a new dam near Cranky Rock on the Belubula River. Raising the wall was found to be the superior option considering cost, flood mitigation, hydrological modelling benefits, construction risk and environmental sustainability. It will increase the dam's capacity to hold water in periods of surplus and deliver controlled release when water is needed.

Crucially, it provides increased capability to manage flood events. Raising the Wyangala Dam wall by 10 metres is expected to deliver an extra 650 gegalitres of storage capacity in addition to the existing storage capacity of 1,217 gegalitres. The water delivery system in the Lachlan Valley fails to adequately mitigate in periods of drought and flood, and the reliability of water availability is unacceptable. In two years the Lachlan Valley endured significant flooding and severe drought. Currently the dam level is at 16 per cent of capacity. The inability of the water system to mitigate those events is having adverse economic, social and environmental impacts on the region's water-dependent agriculture and mining industries. Those industries contribute heavily to the economies of our local communities and one cannot survive without the other.

We are committed to supporting the communities in the Lachlan Valley. We have put the money on the table and we are getting it done. The next step will see \$32 million invested for continued engineering and environmental studies. When successive Labor governments stood at the helm 10 years ago it was hard to imagine vision like this in our patch. Major rail lines were closed permanently and others were mothballed—including the vital Blayney-Demondrille railway line; 90 schools were closed; 2,000 hospital beds were axed over 15 years; and development ground to a halt. It has taken time to repair the damage. After nine years in government the process is still underway. There is a commitment and very real investment to restore the State. I now turn my attention to the flood proofing of the Newell Highway.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Hear, hear!

Debate interrupted.

Bills

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

Second Reading Speech

Debate resumed from 18 June 2020.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (10:14:19): I am delighted to return to my second reading speech on the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Service Providers) Bill 2020. I introduced and commenced to second read the bill on 18 June 2020, when, as a result of standing orders, that speech was interrupted. When the interruption occurred I had just made the point that the principal Act, the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act [PPIPA], dates from 1998—that is, the law protecting privacy in this State is over two decades old. Not surprisingly, in the past two decades various things have happened that require alteration to the current law. One of those things is that various functions once performed by government have been privatised and no longer fall within the protection of PPIPA. Things have changed but the legislation has not kept up. As the Privacy Commissioner said in a report in 2015:

The outsourcing of services traditionally provided by the government sector to the non-government sector where the workforce can include both employees and volunteers, needs to be well managed to ensure continuity of protection for personal information and the privacy of service users and third parties.

As a matter of principle, non-government bodies carrying out traditional government functions should maintain the same privacy standards as government agencies. In that 2015 report the Privacy Commissioner referred to a survey of non-government organisations distributed in October 2014. The responding organisations were uncertain of their obligations under privacy law. A majority of responding NGOs, for example, had not heard of the Information and Privacy Commission—and these were NGOs with contracts with State agencies. As the report concluded, there was a need for targeted communication and resources for NGOs, outlining their obligations and the provisions of privacy law. As I say, these were NGOs doing work for the State, often contractually bound to provide privacy standards—not that they seemed to know it. The report also said:

The NGO survey results also highlighted the need to raise awareness among NGOs about the responsibility of the NSW Privacy Commissioner to assist them to meet their privacy obligations. It also suggests the need for resources and training for NGOs in meeting their privacy compliance obligations ...

So whatever one thinks about the current system for privacy, it is not working in this respect—it is broken. In a sense that is not surprising; non-government bodies are not subject to the same oversight and scrutiny as government bodies. For example, has the Department of the Auditor-General ever done a review of the adequacy of the NGO sector IT system or cybersecurity in the way it has for government departments? Of course not. All these considerations led to a recommendation in the report of the Privacy Commissioner under section 61B of PPIPA in 2015. Recommendation 4 provided as follows:

The PPIP Act to be amended to clearly cover contracted service providers and contractors who may be involved in services other than "data services".

The Privacy Commissioner also noted that this was not in any sense a new issue—and she was right. The PPIPA had previously undergone a statutory review by the then Department of Attorney General. In 2004 that review recommended that PPIPA should provide a structure for binding non-government organisations contracted by public sector agencies. Recommendation 13 of that review stated:

In an environment where government services may increasingly be delivered by an outside contractor a reconsideration of the issue in the privacy context is warranted.

The review particularly pointed to cases where an individual is initially the client of a government service delivery agency. The review pointed to alternatives in other jurisdictions including the Commonwealth model. The Privacy Commissioner's report pointed to examples of where some agencies are, by statute, required to ensure that contractors comply with PPIPA—for example, the then Roads and Maritime Services under section 66 of the then Road Transport Act for the provision of special numberplates. That this provision was in that legislation confirms this is generally a significant issue. However, such a provision is not that common and, in any event, probably just means a contractual obligation for the NGO, which is unenforceable by the citizen and does not deliver the statutory regime protection for the citizen.

There have been other considerations of those issues. In its May 2010 final report on protecting privacy, the NSW Law Reform Commission acknowledged the seriousness of the issue and recommended strengthening the PPIPA on this count. The Law Reform Commission report is evidence for the proposition that on this point PPIPA should be improved and strengthened. Another report from the Privacy Commissioner returned to this issue in 2017. That was a special report under section 61C of PPIPA entitled *NSW Informational Privacy Rights: Legislative Scope and Interpretation - Employer, Employee, and Agent Responsibilities*. The report notes the obligation on a government agency dealing with a subcontractor under section 12 (d) of PPIPA but concludes that there is uncertainty about precisely how far this goes and even more complexity when the contractor uses a subcontractor. There are additionally significant limitations on section 12.

The report restated the conclusions drawn from the 2014 survey of NGOs, which "indicated the need to strengthen the privacy framework for service users and to address uncertainty as to the nature of the obligations upon NGOs". The commissioner's report argued that the need for changes had increased since her 2015 report and recommendations. She wrote:

Since the release of this 2015 report an increasing number of questions have been posed regarding the PPIP Act's capacity to extend enforceable privacy rights against entities that perform work for public sector agencies. This increase has accompanied the NSW Government's ongoing transfer of human and social service provision to the welfare sector.

Interestingly, the commissioner pointed to the fact that the New South Wales Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 directly regulates some contractors in contrast to PPIPA. The report states:

This is because it regulates some private organisations that deal with "health information," which includes organisations contracting to government. This creates an uneven regulatory coverage for no discernible and valid reason.

The health legislation that I referred to is often seen as being in tandem with PPIPA and the variance in the analogous provisions is surprising. The report points to the considerably more advanced legislative scheme in Queensland in sections 36 and 37 of the Information Privacy Act 2009. It also points to section 95B of the Federal Privacy Act 1988, which binds both contractors and subcontractors in a way that is superior to the current New South Wales model in PPIPA. Subsequent to publication of the 2017 report I asked a question on notice for the Government's response to that report. The response to the question was:

There is no legislative requirement for a Government response to the report. The former Privacy Commissioner's reports provide a useful resource for the Government and the incoming Privacy Commissioner for the improvement of New South Wales privacy law and practice.

The Government considers these reports carefully and provides any response as appropriate.

With that sort of anodyne non-response, I am not surprised nothing has been done yet. The case for improving and strengthening the provisions of PPIPA in that regard is very powerful. The amendments relate only to the definition of public sector agency contained in section 3 of the principal Act. It is that definition that determines the agencies included in the PPIPA regime. Paragraph (g) (i) of the definition currently restricts "public sector agency" to a body that provides data services for or on behalf of another body referred to in the definition. The bill omits that provision and replaces it with a much broader formulation that is no longer restrained by the term "data service". The proposed new provision in paragraph (g) (i) states:

- (i) provides services for or on behalf of a body referred to in paragraph (a)–(f) of this definition, or that receives funding from any such body in connection with providing services, and

That is a much broader formation than is currently in the Act. I note that paragraph (g) (ii) of the definition remains in the Act and that prescription is still required for the agency to be covered by the Act. There is a gap in the protection of privacy in this State, which has grown over time, with non-government bodies performing government functions. The bill aims to close that gap. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

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

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 June 2020.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (10:22:57): On behalf of the Government, I make a contribution to debate on the Water Management Amendment (Water Rights Transparency) Bill 2020 (No 2). I acknowledge the people in our farming communities who are doing their best to produce food and fibre for our nation. It has been a very difficult and frustrating time during a very difficult drought. In some parts of New South Wales it is the most severe drought ever experienced. Our farming communities have faced many challenges over the past three years. As I have acknowledged since becoming water Minister, in 2016 in particular, bountiful rains filled most of our dams and catchments and replenished the people of regional New South Wales. The subsequent three years were very dry. Beautiful rain fell over the past week—too much on the east coast for my liking as it was an east coast low. The rain was very welcome in southern parts of New South Wales, particularly on the South Coast. At this point the Hume Dam has had an additional 6 per cent of inflow, taking the dam level up to around 48 per cent.

There are still many challenges across the State, but the progression into the La Niña away from the El Niño is giving many of our farming communities hope and inspiration. We are very much aware of how our policies have helped some through this drought. Only last week I was at a meeting in my community of Kempsey with the Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture and the dairy commissioner. Around 20 local farmers came together to talk about the future and the challenges that they have experienced. To a person, they said that they probably would not have survived the drought if it were not for the subsidies and support that the Government has given farmers to cart hay to their properties to sustain their herds. I am talking about farmers on the mid North Coast of New South Wales. It was great to hear the recognition from our communities and our farmers that the Government stood firmly beside them to support them through the drought.

I acknowledge that we want La Niña to keep coming. On his wonderful website Karl Lijnders suggests that we are going to get more good rains through August. I certainly hope and pray that that is the case because we need to get the dams—such as Chaffey Dam at Tamworth, which has just gone over 20 per cent—100 per cent full. From the member for Cootamundra we heard about plans for the development of a new dam at Wyangala. Wyangala Dam is now heading towards being 20 per cent full as well. Burrendong Dam, servicing Dubbo and the Macquarie Valley, is at around 30 per cent. There is some good news, but we need more good news. Hopefully, we will have late winter and early spring rains and get full allocations for our farmers in the coming months.

Returning to the bill, the member for Murray may not be aware that her colleague in the other place has introduced a bill that is identical to this one. The identical bill is currently being considered in detail by a committee of the upper House that is chaired by her colleague and is due to report tomorrow. That committee is also considering a far superior bill that I introduced in this House earlier this year. Considering that an identical bill is in the other Chamber, I am not sure what the member for Murray—a shooters party representative—hopes to achieve by debating this bill today. Perhaps she has little confidence in the deliberations of the committee that is considering the identical bill. I have a suspicion that this is about driving the politics of fear, suspicion and conspiracy, pitting farmer against farmer and region against region, and trying to divide team New South Wales on the reforms that we need within the water sector.

For the information of the House, the committee received a number of submissions. That is relevant to debate on the bill today because the bill in the upper House is identical. The committee heard from a number of

witnesses. It is poignant to highlight some of the key points in that bill. With respect to my bill, the Lachlan Shire Council pointed out that the bill requires members of Parliament to declare water access licences that they own or have an interest in and any water activity trading within 14 days. It said of the bill that the Government presented to this Chamber—which we debated and is now sitting in the upper House—that members of Parliament having to declare trading of their water within 14 days is a reasonable requirement and is consistent with transparency requirements. That is in the Government's bill; it is not in the bill we are considering now.

With respect to the shooters party bill, the Lachlan Shire Council said: "This bill requires not only Members of Parliament and spouses to declare interests in water licences, but also to require much greater visibility of information on the NSW Water Register, namely the names and addresses of all people who own water licences ... requiring people to provide information that is included on the water access licence application ... Information on water access licences is already publicly available via the NSW Water Register." Using the licence number, a person can access location, volume and condition information. Water trading data is also available, but they cannot get the name and address of all licence holders from this register. However, you can pay a broker about \$16 for the licence holder name and address from Land and Property Information. There is some concern in the industry that if the name and address is easily available, people could be targeted by anti-irrigation interests, on social media or even by brokers.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Balmain will come to order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Brokers could find out how much water people had left on their licences for the year and could then try to engineer higher prices if they saw that people needed more.

Mr Jamie Parker: You can already get that information.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: That is the information in the submissions from the community on the two bills. It is relevant to put those two bits of information side by side. The Lachlan Shire Council submission states in summary that it is of the view that:

Amendments that require greater visibility of information on the NSW Water register is not necessary and could be used to the detriment of licence holders.

My bill makes amendments to the pecuniary interest register with respect to water holdings and also makes provisions for further improvements to the public register that do not compromise the privacy of mum-and-dad farmers. It is timely to acknowledge that this morning the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] released its interim report on the Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry. At 11.4.2 on page 391 the report states, "The ACCC's preliminary view is that publishing identifying details will not help solve market issues." More specifically, it states that publications may have several drawbacks or unintended negative consequences.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The Minister does not need any assistance. The member for Balmain will come to order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The three points raised are that publication may breach privacy laws, may allow people to inappropriately approach individuals to pressure them to conduct in trade, and may result in the targeting of individuals even when they have not engaged in any illegal conduct. I get a sense that the member for Murray is frustrated because everybody is against her bill. They see it as a bill that does not protect small mum-and-dad farmers.

Mrs Helen Dalton: You are not listening.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We are listening to the community. That is the very point that I make.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Murray will come to order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The ACCC has come out in the interests of small mum-and-dad farmers, but the shooters party bill denies those rights to mum-and-dad farmers. The NSW Irrigators' Council, the rice industry and NSW Farmers have all said that the bill is dangerous to mum-and-dad farmers. That is a clear and important fact. That is the difference between the Government's bill and the shooters bill. Why did the member for Murray introduce such a silly bill that puts young mum-and-dad farmers at risk? If the shooters purport to represent farmers, how could they put this bill up in good faith?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Murray will cease interjecting.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: With respect to the shooters party bill, Griffith City Council said:

Council does not support the proposed requirement that the declaration is to include Parliamentarian's spouse's water interests and trading. It is assumed that other interests of Parliamentarians are required to be declared (i.e. real estate) do not capture spouse's real estate. Water interests should be dealt with on the same basis as other interests.

Council does not support the retrospectivity of the Amendment which proposes that declarations are to include transactions backdated to the previous 5 years.

I am beginning to get the impression that the member for Murray simply did not do her homework. The Ricegrowers' Association [RGA] has said about the shooters bill:

The RGA does not support the development of a register of water holdings that discloses individual water users' personal details or water holdings. This information is private and confidential, and all things taken into account, the RGA believes that the disclosure of this information would be detrimental to the many small—

small, not the big ones like the member for Murray—

to medium irrigation businesses we represent.

The NSW Farmers has said about the shooters bill:

NSW Farmers supports the improvement of water accountability and transparency.

So does the Government. NSW Farmers further state:

Transparency is a key principle in decision making. Therefore, we support Members of Parliament being subject to the same disclosure requirements for water holdings as for other forms of property.

However, NSW Farmers does not support the disclosure of personal information through expanded registers (or the development of new registers) as that information may be sensitive, private, and confidential. Publication of personal information could expose particular vulnerable members of our irrigation community ...

I would not interject if I were you, member for Balmain. Many of your supporters illegally trespassed and violated the rights of farmers, the rights of communities—

Mr Jamie Parker: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I had hoped that the Minister would not provoke the member for Balmain.

Mr Jamie Parker: The Minister should address her comments through the Chair rather than address individual members. I know the Minister will do everything she can to avoid accountability, but blaming everyone else for her problems is not the solution.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Balmain is now going beyond the point of order. I ask all members to abide by the same advice the member just delivered to the Minister. Nobody is pure in that sense. There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I was attempting to highlight the reason why many small farmers do not want the private details of the water they own to be available on a public register.

Mr Jamie Parker: You can get it anyway.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Yes, the point the member for Balmain makes is valid. Water access arrangements and information is available, and there is a process for that, but we do not want Aussie Farms 2.0 to be able to go onto farms and create mayhem and chaos. Photos taken on farms and put up on websites have put the fear of God into very good people. The member for Murray may laugh at that, but she has not experienced that kind of fear. In my community, dairy farmers off Waterfall Way—the major State highway between Bellingen and Armidale—have had green activists go onto their properties.

Mr Clayton Barr: But that's not a water issue.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: It is an issue because they do not want all of their details publicly available.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Members will come to order and observe the rules of decorum. There is not one person in this Chamber who is too sensitive to cope with a comment from the Minister. We all understand where this is going. The member for Balmain and the member for Murray are making unnecessary and unhelpful interjections. The fact that the Minister is responding to their interjections is also unhelpful. The Minister will return to the leave of the bill.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: As I was saying, the NSW Farmers submission states:

Publication of personal information could expose particular vulnerable members of our irrigation community (e.g. small farms, or elderly demographics).

We do not support any element of a bill that violates the privacy of personal information, particularly where that violation may threaten the safety or wellbeing of individuals and their families, or put them at either real or perceived risk of harm—

We saw this when green activists illegally entered the properties of good farmers from one part of this State to the other. That was a disgraceful act and it has created a sense of fear and paranoia. A public register with personal

details made available to all members of the public threatens people's privacy. The farming community is sensitive to those risks. Aussie Farms published personal information online last year, which resulted in significant concerns. The submission continues:

Farmers were subjected to trespass, biosecurity breaches, damage to property and faced fear and anxiety of possible attacks on their homes, property, family and livelihoods. NSW Farmers is concerned that the publication of personal information without appropriate privacy protections—

Mrs Helen Dalton: The Minister is drinking lovely water there.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): That was an unnecessary interjection and deserves an apology for breaking the flow.

Mr Geoff Provest: Point of order: I point out respectfully that it is very difficult to hear the Minister with the continual interjections from the member for Murray. The member has been warned on a number of occasions about irresponsible interjections and she is repeatedly canvassing the ruling. I cannot hear the Minister.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for Tweed. The interjection was very moderate when compared to the spectrum of behaviour that is seen in the Chamber. Once again I ask the member for Murray, the member for Balmain and the member for Cessnock to moderate their interjections and allow the Minister to contribute to the debate on the bill before the House.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: In its submission to the inquiry NSW Farmers states:

... [we are] concerned that the publication of personal information without appropriate privacy protections would expose irrigation farmers to similar circumstances. NSW Farmers also notes that the ACCC is currently conducting an inquiry into the Murray Darling Basin Water Markets—

The ACCC report, which I have referred to in my contribution, was released at 9.00 a.m. today. On page 391 the views of the ACCC are very similar to the farming organisations, the NSW Irrigators Council and the Ricegrowers' Association of Australia, in particular, that identifying private details will not help to solve market issues. The Government does not suggest that there are not issues in need of resolution but the ACCC is very firm in its recommendations on transparency in its draft report.

One of the unintended consequences of a publicly available register is that it may lead to the unintentional or deliberate misuse of published information and may create misinformation. Stakeholders may respond strategically to the publication of entitlement details by taking action to mask their identity, such as by transferring entitlement holdings into the names of related parties with less identifiable names. This outcome would work directly against the objective of improving transparency. It is important to listen to the experts who have taken evidence from the farmers and the industry associations so that we land this bill where it needs to go. Sadly, the bill before the House does not do that.

NSW Farmers recommends: "... the committee defers aspects of the bills referring to the public information until the final ACCC findings and recommendations are available to ensure the most appropriate and evidence-based outcomes. NSW Farmers appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020 and the provisions of the Water Management Amendment (Transparency of Water Rights) Bill 2020 and the Water Management Amendment (Water Allocations—Drought Information) Bill 2020 ... NSW Farmers supports improvements to transparency of water ownership and trade, however there must be a balance between sufficient publicly available information and the protection of privacy and personal/sensitive information. NSW Farmers are happy to provide further information about the issues raised in this submission, if this would be helpful to the Committee." The NSW Irrigators' Council [NSWIC] submission on the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party's bill states:

1. NSWIC supports Members of Parliament being subject to the same disclosure requirements for water holdings as for other forms of property.
2. NSWIC does not support the expansion of current registers to provide and make searchable personal information. This information is sensitive and private. Many irrigation enterprises are small to medium family farm businesses and many members are elderly. They should not be exposed to potentially manipulative and malicious use of the registry.
3. NSWIC agrees that simplified public access to water availability and trade information is sought in general by water market participants. NSWIC supports the development of a public water trade register at a valley or zone level, that could provide timely information on temporary and permanent trade. However significantly more work is required to clearly identify the problem(s) and therefore the solution before the NSW governments progresses further development of a publicly searchable register.

I will talk a little later about our water dashboard, which was released in the past week and goes very much to those points raised by the NSW Irrigators' Council about our public dashboard. Farmers across the Murray-Darling Basin and all water sectors have a right to see information in a better way. We are working very hard to make that better. I am very proud of the work that we have done and I will talk about that further. The submission continues:

4. NSWIC believes it is premature for NSW to be legislating any changes to its registers while the ACCC Inquiry into Murray-Darling Basin Water Markets is in progress. NSWIC supports deferring components of these Bills until the committee can consider the findings of the ACCC Inquiry, which covers public information in the terms of reference.

The submission from Namoi Water on my bill—and I am sure the member for Barwon would be interested in this—states:

The bill appears to provide clarity on the requirement of members of Parliament to publicly disclose their interest in water. The bill also provides that notice of trading of water by members of the Parliament is to be registered and lodged. Given the potential for an increase in water licence holdings by individuals this is a sensible addition to the disclosure provisions.

That was on my bill. It is interesting that Roy Butler, the member for Barwon is not in the Chamber supporting his colleague; there are only three members opposite present in the Chamber. The member for Barwon would be very interested in hearing the submission from Namoi Water on the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party's bill, which states:

The Bill provides for a public register with an electronic search facility, on a publicly available website and this is to be available on payment of a fee.

Namoi Water is confused as to the need for this bill as it appears to be largely consistent with the current registers already available and we cannot see a reason for the bill to be put forward in its current form. There is already a public register and it currently operates within the requirements of the Water Management Act 2000. The requirement for updating the register is a function of the dealing form and is the responsibility of Water NSW, the register is currently updated upon completion of trades. We do not consider that an audit of the register is necessary given the dealing provisions within the act clearly provide for this function now. The information provided on an application is already included on the register and inclusion of other more sensitive information such as location could potentially result in a breach of privacy arising from data mining from the site similar to the Aussie farms map.

No wonder the member for Barwon is not in the Chamber supporting this. The submission continues:

Parliament is already required to disclose water licences, we support this being transparent as per the above bill.

... The main difference we can determine is that this bill removes the right of the Minister to restrict access to the register. We would submit given the sensitivity of the information this authority is likely to be an appropriate authority for a Minister. We suggest the current sections remain relevant. Namoi Water cannot see the functionality of this bill when compared to the existing arrangement. We would contend the risk of publicly available searches allows for an Aussie farms style manipulation of data, it could also lead to perverse outcomes in terms of water trading and financial lending to the detriment of water users and the community.

Those are the comments of Namoi Water on the bill introduced by the member for Murray. That is what constituents and representatives in the Barwon electorate are saying. It continues:

It would lead to a change in behaviour in terms of licence holdings moving to obscure trading entities to maintain privacy leading to unnecessary complexity.

That is an interesting analysis from Namoi Water and is very similar to what the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission said today: It could make things more difficult in terms of transparency and create misinformation. I know one person who is good at misinformation and misleading. If after all of this the shooters party is not convinced that its bill is hopeless, an article published in *The Land* today under the headline "Could Dalton's water bill bring activist risk?" states:

Peak industry bodies including NSW Farmers and the NSW Irrigators' Council say they do not support certain details in Murray MP Helen Dalton's proposed water register bill.

Mrs Dalton introduced the bill Water Management Amendment (Water Rights Transparency) to state parliament earlier this year but debate was delayed and the bill lapsed.

The bill called for MPs to declare their water rights.

And it continues. Clearly, the member for Murray and the shooters party have not done their homework. They have not listened to the community nor had respectful conversations. They have worked in an environment of clear stress in farming communities because of drought. We have not had proper general security allocations across the Murray-Darling Basin for nearly three years and this is the conversation that they have driven in that moment of fear and real desperation. They have fought to create misinformation. As *The Land* and the industry representatives have shown, they have not done their homework. They have not listened appropriately to the community in the interests of creating fear and scaremongering.

If the member for Murray and her party were serious about addressing the issue of transparency, she would have called on her colleagues in the other place to support and pass the Government bill, which has already been passed by this House. It makes no sense to go through the time and expense of committee deliberations. It shows utter disrespect to those who provided evidence to the committee to bring on debate on this bill before the committee has reported. The Government opposes the bill. It is unnecessary because the Government has a superior bill that has already been passed by this House. It is ready and waiting to go, pending consideration of the findings of the committee inquiring into the bill.

The member for Murray claims this bill increases transparency. She claims it is better than the bill I introduced that was agreed to by this House without requiring a division. Let us unpack this. The member claims that there is some big secret and that water licences cannot be looked up. The fact is that we already have a publicly searchable NSW Water Register and Water Access Licence Register, which provide information about every water licence in New South Wales. Yes, we can already go online and search for the information in the Water Access Licence Register. What we cannot do, and what our privacy laws are designed to protect against, is going on a fishing expedition and manipulating the data in a way that would jeopardise the privacy of mum-and-dad farmers across the State.

The NSW Water Register provides free public access to information about water licences, approvals, water trading, water dealings, environmental water and other matters related to water entitlements in New South Wales. The register is complemented by the Water Access Licence [WAL] Register, which began on 1 July 2014 and is maintained by the NSW Land Registry Services. This register provides detailed information about every water access licence in New South Wales, including current licence holders, share and extraction components, licence conditions, current ownership details, encumbrances and notations.

Searches of the WAL Register are carried out in accordance with relevant privacy laws and can be undertaken by any member of the public at NSW Land Registry Services or through an authorised information broker. Let us not forget that information about corporations is available through the relevant register maintained by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. We also have a free online trade dashboard so any person can go to the web to find up-to-date information on water trading, including water allocation, volume of water being traded and the price paid.

The member claims her bill creates accountability for parliamentarians over water ownership. This is the kicker: That is the main reason I introduced the bill that will make important improvements. Let us look at the bill being considered today. Compared to my bill, this bill lacks two critical components. Why is that so, as Julius Sumner Miller would say? This bill does not require disclosure of delivery rights in irrigation corporations. My bill does, which provides far greater transparency. This bill does not require any disclosure of water trading activity. My bill requires continuous disclosure of water trading activity. Water trading must be disclosed within 14 days and we will listen to what the committee report tells us about that.

Mrs Helen Dalton: That will make a change.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I am loath to place a member on a call at this stage. The member for Murray will cease interjecting.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I will reiterate those points. I wonder why this bill does not require disclosure of delivery rights in irrigation corporations. My bill does and provides far greater transparency. Secondly, this bill does not require disclosure of water trading activity. My bill requires continuous disclosure of water trading activity as water trading must be disclosed within 14 days. Instead of wasting time with this bill, I hope my bill is passed quickly by the other place following consideration by the committee inquiring into the bill. Another thing this bill seeks to do is amend the Water Management Act 2000, requiring every form for every dealing involving water access licences to include a long and mostly irrelevant list of information.

Those amendments would prevent the forms for different transactions and different dealings from being customised and streamlined to seek the necessary information for each type of dealing which is currently the case. The additional information requirements of this bill are unnecessary for managing and protecting our precious water resources. All the information needed by government to administer the water licensing regime and for regulators to undertake effective compliance and enforcement of our water management system is covered by existing provisions.

Those amendments are not about better water management. They are about imposing an unhelpful administrative burden and red tape on water users which is unnecessary and ill-thought out. Water users have told me they have had enough. This bill creates an additional burden on them. We must allow farmers to do the right thing, not be burdened by more red tape. We need them to get on with what they do best—growing food and fibre. We have undertaken wide consultation with water users and the broader community to improve transparency. Almost universally people support improved transparency in the water market. They do not support making all information publicly available due to potential privacy issues, misuse of information, compromised commercial interests and manipulation of the market.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission inquiry report into the markets for tradeable water rights in the Murray-Darling Basin was published an hour or so ago. Very importantly, it talks about the dangers of changing registers and the misinformation that that could create. This Government will review the report and we will work with the Commonwealth and other basin States on sensible amendments to the public water register

based on this expert advice and not on the scaremongering by the member for Murray. I am very pleased to be working with the Victorian Labor Minister on an approach of a national register so that all registers can talk to each other. It is important that it is reliable information and it is available with the click of a button. We will be looking to this inquiry to provide recommendations on a national registry to provide consistency across New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory, which is the Territory member of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

The Government has nothing to hide and supports measures to improve transparency. Only last week, with the help and advice of farmers from across New South Wales, we were able to develop a groundbreaking online information hub. It was one of the first requests I received on becoming the water Minister. I remember a particular conversation in a shearing shed not far from Tocumwal, talking to some of the best farmers I have met. They said, "You need to improve the transparency and get the market-led information out on a publicly available dashboard." There has been talk about this for a long time. I understand that more than a decade ago, through the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, the Bureau of Meteorology was given \$53 million to provide that type of information. That information was not provided. It should have been.

The lack of information created a vacuum and conspiracies grew in that vacuum about water. Farmers were frustrated, particularly towards the end of 2018 when they barely received any allocations yet the Murray River was running at a minor flood level. That was very frustrating to productive people who wanted to get on with the job of being good farmers. We have improved our transparency and the information that we make available in New South Wales. Mick Keelty was appointed by the former Federal water Minister, David Littleproud, to do the work as the Murray-Darling Basin water cop. He said that the response of New South Wales in its approach to the issues within our communities had been "tremendous" and that it was now up to Victoria, South Australia and particularly Queensland to follow suit. He stated that what was happening at the Natural Resources Access Regulator [NRAR]:

... [was] embarrassing the other states into addressing how they look at compliance ...

In Queensland, there are hardly any resources for compliance at all. I read with dismay in the past 48 hours that some \$15 million in fines have been issued to South Australian Riverland farmers for the inappropriate use of water allocations. A lot of people throughout our farming communities have been calling for more disclosure, more information and action from South Australia and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority on those activities. We are at least seeing some progress but I am concerned to read that the South Australian water Minister will consider waiving some of those fines. Through its NRAR officers across the basin and across the State, New South Wales is now the leader across Australia in terms of transparency and ensuring that people do not take water they are not entitled to. We should be proud of that work. We should also be proud of the work that has been done on the dashboard, which includes portal features such as key decision-making graphics in one place, the provision of comprehensive water resource information and interstate shares and historic data going back 30 years. This is all now available at the click of a button.

We know the drought has hurt; it has bit hard. In our unregulated river systems where water availability is governed by river volume licence holders now have a clearer picture of the prevailing water situation, especially in the case of significant rain events that may generate flows. We are happy to turn the microscope on ourselves. We have just released a report into the flows coming from that first flush where we had the flood plain harvesting embargo. I am pleased with the responses from the people around Broken Hill. I spoke to council members the other day and I have asked them to read through that report. What we did the first time with that flood plain harvesting embargo was to ensure that we got water down the Darling and many of the farmers within the Northern Basin were pleased to do that.

There is no doubt that that did create stress and that we have work to do in order to ensure transparency and timely delivery of information. But, as we should as a good government, we will continue to respond to the interests and concerns of farmers. We have nothing to hide and we support measures to improve transparency. This Government does not support duplicating existing systems and increasing the regulatory burden on New South Wales water users with sloppy, ill-thought out, ill-conceived legislation. This bill is a distraction. It is a distraction from the good work of our farmers and of our communities. It is a distraction from highlighting and talking about what our Government is doing to ensure that water is managed in a transparent and fair way to deliver good outcomes for the environment, agricultural industries and regional communities. It is for those reasons that the Government opposes this bill.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:07:00): I speak in support of the Water Management Amendment (Water Rights Transparency) Bill 2020 (No 2), introduced for the second time by my Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party colleague the member for Murray. It appears the fierce opposition from the Government earlier this year continues. The bill is a complete no-brainer and I do not understand why there is so much hostility from the National Party about it. I live in a part of the world that has been hard-hit by drought and it has made me appreciate

how much we need to value our most precious natural resource: water. The public needs to know how our water is being used and, most importantly, who owns it.

We have a situation in Australia where ruthless, often foreign-owned, corporates are making millions from the secret trading of water. They buy water when it is cheap, hold on to it and watch the price soar when there is a drought. Their only motivation is profit; not Australian agriculture. They make millions while farmers go broke. It is impossible for an ordinary Australian to find out how much they own or even who they are. The people who own water may be politicians, foreign corporates or foreign governments; we just do not know. The first step to addressing our water woes is to lift the lid on the secrecy and find out exactly who owns it. Across the country there is widespread support for a public water register. We have a land register. There is no reason for water ownership to be such a tight-held secret. Eleven thousand people in the bush have signed a petition for a water register. It is up to us, as their representatives, to make it happen.

The member for Murray has copped nothing but vicious personal abuse since she brought this legislation to the Chamber. She was called a "disgrace" by the water Minister. She was called a "disgusting human" by the Deputy Premier. She was also called "the mean girl from school" by a gutless, spineless member of The Nationals in the upper House. The Nationals keep talking about her family and her personal farming activities. Unlike any member of The Nationals in this Chamber, the member for Murray and her family are proud, hardworking farmers who are feeding our nation and employing many locals.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: A lovely family. She should be very proud of her family.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: I listened to the Minister's contribution very quietly and courteously, and I expect the same from her.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: I said she should be very proud of her family.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I ask for respectful debate from both sides of the Chamber. The Minister's interjection has not been helpful. The member has the call.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: That is the sort of behaviour we expect—personal, savage complaints—from members who do not have a real argument against the member for Murray's bill and who are detached from what the general community feel, want and need. For years members in this Chamber were not required to declare their water interests. That is outrageous and does not make sense. We have to declare property and shares that we own, but water traders can keep their water holdings secret. Why? Water is a valuable commodity, a real asset. There is significant public interest in water ownership.

The Premier says that we can trust politicians to proactively declare their water ownership. Respectfully, Premier, unfortunately I do not think we can. My colleague the member for Murray finally introduced legislation to address this anomaly and all the Government did was oppose the bill and abuse the member. Suddenly, some weeks ago, the water Minister, Ms Pavey, decided to introduce her own bill on politicians declaring water. But her bill is a weak, pale imitation of the much more comprehensive bill we debate today. Minister Pavey's bill protects National Party donors and special interest groups and there is no provision for a public water register, which is what we need. We need to know not just about politicians but also about their donors, about their donors' mates and about all the foreign interests who have their fingers and toes dipped in Australian water. It is not good enough for a company in the Cayman Islands to buy large quantities of water while keeping the names of directors, board members and major shareholders a secret. If a foreign or domestic corporation wants to own Australia's most valuable natural resource, then the Australian public and taxpayers deserve to know about it.

The Nationals are using the excuse that the bill will compromise the privacy of mum-and-dad farmers. They say that the bill will lead to terrorist attacks against farmers by animal rights activities or plant right activists. What a load of rubbish. Unlike The Nationals, I often visit farms and farming families. It is very easy for me to see when a farmer owns water because I can see crops growing, water storages, pivot irrigation and pumps. It is no secret; you can see it from the side of the road as you drive along. I do not need a water register for this information and if members of The Nationals visited farms they would also see it. A water register will expose non-farmers who own water—the city-based traders, the foreign corporates and the politicians. That is ultimately who The Nationals are protecting by blocking the bill. We need transparency on how much water they own. We need accountability and we need integrity in the process. That is why I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (11:12:36): I speak in opposition to the Water Management Amendment (Water Rights Transparency) Bill 2020 (No 2). Water transparency is currently front of mind in our communities. Given we in this place must reflect the views of our communities, it is only fitting that currently three water bills that cover similar issues are before Parliament. First there was the Labor bill, known as the "drought of record bill", which has proven not to be in the best interests of our communities. It was a great example of the community leading policy response.

Amazingly, the member for Murray came out hard on why the bill was so great and why the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party would support it. Again, that shows that the default position of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers is to always support Labor. The Labor-Shooters coalition was never more obvious than in the Queanbeyan preselection, when the shooters preferenced the Labor Party. That is the trouble; they are out there in those regional communities saying, "We are independent" and "We are different", when, in actual fact, their actions show that they are nothing more than a rebrand of the Labor Party; they are one and the same.

Mrs Helen Dalton: What did you have for breakfast?

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: I have to give credit to the member for Murray because when The Nationals and her own community highlighted how it would cripple them, she backflipped and erred on the side of reason, the side of The Nationals, the ones who protect regional communities. It is interesting—and the Minister said it—that the member for Barwon is not here. I was listening to some of the rude and crude banter from those opposite while the Minister was speaking. The member for Murray said that Namoi Water does not matter, they are the same people. I want the member for Barwon to come here and say that he supports the bill, why he supports the bill and why he does not support his constituents and the people from Namoi Water.

The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party bill is one of those bills that was close—like the Labor Party one was close—but missed the mark. The bill reiterates a current obligation as ruled by the Clerk of the Parliament that is all it does. It does not deal with the major issue, which is trading. The other great failing of the bill is that it does not respect the privacy of our mum-and-dad farmers. I agree there is a need for registering the details of corporate farmers and significant water-holders, in the same way substantial shareholders are listed on the ASX disclosures register. However, I cannot in good faith endorse Aussie Farmers 2.0 and have greenie lunatics coming on farms and damaging equipment and endangering lives. Talking about The Greens, it is very interesting to note the number of times members of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party have voted with The Greens.

Mr Jamie Parker: Like when?

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: About 70 per cent of the time, 80 per cent with Labor.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Order! We have been going quite well. I imagine that the member for Myall Lakes understands that including members from the Opposition, The Greens, and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in his commentary has elicited further interjections, which the member previously said he found to be somewhat rude. I ask the member for Myall Lakes to remain within the leave of the bill and to not poke the bear, so to speak.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: This morning *The Land* newspaper reported how the bill is not supported by peak industry bodies. The member for Orange said that The Nationals were detached. Might I say that no-one can be more detached than members of the shooters party. They are purporting that their bill is supported by the people, supported by the groups involved in this, but the peak industry bodies, including the NSW Farmers and the NSW Irrigators' Council, say that they do not support the Dalton bill. We have also heard from the Minister that Namoi Water does not support the bill. If anyone is detached, it is the shooters party.

In a statement the NSW Farmers said they were not opposed to the water register but were concerned about farmers' personal information being made public. "We are opposed to certain personal information being accessible to the public—for example, landholders' personal phone numbers and email addresses. This is in light of what we have seen in recent times with animal activists collating farmers' personal information, including home addresses, which has been used for criminal activities including trespass and harassment."

Those opposite would say, "You can drive past the farm and you can see it there", and that is what they have to do. But the bill collates all the information and puts it in one place and then they can just hit a button. The Greens, who live in places other than our rural communities, and who trespass to do these things, are not driving past farms, seeing them and then saying, "I'm going to go and do that." Instead, they can go on to their computer, hit a button and see all the information, which has been put there for them. That is what farmers and people right across the State and regional New South Wales are concerned about. They are concerned about people being able to access this information on their computers and then targeting their property.

Mr Jamie Parker: Target what? Target the bans?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Balmain, the member for Shellharbour and the member for Murray will come to order. I congratulate the member for Cessnock, who is being very, very restrained.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: The peak industry bodies do not support it. All that carrying on by the member for Murray saying that members of Parliament do not have to disclose it is wrong. They have always had to disclose it. What a load of rubbish, and this bill is another step in that load of rubbish. It is interesting that none

of the member's colleagues are here to support her. Where are they? Only members of the Coalition parties, Labor and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party are in the Chamber.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Order! I point out to members that when a question is put during a member's speech, as the member for Myall Lakes has done, it is a rhetorical question and does not require a response.

Ms Anna Watson: Then he should not be asking it.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): It is clear to me it was a rhetorical question. I ask the member for Myall Lakes to ensure that the question is stated rhetorically.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: In relation to the point of privacy today, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] released an interim report entitled *Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry*, which states at page 391:

The ACCC's preliminary view is that publishing identifying details will not help solve market issues.

More specifically the report states that publication may have several drawbacks or unintended negative consequences. The possibility of creating unintended consequences has been highlighted by NSW Farmers, Irrigation Australia and users of Namoi water, which represent regional communities in the State—the true farmers who have concerns about the bill.

Three points are raised: first, that publication may breach privacy laws—we have spoken about that; secondly, publication may allow people to inappropriately approach individuals to pressure them to engage in trade; thirdly, publication may result in targeting of individuals even where they have not engaged in any illegal conduct. The fear of unintended consequences has been expressed in the interim report, today's edition of *The Land*, the ICAC report and right across regional communities about Aussie Farms 2.0. I ask the shooters party that if it wants to attempt to represent farmers, how can it in good faith support a bill with those negative consequences? That outlines the two key differences. I seek an extension of time.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): An extension of time has been requested. All those in favour say "Aye", against "No".

Mrs Helen Dalton: No. Against!

Mr Jamie Parker: But we are not going to call a division because they just want to waste time.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): It is just my observation, but the member for Murray is better off.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: Can we stop the clock while we are having the conversation?

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Has a division been called?

Mr Jamie Parker: No. No division has been called.

Ms Anna Watson: How long is the extension?

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: Can we stop the clock?

Mr Clayton Barr: The member for Myall Lakes has to gather his thoughts and he needs that time.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Jamie Parker: How long is the extension for?

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: The usual.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Has a division been called?

Mr Jamie Parker: No.

Ms Anna Watson: We said "no" three times.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): No. I grant the member for Myall Lakes an extension of time.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: Hang on. The person who called the division—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: I said, "No", and the member for Murray said, "No." That is two people.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): No. The member for Murray did not say, "No."

Mrs Melinda Pavey: She said, "No."

Ms Anna Watson: There was no division called.

Mrs Helen Dalton: I did not call a division.

Mr Clayton Barr: The ayes have it? The ayes have it. Let's move on.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The ayes have it. An extension of time for five minutes has been granted.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: So that outlines the two differences between the Government's bill and the shooters party bill. The bill does not include disclosures of trades. That is important because that is one of the things that can manipulate the market and it needs to be transparent. It does not adequately protect the privacy of our farmers who have committed no offence. I believe that the issues in this debate have been adequately covered by measures already set in train by this Government. Hard work has already been undertaken to increase the amount of information available to the public to allow it to be better informed about water and its availability, allocation and use.

Multiple online tools have already been published so that any member of the public can go on to the internet and find details on every water licence in New South Wales as well as on-water trading. The NSW Water Register is maintained by WaterNSW and provides free public access to information about the status of approvals and approval applications, the conditions of water access licences and approvals, available water determinations and water trading statistics. In addition, there is the Water Access Licence—or WAL—Register maintained by NSW Land Registry Services on behalf of the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, which contains more detailed information about every water access licence in New South Wales. The WAL register—I will pronounce it "wol" rather than "wel" as it reminds me of Wal Murray—aims to, firstly—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Is the member for Myall Lakes asking for a ruling on the pronunciation?

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: Would you?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I rule that it be pronounced "wol". I do not want to hear "wel" again.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: The WAL Register aims are: first, to make information on water access licences available to Water NSW and the public; secondly, to provide a secure system for water access licence information; thirdly, to reduce conveyancing costs; and, lastly, to help develop a market in water access licences. A free online trade dashboard has also been established to bring greater transparency to water market participants in relation to information on the dealings in the water market. All those tools are available online to any member of the public. Opposition to the bill does not mean that the Government is not in favour of having an open, honest and transparency licensing and regulatory system for water in New South Wales or that it does not support a wide range of initiatives to improve transparency in the water market—far from it.

The information contained in the existing registers and platforms, and the accessibility of them to the public, demonstrates that the Government is committed not only to transparency but also to implementing measures to maximise transparency. The Government has taken on board, and continues to take on board, recommendations from various reviews and inquiries, including today's ACCC report, to ensure that the people of New South Wales can trust that our most precious resource is being managed carefully. We are working hard to increase the amount of information available to the public to allow them to be even better informed about the availability, allocation and use of water within our State.

In 2017 New South Wales established the Natural Resources Access Regulator [NRAR] to be an independent, transparent and effective regulator with total carriage of the compliance and enforcement of water management legislation in New South Wales. The principal objectives of NRAR are to ensure effective, efficient, transparent and accountable compliance and enforcement measures for natural resources management legislation, and to maintain public confidence in the enforcement of natural resources management legislation. Since commencing operations on 30 April 2018, NRAR has undertaken more compliance work across New South Wales than ever before.

With over 110 frontline staff, NRAR has undertaken 932 individual property inspections, 741 total compliance actions and commenced 24 prosecutions. NRAR has boots on the ground. It has identified and listened to allegations of possible misuse of information and allocations. It has worked with the community to identify those rogue operators who have taken more than they were entitled to.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:28:00): On behalf of The Greens, I address the Water Management Amendment (Water Rights Transparency) Bill 2020 (No 2). I note that there has been heated debate in this House and I will try to focus on some worthwhile elements in the bill and point out some reasons that the member's bill makes a very important contribution to the efforts that all members realise must be made to improve openness, transparency and accountability. I will not get involved in the dispute between The Nationals and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party; I know there is a real battle about who controls what area. It is great for our democracy that political parties hold other parties to account. It keeps us on our toes. We should welcome parties of all stripes into the Parliament to ensure that we do the best we possibly can for all constituents.

I have no doubt the bill helped precipitate some of the action that we have seen from the Government on water. It highlights issues that are incredibly important not only for the people of rural and regional New South Wales but also for those in our cities. It is important to recognise that the legislation that is being proposed today has some very positive elements, as do the proposals put forward by the Minister in the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020. We need to recognise that this is critical in terms of taking the debate forward. Before I address any details, I highlight some key issues: the bill changes the pecuniary interests form for New South Wales MPs so they have to declare their water ownership; it changes the application process for getting a water licence so people cannot obscure their identity when they apply for the licence; and it changes the online NSW Water Register to allow people to search for the water holdings of people, companies, governments and departments.

I know that one of the fallback positions of many people in The Nationals is to say, "We're trying to get you something that the city gets." It is all about creating an opposition, "We're doing something because the greens are going to be doing X, Y and Z, so we're fighting The Greens." It is all about adversarial, confrontational language. I want to address some of the really disturbing claims that have been made about young family farmers, small farms and so on, which I think unduly frightens people. If it was such an important issue—like issues that animal rights activists have pursued in the past—people would simply raise the money, get brokers to get all the details and create their own database. It would be very simple to do. It might cost \$100,000 to pay brokers to get each one of those individual licences, create a database and have that database publicly available. Then people could search and use that, and it would be Aussie Farms 2.0.

That has not happened. Why? It has not happened because it is not of interest. People are not out there saying, "We're going to defend the rights of this thing called water. We're fighting about water." That is not a priority for people. The issue that has been taken up in the past is the issue of animal rights, and the Government claims to have solved that problem. The Government claims it has solved the problem of trespassing because it massively increased penalties. So on one hand the Government says, "We've solved the problem because the penalties have been so dramatically increased that no-one would dare do it"—and, as we know, that has not happened subsequent to the passing of that legislation. On the other hand, there is no campaign and no group that is saying, "We're going to rip up the rice. We're concerned about water. We want to pick up the water, hug it, take it away and look after it." There is no such campaign. There is no such group out there that is militantly arguing on that issue.

Of course we are all interested in the issue of sustainability. We want to have healthy rivers. Those things are incredibly important. My concern is that we are missing the true importance of this debate because, firstly, we have a debate between the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and The Nationals and, secondly, it is about scaring people. We do not need to scare people unnecessarily. There is no campaign out there that is going to be getting onto people's farms, picking up the water from their dams and taking it away to look after it. The issue that we want to deal with here is how to make sure that this marketplace can work in the most efficient way possible.

Transparency is absolutely critical. I am really surprised, in fact, that the Minister would uncritically refer to the claims that people would seek to evade the law if it was changed to say that those details need to be made publicly available. That is a remarkable thing for the Minister to raise uncritically: people coming to the Government and saying, "If you change the law to ensure this happens, we'll avoid and evade that law." Those groups are making a very significant claim, saying, "We will not agree with what the Parliament puts forward. We will not comply with the law. We'll avoid and evade that law."

That is a very concerning claim that people are making. We call on people in this place to respect the views of the Parliament. One would think the organisations that have been referred to would be the first ones supporting the law. They are happy to argue that the trespass law should be supported, but if there is a law that says they have to disclose their water holding interests, they say, "Oh, we don't want to support that law." They cannot have it both ways. We need to make sure in this debate that we recognise that the Parliament seeks to work through all those issues and come to a consensus on views that are important and that we can all support and take forward.

It is critical that we support the market working effectively. Transparency is absolutely critical. That is why, in particular, we support the provisions about MPs applying retrospectively. Let us go back and have a look

to see if they have been making the correct disclosures. That is particularly important. We want to make sure that we support small family farms, which we have heard the Minister refer to. How do we support them? We give them water that is not subject to gross speculation. We know that speculators have been distorting the market, and people have a concern about that. We have heard that if we introduce the member's bill it might lead to misinformation. There is already a lot of misinformation in the community because people cannot see what is happening, and we want to increase transparency.

I acknowledge the Minister is moving forward in some areas, which is to be recommended. I am not here to be a cheerleader for any particular side. I am here to ensure that we support farming communities, that water allocations are sufficient so that agriculture continues to be financially viable but, most importantly, that we protect healthy rivers and support the environment. I recognise that my time is coming to an end—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Just for the speech.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: All of our times are coming to an end. We are all heading in that direction.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: One day closer.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: Two minutes and 43 seconds closer. The view of The Greens has always been to ensure that we have a rigorous examination of our water systems. There have been a lot of problems including rorting, misallocations and over-allocations. We want to have the highest and deepest transparency in the system to ensure confidence in it. The bill goes some way towards that and on that basis we do not oppose it. Discussions about water should not be about scaring people that the rivers will run dry or that our farmers will go broke. There is an argument in the middle that we need to maintain to ensure that all members in this place focus on the key issues for the future of agriculture and our environment, especially the health of our rivers. The bill has merit in many areas. We acknowledge that if it were not for the bill and other campaigns run by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party there would be less action from the Government's side. We want vigorous, proactive debate that is based on science and facts, not scaremongering.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (11:39:23): I will address some remarks made by members opposite earlier. The member for Orange asserted that the member for Murray is a proud farmer, and I recognise that fact. He also said that there are no other farmers in the Chamber. I am a proud member of The Nationals and a proud farmer of macadamia nuts and blueberries. My family has grown bananas in our community since the 1950s. I correct the member for Orange. I heard nothing but an attack in his speech, which was completely devoid of facts. Watching it from my screen I felt quite misled and compelled to come to the Chamber to listen in case something had been lost in translation. I was astounded by some of the things he said and I note that none of his party colleagues are here to support him. I do not know how to talk about the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party sometimes. My first interaction with the party was with former upper House member Robert Brown when I was still in the private sector as a farmer. I found him to be quite the gentleman and—

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order: Let us get to the point.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): What is the member's point of order?

Mrs Helen Dalton: My point of order is relevance.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I believe there is validity in the point of order. The member has strayed from the leave of the bill in specifically stating that he would deal with the issues of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I ask him to deal with the bill.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: I raise the issue because we have two bills: one from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and a far better one by Minister Pavey. When I was in the private sector I had an opportunity to meet the Hon. Robert Brown—a fine fellow.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. The member is continuing to pursue this line.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I have asked the member for Coffs Harbour to continue. I understand it will be a minor explanation.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: I would have been done by now had we not had these interjections. Robert Brown, MLC, is a fine fellow.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Oh.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: Member for Murray, do you disagree that he is a fine fellow?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Coffs Harbour will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: Unfortunately, the shooters party got rid of the one good bloke that they had in their party and I just do not understand why they would have done that. The member for Balmain made some comments about the positive elements of the bill. The one positive element that I can see is that it is easier to organise a protest, and we all know The Greens love a protest. There is a concerted campaign against some types of farming in this area, including cotton. Cotton farming has been the subject of unscrupulous attacks, especially from members and residents of inner Sydney. Yesterday *The Sydney Morning Herald* published four or five letters from people who live within about five kilometres from here. They are experts on how to grow cotton in this country—absolute experts! But I digress.

The debate on water and water use in general has become very politicised. Often that has been done by those with the least amount of knowledge about water and who have absolutely no connection with the land. I think the member for Murray and the member for Barwon will probably agree that the issue has become politicised. A straw poll of some of my Sydney-based friends opened my eyes to how little people in the city understand about water. One of them thought it was somehow possible that 105 per cent of water in a river system can be used for irrigation; the rest of them had assumed that much more than 50 per cent of a river system like the Murray-Darling could be used. We know that that figure is between 14 per cent and 25 per cent, depending on the year and depending on the exact river, but most of the people I asked still assumed it was 100 per cent. So it is important to acknowledge, first-up, that there are people living in our metropolitan areas who have absolutely no idea how water is allocated to farms and farmers for growing food and fibre. The member for Murray has proposed this bill, which potentially exposes the names and addresses of mum-and-dad farmers across the State.

Ms Anna Watson: That is not true.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Shellharbour who says that it is not true. It is absolutely true, and it will be one of the only places where that can be done. You can look up a car's rego and see whether it is registered, but you will not know the name, address, phone number and email address of that person. It is an undeniable fact that the access register will make it easier to find the names of water licence holders. Members opposite may not have been personally affected by Aussie Farms the first time around. Friends of mine and friends of the Minister from the Minister's electorate and from my electorate have their homes and farms listed on the Aussie Farms website. One of them had photographs published that were taken from well inside their gate—not only past the biosecurity signs and past the front gate but also nearly inside their private property, near their residence.

I do not know why the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is supporting the bill. I take that back. Not all of its party members are supporting the bill. One member of the shooters party is in the Chamber. It takes far more to support farmers than simply putting "Farmers" in the name of your party. Farmers are continually living in fear of protesters. They are subjected to trespasses and useless trolls from the inner city, their families and homes are at risk and their animals and biosecurity are at risk. I note that the ABC has defended the position of The Greens with the following headline, "Greens back farm trespass, saying it can be 'reasonable'". The bill will make farm trespass easier; it will not protect the rights of farmers to have their privacy upheld. Any change to the public register must balance improving transparency with protecting the privacy of mum-and-dad farmers. An article from Olivia Calver on page 6 of today's *The Land*, entitled "Could Dalton's water bill bring activist risk?" states:

Peak industry bodies, including NSW Farmers and the NSW Irrigators' Council, say they do not support ... Murray MP Helen Dalton's proposed water register bill.

...

In a statement to *The Land* NSW Farmers said it was not opposed to water registers, but was concerned about farmers' personal information being made public. "We are opposed to certain personal information being accessible to the public, for example a landholder's personal phone number and email address," it said in the statement. "This is in light of what we've seen in recent times with animal activists collating farmers' personal information, including home addresses, which has been used for criminal activity, including trespass and harassment."

Interim chief executive officer of the NSW Irrigators' Council, Claire Miller, said they also didn't support total transparency that shows up every "mum and dad" farmer.

"We have a privacy concern, but we also have concerns about the data being used by unscrupulous brokers and others to monitor people's water use."

That is in *The Land* today. Griffith City Council submitted a letter to the inquiry conducted by Portfolio Committee No. 4 - Industry into the Constitution Amendment (Water Accountability and Transparency) Bill 2020, Water Management Amendment (Transparency of Water Rights) Bill 2020 and Water Management Amendment (Water Allocations—Drought Information) Bill 2020. First, the letter refers to the Minister's bill. It is generally supportive of that bill. The letter then refers to the member for Murray's bill. It states:

- Council does not support the proposed requirement that the declaration is to include Parliamentarian's spouse's water interests and trading. It is assumed that other interests of Parliamentarians required to be declared (i.e. real estate) do not capture the spouse's real estate. What interests should be dealt with on the same basis as other interests.
- Council does not support the retrospectivity of the Amendment which proposes that declarations are to include transactions backdated to the previous 5 years.

That is from Griffith City Council, which is in the electorate of Murray. Namoi Water made a submission to the inquiry also. [*Extension of time*]

Namoi Water's submission, which was received on 7 July 2020, states:

There is already a public register and it currently operates within the requirements of the Water Management Act 2000. The requirement for updating the register is a function of the dealing form and is the responsibility of Water NSW, the register is currently updated upon completion of trades.

The submission continues:

We would submit given the sensitivity of the information this authority is likely to be an appropriate authority for a Minister. We suggest the current sections remain relevant.

The submission from the Ricegrowers' Association of Australia [RGA] to the inquiry states:

The RGA does not support the development of a register of water holdings that discloses individual water users' personal details or water holdings. This information is private and confidential, and all things taken into account, the RGA believes that the disclosure of this information would be detrimental to the many small to medium irrigation businesses we represent.

The Lachlan Shire Council made a lengthy submission to the inquiry. Its submission states:

This bill requires not only Members of Parliament and spouses to declare interests in water licences, but also to require much greater visibility of information on the NSW Water Register, namely the names and addresses of all people who own water licences (described as the transitional provision in Schedule 1 (9) requiring people to provide information that is included on the water access licence application).

Information about water access licences is already publicly available via the—

the submission then sets out the URL for the NSW Water Register—

You can just put in the licence number and get the location, volume, conditions etc. You can also get water trading data, but you cannot get the name and address of the licence holder from this register. However, you can pay a broker about \$16/search and they will get you the licence holder name and address from the LPI.

There is some concern in the industry that if the name and address was so easily available you'd find people being targeted by anti-irrigation interests, social media etc, or even by brokers, particularly where brokers could look up and see how much water people had left on their licence for this year and could then use that to try and engineer higher prices if they can see some people need water.

In its summary, the Lachlan Shire Council's submission states: Amendments that require greater visibility of information on the NSW Water register is not necessary and could be used to the detriment of licence holders. At nine o'clock this morning the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] released the interim report into the Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry. I am sure the member for Cessnock has already read up to section 11.4.2 on page 392. He has been busy. The preliminary view of the ACCC is that publishing identifying details will not help solve market issues. Under the headline "Questions for stakeholders"—and I consider that the shooters party is potentially a stakeholder—the report reads:

Do you consider the identification of water right holder types (land-owner, brokers, agribusinesses, environmental water holders) in ownership, permanent and temporary trade registers ...

Mr Temporary Speaker, would you please call the Chamber to order? I can hear a lot of chatter.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Members will come to order. I note that I had been interrupted. It is a bit like tag-team wrestling. The member for Coffs Harbour will continue.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: The report continues:

How do you consider such a classification would be made—by account or by individual (for example, a farmer may own an ABA that is not connected to a use licence and then own another that is, in the first option that same farmer would have two classifications, in the second option he would be classified as a land-owner for both accounts).

Do you support disclosing some ownership information for those who own more than a certain amount of entitlement in a system? ... If yes, what proportion should this be and how will this change your approach to engaging in the water market? If no, why?

The ACCC has done a very thorough report. In conclusion, I do not support the bill. The effect of the bill will be more trespass and less transparency and we will see our farmers targeted. I do not believe it is right that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party— [*Time expired.*]

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:51:55): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Water Management Amendment (Water Rights Transparency) Bill 2020 (No 2).

Mrs Melinda Pavey: What an honour.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: It is an honour. Speaking on water issues in this Parliament and meeting water communities across the State is an honour that many parliamentarians probably do not appreciate. Water is without a doubt one of the most interesting, fascinating, intriguing and complex issues that our State faces. Without fail, every individual that I have met across the State is a wonderful person.

Debate interrupted.

Motions

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Debate resumed from 18 June 2020.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (11:52:25): I support the fantastic member for Shellharbour and her motion, which reads:

That this House:

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

Coercive control, as many people know but some do not, involves a pattern of behaviour rather than a one-off incident of domestic violence. It refers to a pattern of domination and intimidation and may include emotional or financial abuse, cyberstalking, sexual coercion, isolation and other forms of abuse but does not necessarily include explicit physical or sexual violence. For the record, it includes behaviours the aim of which is to isolate and disempower a woman, such as controlling her contact with family and friends, stopping her from obtaining employment or studying, deleting her contacts from her mobile phone, distributing revenge porn, and threatening to self-harm and/or harm her, the children or her pets should she wish to leave. These controlling behaviours collectively strip the other person of their autonomy and sense of self-worth.

The introduction of a coercive control offence in Australia has been examined by several domestic violence inquiries in the past decade. Mainland Australia has no laws that directly criminalise non-physical domestic abuse. In current New South Wales legislation most of the behaviour described as "coercive control" would not constitute an offence unless there is an apprehended violence order already in place. It is often assumed that women and children who are murdered by the woman's partner or former partner have usually experienced a history of domestic violence, particularly physical violence. However, we are learning that in many cases the first incidence of physical violence may actually be the occasion resulting in the woman's death.

Current research suggests that dangerous patterns of coercive controlling behaviour are the best predictor of the risk of domestic homicide and are better than assessing danger by physical assaults alone. The current situation in New South Wales places victims and their children in a perilous situation and presents a great challenge every minute of every day for police in their role of protecting women and children living with domestic and family violence. On 18 June Minister Mark Speakman, when speaking to this motion, said:

... I tabled the 2017-2019 report of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team, known as DVDRT. The report reviewed 53 closed cases of domestic violence homicides that occurred between July 2014 and June 2016 and made 34 recommendations. Recommendation 9 stated:

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

We need to bring in law to deal with coercive controlling behaviours. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (11:57:17): I thank the member for Shellharbour for moving this motion and I take the opportunity to contribute to debate on this complex but very important matter. Members on both sides of the House acknowledge that domestic and family violence is a serious public health and criminal justice matter. We recognise that everyone, from the Government to the community, has a role to play because violence and abuse can take many forms and all incidents of domestic violence are serious. The Department of

Communities and Justice is undertaking a review of the current legislation covering domestic and family violence and is taking evidence from other jurisdictions. Some of the reforms include the need to address and take into consideration the vastly available statistics and authoritative evidence about the incidents and forms of domestic violence experienced by victim-survivors. The Government also relies on the feedback from our frontline service providers about the lived experience and the services' responses to domestic violence.

The Government takes domestic and family violence very seriously, especially during the global pandemic, which presents enormous challenges in this area. During COVID-19 frontline services have seen more people seeking assistance and victims presenting with more complex needs. That is why we are responding to these ongoing challenges to help protect victim-survivors. Last month the New South Wales and Federal governments invested more than \$21 million to boost support to domestic violence frontline services and to assist victim-survivors to seek and access help across the State in these unprecedented times. The investment comprises \$12.8 million from the New South Wales Government and \$8.8 million from the Commonwealth Government. The overall package includes support for specialist domestic violence services; women's refuges; men's behaviour change programs; the State's 24/7 crisis counselling line, which is the NSW Domestic Violence Line; and an awareness campaign for social media so victims are aware of how to access support and so bystanders can report abuse too.

I know that in my local electorate there are some amazing organisations that are doing fabulous work in addressing domestic and family violence. Sutherland Shire Family Services provides help and assistance across both local government areas in my electorate through its Defence Family Worker Support program, which is obviously important with the Holsworthy Barracks in the electorate. This program provides a family support worker to build up a family's supportive and social networks as well as strengthen the relationship between the parent and child. Those family support workers assist by advocating on the behalf of their clients to government departments and other local services, as well as supporting them with issues that are unique to military life. I commend them for the wonderful work they do, which helps so many families across the local community.

Domestic violence frontline services remain at the ready to support victim-survivors and their families as the State continues to respond to COVID-19 and chart a path toward recovery. Every person has a right to live a life free from violence. Violence is always a choice and violence is never the victim's fault. Working collaboratively across all parts of our community is the way to successfully address domestic and family violence. Once again, I thank the member for Shellharbour for her motion on a crucial conversation to bring this terrible situation out from the shadows.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:01:17): I applaud the member for Shellharbour for moving this important motion. Over my 13 years in Parliament I have raised this matter in this House many times because it is important. I am pleased that the silence is finally ending and that the Government is taking the matter seriously, but much more needs to be done. We know that domestic abuse is found in all sectors of our community. Women in harbour-side mansions can be victims just as much as women in social housing. Women in our cities can be victims just as much as women in the bush. There are men who are victims of abusive behaviours and we must support them too, but let us not kid ourselves: Overwhelmingly, victims of domestic abuse are women.

It is for all of us to stand up against this scourge and stop the cycle of abusive behaviours by some men. The past few months have been very challenging for the community of the Wallsend electorate, as they have for communities everywhere. The nature of isolation has meant that people in abusive relationships are less able to avoid their abusers. Money has been tighter and people are cut off from their support networks. That is fertile ground for the controlling and coercive behaviours mentioned by the member for Shellharbour. Reports from the New South Wales Domestic Violence Death Review Team indicate that these behaviours are very common in domestic violence cases. The winner of the 2020 Stella Prize, Ms Jess Hill, who has been writing and researching about domestic abuse since 2014, investigated those issues in her book *See What You Made Me Do*. The book is a forensic examination of the causes and effects of domestic abuse and coercive control, and the extent of the problem in our society. She said:

Domestic abuse and coercive control steals people's language away from them ... It's just not good enough to me that there are millions of people who are alive right now who have lived through domestic abuse, who are not understood by the rest of Australia ... you're talking about 2 million women who've lived through intimate-partner violence, millions of grown-up children. So the numbers on that scale are enormous. *The Newcastle Herald* recently reported on new crime data showing spikes in sexual assaults across the Hunter. Outside Newcastle, sexual assault is up nearly 20 per cent. In Port Stephens, sexual assault is up almost 50 per cent. In the Upper Hunter shire, stalk/intimidate/harass is up by more than 70 per cent. As we suffer through the present recession things may get even worse. We cannot pretend that the incidence of domestic abuse will not increase when people will be out of work or stressed about money. They might drink more and existing tensions in relationships might build. In this vein, the Newcastle Domestic Violence Committee has called on the Government to help abuse survivors feel safer in the Local Court and with police. A very clever woman named Meighan Jenkins has made submissions about how we can help domestic violence victims. I would like to make sure that the Attorney General listens to her very good advice. I thank all workers in Lake Macquarie and the Newcastle Domestic Violence Committee for their hard work. I support and applaud the member for Shellharbour for raising this important and sensible motion.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (12:05:28): I thank the member for Shellharbour for this motion. I am pleased to take the opportunity to briefly contribute to this very important discussion on a complex and important matter. As my colleague the member for Holsworthy said, on both sides of the House we recognise that domestic and family violence is a serious public health and criminal justice matter. We recognise that everyone from government to community has a role to play in addressing this scourge. Domestic violence and abuse can take many forms and all forms of domestic violence are serious and intolerable. That is why the Department of Communities and Justice has undertaken a review of the current legislation covering domestic violence and family violence.

The department has taken evidence from other jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom to see how its legislative reforms may be applied in New South Wales. This includes the need to address and take into consideration the vastly available statistics and authoritative evidence about the incidence and forms of domestic violence experienced by victim-survivors. We rely on feedback from our frontline service providers about the lived experiences and service responses to domestic violence. Reports from frontline services are very important. Although the reports are often anecdotal, they are not subject to scrutiny in the same way as officially gathered statistical data. The voices of those with lived experience form part of the rich tapestry of feedback that we should always be ready to listen to.

The Government takes domestic and family violence very seriously, especially at a time where a global pandemic has presented enormous challenges. During COVID-19 frontline services have seen more people seeking assistance and victims are presenting with more complex needs. That is why we are already responding to these ongoing challenges to help protect victim-survivors. The New South Wales and Federal governments have recently invested more than \$21 million. As my colleague the member for Holsworthy mentioned earlier, I reiterate that more than \$21 million has been invested to boost support for domestic violence frontline services and to assist victim-survivors to access help across New South Wales in these unprecedented times. The investment comprises \$12.8 million from the New South Wales Government and \$8.8 million from the Commonwealth Government.

The overall package includes support for specialist frontline domestic violence services, women's refuges, men's behaviour change programs and the State's 24/7 crisis counselling line, which is the NSW Domestic Violence Line. It is also for an awareness campaign for social media so that victims know how to access support and bystanders can report abuse too. Domestic violence frontline services remain steady and ready to support victim-survivors and their families as the State continues to respond to COVID-19 and chart a path forward for recovery. Every person has the right to live a life free from violence. Violence is always a choice and violence is never the victim's fault. Working collaboratively across all parts of the community is the way to successfully address domestic violence and family violence. I thank the member for Shellharbour for her motion on a very critical conversation to bring this scourge out from the shadows.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:09:29): By leave: I thank the member for Shellharbour for this motion. It is an important issue that should be discussed regularly by this House until it is resolved. Coercive and controlling behaviour is pervasive in domestic violence cases throughout New South Wales. However, coercive control itself is not illegal in this State. The only Australian jurisdiction to criminalise this domestic abuse is Tasmania. Coercive control is now widely recognised as harmful and a sign that further abuse is likely to have occurred or will occur in future. Internationally the jurisdictions of England and Wales criminalised coercive control in 2015 and Scotland and the Republic of Ireland did so in 2019, while in the United States, California is currently debating the introduction of coercive control legislation.

Action on coercive control in Australia has stalled since 2004 when Tasmania introduced world-leading reforms, creating two new family violence offences. These reforms prohibited economic abuse as well as emotional abuse and intimidation. These were important early reforms although, unfortunately, despite the pervasiveness of this extremely damaging behaviour, few prosecutions have been brought. It is time that New South Wales used the lessons learnt from the introduction of coercive control laws in Tasmania, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. We can learn from these early missteps and ensure that New South Wales has the strongest anti-coercive control laws possible.

This is the real reform that the people of New South Wales have put us here to implement. We can improve the lives of so many individuals and families throughout New South Wales. We can reduce the scourge of domestic and family violence in our State. Between 60 per cent and 80 per cent of women who seek help for abuse have experienced coercive control. More alarmingly, 99 per cent of domestic violence-related homicides in New South Wales involve the use of coercive control. I repeat, 99 per cent. Abusers can be prosecuted for related acts of domestic violence but the controlling behaviour itself remains legal. There is no doubt that coercive controlling behaviour is abusive. It is damaging and destroys lives. Stopping a partner from seeing friends, checking in on them constantly throughout the day and not letting them live their own lives are forms of abuse.

The threats, humiliation, monitoring and isolation of coercive control behaviours are physically and emotionally damaging to the victim. They can cause severe depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. It is not just physical abuse but also the psychological effects of controlling behaviours that cause great harm in our communities. Introducing strong coercive control laws will help stop this abuse. Laws operating in the United Kingdom have seen perpetrators jailed and victims protected. It is not just the direct enforcement of these laws that is important. Prohibiting coercive control sends a strong message to the community about the unacceptability of this behaviour. It also sends a message to victims that their suffering is real, that we believe them and that the New South Wales community cares about them and wants this abuse stopped.

Coercive control legislation alone is not sufficient but we can learn from the implementation of laws in Scotland where they were accompanied by increased training for law enforcement and the judiciary. These laws are crucial to protect victims of domestic abuse, they set the tone for what is unacceptable behaviour and they give police the tools to stop this abuse. We have the opportunity in this Parliament and in our State to protect members of our communities from abuse. I encourage every member of this House and in the other place to support this legislation.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:13:53): By leave: I support this important motion proposed by my colleague the member for Shellharbour relating to the introduction of coercive control legislation in New South Wales. I wholeheartedly support this motion based on the overwhelming evidence on this subject and having consulted my constituents. They have shared their stories or sought help in the absence of legislation to address the injustice of their lived experience. While there is no single definition of domestic violence, the central element is an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner through fear by using violent and threatening behaviour.

In most cases, violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics to exercise power and control over women and their children, and it can be criminal and non-criminal. Domestic violence includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse. It can include a range of controlling behaviours, such as control of finances, isolation from family and friends, continued humiliation, threats against children and also threats of injury or death. At the current time, the NSW Police Force is able to prosecute only under the Crimes Act 1900 in relation to physical assault, stalking and harassment, or under Commonwealth legislation for the use of telecommunications devices to threaten or intimidate. There is no scope to address the coexisting elements of domestic violence and family violence, being the coercive and controlling behaviours of a domestic violent perpetrator.

In 2015 England and Wales were the first nations to outlaw coercive control. Ireland followed suit with similar legislation in May 2018, followed by Scotland. Professor Evan Stark of Rutgers University describes a wide range of controlling behaviours that one person may commit against another person, who is usually a woman and usually a current or former intimate partner. These behaviours collectively strip the other person of their autonomy and their sense of self-worth. The behaviours typically involve some or all of the following: physical violence, intimidation, degradation, isolation and regulation. In most cases, these behaviours have occurred in the context of a relationship that at some point involved actual or threatened physical violence.

While there have been some male victims in these cases, the overwhelming majority are women. In Australia an average of one woman each week is murdered by a current or former partner. From the age of 15 some one in four women have experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner. Intimate partner violence is a leading contributor to illness, disability and premature death for women aged 18 to 44. Indeed, figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show that hospitalisations due to domestic, family and sexual violence are also increasing.

Unfortunately, no electorate in New South Wales is exempt from the horrors of domestic violence, and my own community in the Eastern Suburbs is no exception. Domestic violence liaison officers at both Waverley and Randwick advise me that it is rare to have a shift without at least one presentation or call-out in relation to domestic violence. Indeed, it is often more than one instance. Aside from physical threats, police report psychological components of abuse that coercive control legislation would provide greater scope to address. Recently one domestic violence counselling service in the Eastern Suburbs reported a 110 per cent increase in demand for services.

Clients reported incidents of coercive control including not being permitted access to the phone, threats of harm or threats to have them deported without a spousal visa. According to this particular support service, in current New South Wales legislation most of the behaviour described as coercive control would not constitute an offence unless there was an apprehended violence order already in place. It is often assumed that women and children murdered by the woman's partner or former partner have usually experienced a history of physical violence. However, with the current narrative around domestic violence, in many cases the first incidence of physical violence has actually been the occasion resulting in a woman's death. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:18:14): By leave: On behalf of The Greens, I confirm our support of this motion on domestic violence prevention and thank the member for Shellharbour for bringing this incredibly important issue to this place. Domestic violence and abuse can take many forms. As the member for Shellharbour has already mentioned, coercive controlling behaviour on the part of the abuser is a key factor in almost every case of domestic violence reported in New South Wales. In the most serious domestic violence cases, coercive controlling behaviour was more often than not a prevalent aspect of the relationship long before the situation escalated to unthinkable violence. Coercive and controlling behaviour is a precursor to almost every domestic homicide in New South Wales and around the world. Thanks to the incredible work of domestic violence advocacy groups, jurisdictions all over the world are finally recognising the insidious nature of this behaviour and introducing laws to criminalise it.

I am very pleased to say that my Greens colleague in the other place Ms Abigail Boyd has introduced a bill to criminalise coercive control in New South Wales. Controlling behaviour is domestic abuse and it is time that our laws recognised that. Domestic violence is far too prevalent in our society and has far-reaching consequences. The statistics are stark. While we all quote statistics in this place, we have to remember that behind all of the statistics are real people who will never be the same again because of this abuse. We are talking about a situation where victims of domestic abuse accounts for nearly 60 per cent of all women hospitalised for assault. Between 70 per cent and 90 per cent of Indigenous women in prison have been victims of domestic violence. More than 100,000 people who sought help from homelessness services in 2015 and 2016 said that domestic violence was a factor in their homelessness and 64 per cent of those were women and children.

They are stark figures. Every time I read those figures in this place I cannot help but think about the outrage and action that happened around the implementation of the lockout laws in Sydney and the punch that caused the death of one individual. Parliament was recalled and punitive measures were imposed on an entire community as a result of that one incident. It is crucial to hear these statistics and look at the complete failure of successive governments to address the issue of domestic violence in this State. It is an absolute outrage and demonstrates the strength and power of male domination and the patriarchy to protect male violence against women that continues in this Chamber and across society. Until we do something about that, we must all take responsibility with shame and disgust for not taking action.

Coercive control is sometimes known as intimate terrorism. That is exactly what it is. Investigative journalist and author Jess Hill describes coercive control in her groundbreaking book *See What You Made Me Do* as "a strategic campaign of abuse held together by fear". Currently in New South Wales being physically violent with your partner is illegal but controlling your partner through fear of violence is not. Telling your partner who they can or cannot talk to, isolating them from support networks, denying them access to financial independence, monitoring calls or reading texts are not currently illegal activities. It is time for that to change. That is why The Greens have introduced this bill. I note that the Attorney General has attempted to amend the motion. Ms Abigail Boyd, my colleague in the other place, has introduced a bill. I urge all members to recognise the importance of criminalising coercive control and to support that bill when it comes to a vote in the other place.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:22:24): By leave: I am pleased to speak to the motion brought by the member for Shellharbour and Opposition Whip. I take this opportunity to update the House on the significant investment the Government is making towards reducing domestic and family violence reoffending across New South Wales. I acknowledge the contributions made by members on both sides of the Chamber—members for the electorates of Holsworthy, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Prospect, Coogee and Newtown—and the respectful way in which debate has taken place. The Government supports a significant and innovative program of work to impact rates of domestic violence in our community. This is supported by the Premier's Priority to reduce the number of domestic violence reoffenders by 25 per cent by 2023. This work is intended to improve outcomes for victims and the community by delivering large-scale, evidence-based programs and interventions to ensure that the risk of domestic violence offenders reoffending is addressed systematically.

Elements of this work include programs delivered by Community Corrections, Corrective Services NSW and the Department of Communities and Justice to drive behaviour change amongst serious offenders, to intervene earlier following an offence or incident and to actively monitor and police high-risk offenders to reduce the incidence of offending behaviour. Those roles are being played out on the Central Coast. The EQUIPS suite of programs is designed to be delivered to offenders assessed as medium-to-high risk and address factors related to recidivism. They are adapted to offenders who are perpetrators of intimate partner violence. The New South Wales Government has supported the extension of community-based Men's Behaviour Change Programs, to support their delivery to locations not previously serviced across the State. I am further advised that the Department of Communities and Justice is trialling ENGAGE, an early intervention program for adults who are charged with a domestic violence offence, are respondents to an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] or who have been referred by New South Wales Government agencies or non-government organisations where domestic violence is an issue.

The Government funds a range of statewide programs that focus specifically on perpetrator interventions, including Men's Behaviour Change Programs, which are group-based programs for perpetrators to recognise their violent behaviour and develop strategies to stop using violence; Automatic Referral Pathway, in which adult men charged with a domestic violence offence or issued with an ADVO in New South Wales are automatically referred to a telephone and counselling service to facilitate their access to a range of support services and interventions; and Men's Telephone Counselling and Referral Service, a 24/7 telephone and online counselling service for men with emotional health and relationship concerns.

In conclusion, I note that the Attorney General has amended the original motion of the member for Shellharbour, and I support those amendments. The Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence has asked his department to carefully examine the extent to which our existing laws respond to the range of non-physical forms of domestic and family violence to protect victims from coercive and controlling behaviours in the context of domestic violence. I acknowledge the work of the Department of Communities and Justice on this, and recognise the complexities of introducing a reform of this nature. The New South Wales Government is committed to addressing, in the best possible way, the devastating behaviour that terrorises victims of domestic violence. I appreciate the opportunity afforded to me to contribute to this debate.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:26:47): In reply: I thank all members who spoke on this motion, including the member for Cronulla, the shadow Minister and member for Blue Mountains, the member for Holsworthy, the member for Wallsend, the member for Hawkesbury, the member for Prospect, the member for Coogee, the member for Newtown and the member for Terrigal. This is not as simple as amending a law; we need to amend the way society thinks and acts on these types of controlling behaviours. The creation and implementation of a law provides a notice to the community that this society condemns a particular thing—in this case coercive control. It enables the justice system and police to intervene early by criminalising abusive behaviours and demonstrates our strongest denunciation of them. It legitimises victims' perceptions that what they are experiencing is abuse. It also gives the broader community a language and shared understanding, which can lead to long-term changes in attitudes. Because of that, lives will be saved.

In Australian jurisdictions, other than Tasmania, the types of behaviours we might call coercive control are recognised as forms of family violence. Generally, those behaviours can be prosecuted only as a breach of an intervention order, otherwise known as a domestic or apprehended violence order. This is an issue because many women who need protection do not have intervention orders and, even when they do, police do not always take action when those orders are breached. This sends the wrong message to victims that those behaviours are wrong only if an apprehended violence order is in place. We, therefore, need a law in New South Wales that can intervene in a situation of coercive control and serve as a breach of a law on its own and not just after an apprehended violence order is in place, because often that is too late. There are some concerns. Most importantly, the criminal justice system already struggles to respond to physical violence. Women are also often misidentified as perpetrators—that they are making things up, especially in intervention order proceedings.

Why should it be any better using the more complex concept of coercive control? The answer, which is supported by conversations with police and service providers in the UK, is that with proper resources and training, criminalising coercive control becomes more than adding another crime to the thousands already on the statute books; it fundamentally shifts the way that police, prosecutors and judges see domestic abuse. They no longer see it as a series of separate events but more like the way victims experience it: cumulatively and comprehensively.

We need to start in schools. Teachers need to be shown how to help children to recognise coercive and controlling behaviour in others. They need to understand that these behaviours are wrong from a very young age. We need a generationally learned transmission from these behaviours. The Illawarra Women's Health Centre is currently running a mother-and-son program that talks about coercive control and violence against women. This problem needs to be identified and called out early for the benefit of potential perpetrators, victims and their families. The Scottish legislation is forward thinking and its adoption in New South Wales should receive bipartisan support. To understand why, we only have to remember what Hannah Clarke and her three children went through. I ask members to support the motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Shellharbour has moved a motion, to which the member for Cronulla has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes37
Majority.....9

AYES

Anderson, K
Butler, R
Cooke, S (teller)
Dalton, H
Donato, P
Griffin, J
Hazzard, B
Kean, M
Marshall, A
Perrottet, D
Provest, G
Sidgreaves, P
Smith, N
Taylor, M
Upton, G
Wilson, F

Ayres, S
Conolly, K
Coure, M
Davies, T
Elliott, D
Gulaptis, C
Henskens, A
Lee, G
O'Dea, J
Petinos, E
Roberts, A
Sidoti, J
Speakman, M
Toole, P
Ward, G

Bromhead, S
Constance, A
Crouch, A (teller)
Dominello, V
Gibbons, M
Hancock, S
Johnsen, M
Lindsay, W
Pavey, M
Preston, R
Saunders, D
Singh, G
Stokes, R
Tuckerman, W
Williams, L

NOES

Aitchison, J
Barr, C
Chanthivong, A
Dib, J
Greenwich, A
Haylen, J
Kamper, S
McDermott, H
Mehan, D (teller)
O'Neill, M
Piper, G
Voltz, L
Watson, A (teller)

Atalla, E
Car, P
Crakanthorp, T
Doyle, T
Harris, D
Hoenig, R
Leong, J
McGirr, J
Mihailuk, T
Park, R
Scully, P
Warren, G

Bali, S
Catley, Y
Daley, M
Finn, J
Harrison, J
Hornery, S
Lynch, P
McKay, J
Minns, C
Parker, J
Tesch, L
Washington, K

PAIRS

Barilaro, J
Berejiklian, G
Clancy, J
Williams, R

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

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: LEAVE NOT GRANTED**

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:40:25): I seek leave to move a suspension of standing and sessional orders to allow for debate on notice of motion No. 1246 standing in my name to be considered forthwith. There is no other mechanism in this Parliament for me to raise my concerns. As indicated by the Speaker of this House, the floor of the House is the only avenue available to me. It is for that reason that my motion should be considered.

Leave not granted.

Ms Trish Doyle: Mr Temporary Speaker, it is in this place—

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: The member has no right to address you on this issue—no right whatsoever. Either you make members comply with the rules or not. This is not an appropriate way to deal with the standing orders in this place. The question was to seek leave; leave has been refused and that is it.

Ms Trish Doyle: To the point of order: There is no other mechanism for me. I would like to speak to my motion.

Mr Brad Hazzard: The member can deal with it in the normal way, as everybody else does.

Ms Trish Doyle: There is no other way.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The House has made its decision. Thank you.

Ms Trish Doyle: I feel that this House is shutting down an important statement that I seek to make.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Further to the point of order: There is no platform for this now. There are standing orders that should be complied with. I am not saying I have particular views one way or the other on the member's motion, but she cannot actually deal with it in this way. It is not appropriate.

Ms Trish Doyle: Further to the point of order: I am very concerned that I am being denied leave to raise a really important issue.

Mr Brad Hazzard: If you have something to say—

Mr Ryan Park: Brad, you know better than anybody that this should be allowed.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Leave was not granted to the member for Blue Mountains.

Ms Trish Doyle: So you are effectively shutting me down. I have no other mechanism.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Further to the point of order: The member is abusing the standing orders. If the member wants to deal with this matter, there are appropriate ways within this House, but this is not it.

Ms Trish Doyle: Further to the point of order: There is no other way for me to make a statement.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): You can do it through a substantive motion.

Ms Trish Doyle: The Speaker has referred me to the processes of Parliament and I now seek leave, on the Speaker's advice, to make a statement. There are no other mechanisms for me to do so.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Leave has been refused by the House.

Ms Trish Doyle: Can you advise me on the appropriate way then?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I believe the appropriate way is by substantive motion.

Ms Trish Doyle: But I am seeking to move a suspension of the standing and sessional orders to address my motion. I would like to move a substantive motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The House has voted and the answer is no.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: This is not a frivolous political point. The health Minister, whom we all respect, has been in this place longer than any member. He knows very well that if the tables were turned, this issue would have been addressed on the floor of the Chamber.

Mr Brad Hazzard: To the point of order: There is no provision for this. The House has made a decision and you should not be entertaining this.

Mr Ryan Park: Further to the point of order: What we are asking for is an appropriate forum to allow the member for Blue Mountains to have a serious issue addressed by this Parliament. What you are saying today in this ruling is that you will not allow a member to have a serious issue addressed in the way that the Speaker of the House has advised us is the forum and mechanism through which to do it.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Exactly right, and it was rejected.

Mr Ryan Park: That is a disgrace.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): It was rejected by the House.

Motions

BUSHFIRES AND WILDLIFE

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 1090 by deleting paragraphs (2) and (3) and inserting instead:

- (2) Notes remaining unburnt habitat across New South Wales is of critical importance to enable native animal populations to recover.

- (3) Notes the 42 recommendations of the recent parliamentary inquiry into koalas and calls on the Government to take them very seriously.

Leave granted.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:47:51): Accordingly, I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes bushfires across New South Wales have burned more than 5 million hectares of land, destroying landscapes and killing over a billion native animals.
- (2) Notes remaining unburnt habitat across New South Wales is of critical importance to enable native animal populations to recover.
- (3) Notes the 42 recommendations from the recent parliamentary inquiry into koalas and calls on the Government to take them very seriously.

Koalas have been in Australia for over 20 million years and in that time they have taken an important place in Australian Aboriginal culture and modern-day Australian culture. We have seen koalas represented in dance, in rock art and in shared stories in Indigenous culture. Today koalas play an important part in our everyday lives. They are one of the iconic animals that represent our country. After European colonisation in 1788 no explorer reported even seeing a koala in the wild until Strzelecki crossed south Gippsland in 1840, over 50 years later. Since then we have done a good job of not caring for koala populations but doing the opposite.

Even prior to the devastating 2019-20 bushfires it was clear that koalas in New South Wales, which already were a threatened species, were in significant trouble. The official Government estimate of 36,000 koalas in the NSW Koala Strategy is widely understood to be outdated and unreliable. Then, of course, came the devastating fires in which at least 5,000 koalas—potentially many more—were lost. The report from the upper House inquiry into koala populations and their habitats found that koalas could be extinct in New South Wales by 2050, which is just 30 years away, unless urgent action is taken. I acknowledge the work of The Greens MLC, Cate Faehrmann, who did a remarkable job as Chair of the committee. She expressed a frustration that despite hearing from government witnesses that current policies and laws are adequate to protect koalas and their habitats, hearings held by the committee across New South Wales made it apparent that they are not.

The most serious threat to koala populations is fragmentation and loss of habitat. We have cleared so much land for agriculture, development, mining and forestry that koalas no longer have a fair chance to survive in the wild. We have taken so much water out of our ecosystems and ignored climate change for so long that the remaining forests are dry and less inhabitable. We have deteriorated the quality of their food, and compounded the severity of threats like drought and bushfires. This is an issue for people in not just rural and regional New South Wales.

In April 2013 I held a well-attended public meeting to defend and support koalas, and backed a campaign for koala protection. We heard from a range of experts such as Ricardo Lonza from Help Save the Wildlife and Bushlands in Campbelltown, who were fighting to save koalas in greater metropolitan Sydney. The committee heard stories from wildlife carers about the high number of malnourished and dehydrated koalas that were being brought into care. The committee received images of koalas no longer able to get adequate hydration from the leaves they eat and descending from trees to drink from garden hoses and water bowls.

Last season's bushfires had a devastating impact on koala populations. The bushfires burnt more than five million hectares of land, destroying landscapes and killing over one billion native animals. That event had a transformational impact on our koalas and it requires a transformational response. The only way our children's grandchildren will see a koala outside of a zoo is for the Government to respond to the urgent need to protect habitat. The motion calls specifically for significant commitments. The Greens believe it is important for the Government to act on the recommendations of the inquiry.

The Office of Environment and Heritage [OEH] has described the area around Coffs Harbour, in particular, as one containing koala habitat of national significance. The Greens strongly support The Great Koala National Park, which would see 175,000 hectares of publicly owned State forests added to existing protected areas to form a 315-hectare reserve in the Coffs Harbour hinterland. The OEH has also identified areas of regional koala significance, also known as koala hubs. Analysis of that data shows that The Great Koala National Park contained 44 per cent of all the hubs in State forests in New South Wales, including two nationally recognised koala metapopulations estimated to contain almost 20 per cent—about 4,500—of the remaining wild koalas in New South Wales.

That makes The Great Koala National Park the most important area of public land in New South Wales for koalas. That is why the inquiry recommended that a great national park be investigated, and that is why the motion calls on the Government to adopt those provisions. The Greens believe the Government should protect the land

to have the best chance of ensuring that koalas have a secure future in New South Wales. This is the time to act while we can still save them. As climate changes and inland New South Wales becomes too hot, koala feed trees and populations will move east. Protecting habitat on the eastern seaboard is a critical strategy to help koalas cope with climate change. The Great Koala National Park will protect coastal forests and restore the link between coastal forests and the escarpment to allow koalas to move in response to extreme weather events and climate change.

I acknowledge the work of many people who have developed the proposal for The Great Koala National Park and the development of this motion, which sets out clearly why these things should happen. I acknowledge the work that has gone into developing The Great Koala National Park proposal and the lifesaving work of every wildlife carer year around, but especially following the devastating bushfires this year. I acknowledge the National Parks Association NSW; Kevin Evans and Ashley Love; Linda Sparrow and Bangalow Koalas; wildlife carer Maria Matthes; and members of Northern Rivers Wildlife Hospital and the National Conservation Council. I also acknowledge the Mayor of Bellingen Shire Council, Dominic King, from The Greens.

In this Parliament there should be collaboration between the Government, Opposition, The Greens, The Nationals and the Australian Labor Party to ensure that we press the issues that have been brought to our attention in such an alarming way. The only species of koalas left has been pushed to the brink. We have created this problem and we can fix it. We believe The Great Koala National Park is well placed and the motion is an important part of us driving towards that objective. I encourage the Government to listen to the community that supports this approach for a national park and to listen to all those who have fought hard to ensure that we can protect this species, which is a critical part of Australia, into our future forever.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I ask the member for Kogarah to take note of Standing Order 54.

Mr Chris Minns: Which one is that?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Members must be seated while in the Chamber, unless moving in or out of or around the Chamber.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:54:35): I thank the member for Balmain for bringing this motion to the House and for foreshadowing very sensible amendments to it. The Government agrees with the sentiment of the member for Balmain that the 2019-20 bushfire season was devastating in its impact on life and property. That includes the impact on our natural environment, which will take many years to recover. At the outset, I thank all those men and women who put themselves in danger to protect our communities and our environment. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude. In terms of the impact on the environment, the Government released the Wildlife and Conservation Bushfire Recovery Immediate Response plan, which outlines some of the areas affected, including 35 per cent of rainforest areas, 24 per cent of koala habitat in eastern New South Wales, 37 per cent of the national parks estate, 54 per cent of the Gondwana Rainforests world heritage area and 40 per cent of State forests.

Experts commissioned by the World Wildlife Fund have estimated that three billion native animals—mammals, reptiles, birds and frogs—were either killed or displaced by the fires across Australia. That number is hard to grapple with, but it highlights the extent to which the bushfire season has taken a dramatic toll. The impact on koalas became symbolic, with images of injured animals broadcast across the world. The Government's immediate response plan put into action the immediate steps required to support our wildlife, such as supplementary food drops, watering stations and monitoring. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service commenced the largest feral pest control program to stop feral animals from further impacting native animals that have survived. But we acknowledge there is much more to do.

Turning to point 3 of the original motion brought by the member for Balmain, there is no doubt that the biggest threat to koalas in New South Wales is the loss, modification and fragmentation of habitat. However, that is not the only threat. Disease, particularly chlamydia; vehicle strike; attack by roaming or domestic dogs; heat stress through drought and heat waves; and climate change are all having significant impacts on the koala population. A broader suite of threats needs to be tackled and the Government intends to do exactly that. It has already committed to supporting koalas through the NSW Koala Strategy, which was released in 2018. The Government has invested \$44.7 million in the strategy—\$20 million for land and \$24.7 million for action—to protect and conserve koalas, with a core pillar to koala habitat conservation.

It has already purchased more than 3,600 hectares containing priority koala habitat for permanent protection as national parks, which includes land in the Southern Highlands and a property near Pottsville in the Tweed local government area. The Government has set aside 20,000 hectares of State forest for new koala reserves under the Forestry Act, and 4,000 hectares has been transferred to the national parks estate. It has protected

254 hectares of koala habitat on private land with new conservation agreements, and released the Koala Habitat Information Base, which is an important resource that will support government agencies, local councils, private landowners and the community to make informed decisions about koala conservation. Sixty-eight on-ground actions are underway or have been delivered to the community to address local threats to koalas. Work is also ongoing in genomic research, engagement with Aboriginal community organisations, urban planning, road fencing and support for koala hospitals. It is a comprehensive plan to solve a complex problem.

In addition, recently the outstanding Minister for Energy and Environment set a goal of doubling our koala population by 2050, which will be informed by a group of experts assembled by the Chief Scientist & Engineer to ensure that we are making use of the best available science and evidence. It acknowledges that we must, and can, do more, but it cannot be limited to just actions on the public estate or stopping logging. In fact, all remaining unburnt habitat is important. For forestry operations, the New South Wales Environment Protection Authority has issued additional protections that must apply to burnt forest to minimise further impacts on recovering wildlife, habitat and ecosystems. This includes doubling the amount of protections that apply for koalas and the retention of all unburnt habitat refuges for koalas at these sites.

The EPA has also increased its regulatory oversight of forestry operations and is taking swift and strong action where issues or environmental impacts have been detected, including the issuing of stop work orders to the Forestry Corporation of NSW where alleged non-compliances have been identified. The EPA is actively investigating such issues and is working with the Forestry Corporation to not only ensure that these issues are rectified but also that steps are taken to prevent them happening in the future. A lot of work is underway that goes beyond action on State forests. The evidence shows that we need a comprehensive approach if we are to give koalas the best chance of survival. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:00:31): I congratulate the member for Balmain on bringing the motion and its amendments. No-one will ever forget the horror of the Black Summer bushfires. From the very top to the very bottom of New South Wales homes were destroyed, communities were smashed and, tragically, people lost their lives. The enormity of the toll on people's lives, homes and communities is incalculable. The bushfires also took a toll on our forests, our ecosystems and our biodiversity from the Queensland border to the Victorian border. The extent and intensity of the fires had never been seen before. We lost five million hectares. The World Wildlife Fund's most recent interim report estimates that three billion animals perished in the bushfires in what is now being described as the worst wildlife disaster in modern history. Now we all have a responsibility to address those weighty numbers and to recover from that horrific description.

Since the bushfires I have visited many affected areas along the north and south coasts of New South Wales. I have seen the charred trees surrounding entire towns. They stand as a constant reminder to everyone in those communities of what they have lost. But the extent and intensity of the fires hit home to me most when I had the opportunity to go over the top of Kosciuszko National Park post the bushfires. The burnt remains and scorched ground as far as the eye could see to the horizon is something that I will never ever forget. It is an ecological disaster on a scale we have never seen before and I hope against hope that we never see it again. Now, post bushfires, we have the hard road to recovery.

I am pleased the motion has been amended to reflect the importance of a statewide approach to recovery because the bushfires did not know any boundaries. They did not know what type of land they were burning and they left very few communities untouched. By removing the limitation of the original motion we are not just talking about public native forests but all land, regardless of who owns it. Koalas and other wildlife do not know or care who owns the land or where their tree is—whether it is in a national park or a State forest, on Crown land or private land. For effective recovery we need a whole-of-government approach. All agencies responsible for different landholdings have a role to play in stopping koalas from becoming extinct.

The amendments to this motion also inform the House of the latest information and recommendations from the parliamentary inquiry about koalas. We have an enormous challenge ahead of us. The Government must adopt and implement the 42 recommendations of the inquiry urgently; otherwise, koalas in the wild will be extinct by 2050. They are the clear and pressing recommendations of the parliamentary inquiry, and communities like mine in Port Stephens and other communities across New South Wales demand more from this Government to ensure that koalas are seen in the wild and not just in zoos in the future.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (13:04:54): We know that bushfires take a terrible toll on lives and properties, but they also impact our precious ecosystems and biodiversity. That is why we are delivering extensive bushfire recovery actions. I will focus on the impact that bushfires have had on our natural environment and on the importance of our national parks system to the recovery effort. I highlight some of the impacts that this past bushfire season has had on our natural assets. Some scientists estimate that over three billion native animals perished or were displaced across Australia. The total area affected across New South Wales was 5.5 million hectares, 2.7 million hectares of which was in the national parks system. Approximately 80 per cent of the Greater

Blue Mountains World Heritage Area was affected by fire, and early assessments show that the fires impacted around 54 per cent of the Gondwana Rainforests World Heritage Area.

The scale of this bushfire season is unprecedented. That is why the New South Wales Government—and particularly our National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS]—is focused on recovery. The Government has released a key document entitled *Wildlife and Conservation Recovery Immediate Response*, which sets out the immediate actions being undertaken to protect wildlife, including koalas, and to support natural recovery. In the immediate aftermath of the bushfires, watering stations were deployed and supplementary food drops were conducted to support remaining populations of species including koalas, brush-tailed rock wallabies, mountain possums and mountain pygmy possums. Over the next 12 months the National Parks and Wildlife Service will deliver extensive control programs to protect native animals and plants from feral animals and weeds. This will be the largest feral animal control program in NPWS history.

The first 570 hours of post-fire aerial shooting have already removed 7,753 pest animals. The NPWS is also monitoring natural recovery. Emergency interventions are ceasing where monitoring shows they are no longer required. I am delighted to inform the House that early assessments indicate that some areas are already starting to regenerate naturally, particularly in northern New South Wales. One such beautiful area is the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. The New South Wales Government remains firmly committed to the long-term protection of habitat in our conservation system. Even prior to the bushfires, Minister Kean—a great Minister—announced his intention to reserve 200,000 hectares in the national parks system within two years. More than 65,000 hectares have been added to the estate since that time.

The Government has also purchased key properties such as Radiata Plateau and Tugalong Station, which support a diversity of fauna habitat including threatened species and koalas. This Government is standing by its firm commitment to protect threatened species in New South Wales, which is why it is working so hard to grow the national park estate with these strategic acquisitions. The Minister for Energy and Environment came to my electorate to announce another 89 hectares. A very important issue is that approximately 60 per cent of the North Coast koalas are infected with chlamydia. We have partnered with Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and the head veterinarian, Michael Payne, to conduct further research into creating a vaccine. We are not creating a tourism area but a research station that is conducting research into chlamydia in koalas.

You might ask, Mr Temporary Speaker, why koalas are susceptible to chlamydia. It is because they have the retrograde AIDS virus and it has spread quickly through the koala species because during the breeding season it is quite common for a koala to have four or five sexual partners in 24 hours. That is why koalas sleep for approximately 22 hours a day. Chlamydia is a real threat. Habitat is very important but so is the control of chlamydia. According to the experts, loss of habitat is an important issue but they believe chlamydia is one of the greatest threats to koalas. We need to address it and we need to apply more resources towards it. I commend the motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the member for Tweed and commend him for his great knowledge of the sexual activities of koalas.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:09:00): I strongly support the motion and commend the member for Balmain for bringing it before the House. Protecting biodiversity is fundamental to our future. The bushfires had a devastating impact on the State's natural environment. Over five million hectares of land burned, including two million hectares, or 41 per cent, of the national park estate and 875,000 hectares, or 40 per cent, of State forests. Recently the estimate of animals killed has increased to nearly three billion. That includes at least 5,000 koalas. Hundreds of billions of insects also perished. It is likely that critically endangered species have become extinct and other species added to the endangered list.

The Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 7 - Planning and Environment conducted an inquiry into koala populations and habitat in New South Wales. The committee found that koalas could become extinct in New South Wales before 2050. That gives us very little time to intervene and save them. Our now reduced and fragmented landscape is making wildlife recovery difficult. The only hope is to protect remaining habitat so that koalas and other animals displaced by the fires have access to natural refuges. Critical to that is the network of State forests that escaped the bushfire carnage. State forests can provide natural habitat to enable wildlife populations to regenerate. But alarmingly the State has embarked on a business-as-usual approach to deforestation, with logging operations commenced or planned in rare, unburnt native State forests that provide habitat for threatened species impacted by the fires.

Logging has commenced in State forests that provide habitat to the vast majority of the 113 species identified by the Federal Government as needing urgent action following the bushfires. Those logging operations are based on ecological assessments conducted before the recent bushfire season, without any consideration of the dramatic landscape changes or species losses that occurred last summer. That is a travesty. All pre-fire risk

assessments are now irrelevant. It is grossly negligent to log native forests based on such outdated evidence. My Independent colleague the member for Lake Macquarie and I have joined with environment groups in calling for a moratorium on native forest logging while an independent, comprehensive scientific assessment across the entire network of native forests, threatened species and ecological communities is conducted.

During that process forestry workers could transition into bushfire-recovery and fire-mitigation roles that would provide ongoing and skilled employment while protecting regional communities from future fires. Experts continue to stress that the only way to save the koala from extinction in New South Wales is to protect the areas where they live. The Great Koala National Park proposal includes core koala hubs that provide the best opportunity to ensure the future of the koala. If we do not protect native forest refuges to ensure the recovery of the natural environment, we will lose our biodiversity forever. I commend the motion to the House.

Debate interrupted.

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

Announcements

MEMBER FOR RYDE

MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS

The SPEAKER: I wish the Minister for Customer Service and member for Ryde a happy birthday. I also wish the member for East Hills a happy birthday for tomorrow. The member for East Hills is not present, but I am sure she can feel the warmth from the Chamber in her office.

THE MCKINNON INSTITUTE FOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge the 20 members of this place and the other place who are taking part in The McKinnon Institute for Political Leadership online course, which started last week and will continue tomorrow. Members can still join the cohort by contacting my office, if they wish. With six online sessions still to come, the line-up of expert speakers is worth hearing from. Thank you to those who gave great feedback after the first session with the Hon. Gerry Brownlee from New Zealand, who shared his experience of responding to the Christchurch earthquakes when he was a Minister at that time. The speakers tomorrow will be John Brogden and a sports psychologist. They are all very high-quality speakers.

COVID-19 AND PARLIAMENT HOUSE VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:17:46): I remind members that while they are welcome to escort visitors into the precinct for essential meetings, under Parliament's current COVID-19 restrictions any person they escort into the Parliament must go through a vetting process, including temperature checking. The resolution of both Presiding Officers is that the identity information of visitors to Parliament House will be collected from next Tuesday, as it was initially. The environment is continuing to change. QR codes will be used where possible so that people will have the choice either to have their identity recorded manually, or more anonymously by scanning a QR code using their mobile phone.

Governor

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message regarding the administration of the Government.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I normally do not make an announcement because the current arrangement that the Government has with the Opposition is that, on rotation, 16 Ministers attend question time each day. However, this morning the Government notified the Opposition and the crossbench that the Premier and the Deputy Premier will not be in the Chamber today. Members offer their condolences to the Deputy Premier, whose father passed away recently. The Premier and the Deputy Premier are attending his funeral.

Question Time

ICARE

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:20:52): My question is directed to the Treasurer. Yesterday the Treasurer said that icare's funding ratio is above 100 per cent and that the scheme is in surplus. Did the Treasurer mislead the House?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:21:06): The advice I have received is that the funding ratio of the icare scheme is above 100 per cent. Let us remember what the funding ratio or surplus of the scheme—or lack thereof—was under Labor. Opposition members have raised questions all week in relation to the performance of the workers compensation scheme. As members of this House know all too well, under the leadership of the Opposition we had a scheme that was substantially in deficit and could not provide the support that injured workers across this State needed. I particularly thank all the icare workers—over 800 of them—who have been on the front line every single day providing important care and concern for injured workers who need it. We have transformed a scheme that was not only substantially in deficit but that also did not have injured workers at its centre. I particularly thank all those members of the icare team who are on the front line making sure that injured workers get the support they need. The Leader of the Opposition would like to talk about the performance of the scheme. The performance of the scheme has never been better.

Ms Jodi McKay: Be careful. You have no idea what we have.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Not much intellectually.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As the Minister says, they do not have very much intellectually. Members on this side of the House know that strong financial management of the scheme has taken it from being substantially in deficit to being in a position—

Mr Clayton Barr: That is not true.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Cessnock interjects, but he knows this all too well because he was the shadow finance Minister at the time. He knows that even former Premier Bob Carr talked in his book about the fact that under the first iteration we had a scheme that was over \$2 billion in deficit. He also said at the time that support for injured workers remained static. The Michael Daley changes led to a \$4 billion deficit—he knows it. Even the former head of WorkCover himself said that Michael Daley's mismanagement, along with Joe Tripodi, led the scheme to be in a "parlous state" with premiums due to have risen by 28 per cent. Under the current financial management of this scheme, as the member for Maroubra knows all too well, our premium rates are half what they were under the previous Labor Government. At the same time, the scheme is delivering more support for seriously injured workers.

ICARE

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:24:53): My question is directed to the Treasurer. Did icare call an extraordinary board meeting earlier this year because it suffered a \$2 billion net loss and the scheme was in deficit?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:25:11): When it comes to the financial performance of the scheme, the advice that I have received is that it is in surplus and the funding ratio is above 100 per cent. When you look at the financial results that we have obtained from the new scheme under icare, you cannot compare it to the \$4 billion deficit under the Labor Party. If that is what their measure of success is, then how successful is the current scheme today?

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was in regard to an extraordinary meeting called by the board. Will the Treasurer answer whether he knew about that extraordinary meeting called by the board? That was the question the member for Keira asked.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer has the call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The management of icare is led by the senior executive team and the board of icare has oversight. On that note, up until today that board had a member who is the president of the New South Wales Labor Party, Mr Mark Lennon. I make the point today—and it is very important given the questions that have been raised by the Opposition—that I am genuinely disappointed that Mr Mark Lennon has resigned from the board. Mr Lennon has made it clear to me, in a letter that I received last night, that it was a difficult decision for him.

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

The SPEAKER: I have already heard one point of order on relevance. I am happy that the Treasurer is being relevant to the question.

Ms Jodi McKay: He has used Mark Lennon as a shield all week. There are nine directors and an executive board and we—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In relation to the board, I particularly thank Mark for his service. He has been a member of the icare board, which has oversight of the icare scheme, since its inception in 2015. Prior to that he served as a member of the Safety, Return to Work and Support board and the WorkCover NSW board since 2007—probably under the previous leadership of the member for Maroubra. Icare was formed with the purpose of transforming the workers compensation scheme into one that puts injured workers at the centre. To achieve that outcome, the Government considered it was important that someone with the expertise and skill set of Mark sit on the board and be a strong voice for those injured workers in the scheme.

His contribution in that capacity has been vital in ensuring—as the member for Cessnock knows very well—that workers are at the heart of the icare scheme. I say to Mark today that his contributions to icare's Investment and Asset Committee; Customer, Innovation and Technology Committee; and Foundation Committee—and previously on the People and Remuneration Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee—have all been greatly valued. I will put aside the politics that the Labor Party likes to play regarding workers compensation, but I note that the Leader of the Opposition felt very strongly about workers compensation when she came into this place. In her maiden speech she mentioned workers compensation and she has never mentioned workers compensation in this Chamber since that day.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: Mr Speaker, you have extended some latitude regarding relevance. But even you would see that the last comment was completely irrelevant. The Treasurer has strayed from the legal question.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Treasurer has been overwhelmingly relevant and is still relevant in a very general sense. His answer refers to the board having responsibility for the primary question. I will hear further from the Treasurer.

Mr Ryan Park: He is now referring to the member for Strathfield's inaugural speech.

The SPEAKER: I will listen very carefully. The Treasurer may continue. The member for Keira will resume his seat. I will not engage in further debate.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Mark Lennon is a man of integrity and, in the words of the member for Maroubra, I thank him for his service.

ICARE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:30:13): I direct my question to the Treasurer. In this brief, which was prepared on 13 May this year and is addressed to the Treasurer, the Treasurer was explicitly warned of icare's \$2 billion net loss and that the scheme had slid into deficit, with a funding ratio of 98 per cent. Did the Treasurer mislead the House?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:30:52): Let me make a couple of things clear about "98 per cent". The advice I have received is that the scheme—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —is in surplus with a funding ratio of above 100 per cent. The member for Swansea is raising the ratio of 98 per cent after having a deficit of \$4 billion. Is that what success looks like to the Labor Party? That just shows we may as well be the Opposition ourselves, because that is the way—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That is your gotcha moment.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This document clearly shows that on 13 May the Treasurer was advised that the scheme was \$2 billion in deficit. The Treasurer has clearly misled the House all week.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. There is no point of order. The Treasurer will continue.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: When it comes to the financial management of the scheme, what is most important is that it is in a strong state so we can provide extra support for those who are most seriously injured at work. In fact, I remember the changes that Minister Victor Dominello brought in to provide extra support to firefighters last year or the year before to make sure we could provide support that could never have been achieved under the scheme that was run by the previous Labor Government. That is why we have that strong financial management: so we can deliver support to the injured workers who need it. That is why I am very passionate about making sure the investment returns of a \$30 billion organisation remain strong: so that we can provide the support for those injured workers who need it. Under members opposite the workers compensation scheme was

\$4 billion in deficit. Even the former head of WorkCover, who criticised the member for Maroubra's management of that scheme, knew all too well—

Mr Michael Daley: I am not a fan of his either.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: He was not a fan of the member for Maroubra, because he will not accept scrutiny over the scheme. That is why when we set up icare we made it very, very clear that we wanted to have extra regulatory oversight through the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA]. And why is that important? Because workers compensation looks after some of the most vulnerable and seriously injured workers in our State. Good governments should always ensure that there is transparency and accountability. There is no doubt that when you have a system of workers compensation it will never be perfect; surely it should not be \$4 billion in deficit—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We are dealing with people who need extra care and support. I am very satisfied that through icare we have been able to do just that. I want to share with the House—because ultimately workers compensation is not about numbers; it is about people—the feedback that I have received recently from an injured worker, who said, "The excellent help and support we have received as well as the caring, the kind and the genuine interest we have been shown by every person from icare that we have dealt with—each person has gone out of their way to clearly, patiently explain what can be done for us as well as follow through on what had been organised." Ultimately these are the stories of the people that icare is there to help. These are the injured workers' stories. That is why I particularly want to thank today all those members of icare for the amazing work they do each day.

ICARE

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:35:58): My question is directed to the Treasurer. This confidential document addressed to the Treasurer contains statement after statement about icare's financial position that contradicts what the Treasurer has said to the House. There was an emergency board meeting two months ago and there is a \$2 billion deficit. Will the Treasurer now admit that he has been misleading the Parliament?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:36:28): I completely reject the proposition in the question. As I have said—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. I call the member for Oxley to order for the first time. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. I call the member for Oxley to order the second time. I call the member for Wakehurst to order for the first time. I call the member for Wakehurst to order for the second time. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time. I call the member for South Coast to order for the first time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I want to make the point that the health Minister has made in relation to the icare board and in relation to the politically motivated attack that has been conducted this week by the Leader of the Opposition in respect of the integrity of the icare board. The icare board is an independent board—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: It relates to Standing Order 129. Mr Speaker, in the past you have asked members to make questions very specific and you have said that you will make sure that the answers are generally relevant. We on this side have asked a very specific question about concerns around a serious charge of misleading the House—something that, as you will know as a historian of this place, has led to the dismissal of former Cabinet Ministers. We are now asking a serious question. We expect an answer that is relevant and within the leave of the question.

The SPEAKER: I understand the point of order. The Treasurer was less than half a minute into his answer but I will keep it in mind. If the member wants to raise the same point of order in a couple of minutes then I will entertain it again.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As I said at the outset, I reject the proposition in the question—there is my answer. When it comes to the board, I have found absolutely disgraceful this week the attacks on the board and the integrity of the board that have been made by the Leader of the Opposition. She has accused the board of corruption, wilful misconduct and mismanagement. If we are talking about saying things outside the House, I would say to the Leader of the Opposition, "You should say that about the independent board outside of this House." If you believe corruption has been undertaken by the board, including the current president of the New South Wales Labor Party—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We have this ridiculous situation where the Leader of the Opposition has come into this place and accused her own party president of corruption. Being part of a board—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: It relates to Standing Order 73 or Standing Order 129—take your pick. Mr Speaker, this has nothing to do with the question. It is completely away from the question and the Treasurer is now nearly two minutes into his answer.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer is being generally relevant. Equally, I do remind him that the question regarding financials and misleading the House is one that has been repeated a number of times. While I acknowledge he is being generally relevant, I ask that he reiterate his response, particularly given the specific nature of the allegation.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: On this side of the House we measure success on outcomes. The fact is that we have a scheme in a strong financial position that has been brought to that place by our financial management. The scheme was \$4 billion in deficit under those opposite. The situation now is that we have the lowest premiums. They are the facts and they are undisputed. We have the lowest premiums for businesses since 1987. Premiums are half what they were under Labor. That is a fact. We have a scheme on a solid financial footing. We have had no call on the budget. Let us go back a step. As the health Minister knows all too well, the workers compensation scheme under Labor threatened our State's Triple-A credit rating. Do not take that from me; take it from the jobs Minister at the time, Sandra Nori. The 26-week return-to-work rates for injured workers are currently at 82 per cent.

Mr Clayton Barr: Down 16 per cent over the past two years.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Yes. We want a scheme that helps injured workers get back to work. But those who cannot, need to have that extra financial support to assist them, and under this scheme they do. In fact 99 per cent of liability decisions are made in seven days or less, 93 per cent of calls are answered in 60 seconds or less and 90 per cent of new claims are allocated on the first day of receipt.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Never before have we had a scheme more centred around injured workers than we do today through icare. This scheme has been brought out of the depths of deficit under those opposite—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —into a strong financial position that now enables more support for injured workers across the State than they have ever had before.

COVID-19

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (14:43:08): My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Given he allows people from Sydney COVID hotspots to travel all of the State, why do his health orders prevent pregnant women in COVID-free border towns from accessing healthcare? Why is he discriminating against country people?

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:44:17): I thank the member for Murray for her question. We are—from a very sad situation in Victoria—in what has been described as a very grave situation here in the south-east of Australia. I express my support and concern for the Victorian Government in its efforts to manage the situation in Victoria. New South Wales has been doing what it can to support Victoria, providing public health officials, nursing staff and contact tracers, and doing all we can to support them. Clearly, it is a very difficult situation.

As members would know, New South Wales has done all it can to support not only Victoria but also the border communities caught between a very challenging health situation and New South Wales, which continues to do reasonably well, although there are challenges arising from Victorians who have come to New South Wales. Sadly that has led to the Crossroads Hotel cluster and a cluster around a variety of restaurants. It is important that this matter not be approached in a political way. Generally this has been respected in New South Wales—with a few exceptions—by the Opposition, which has been actively involved in conversations and questions to the Government about various issues.

The member for Murray has been on webinars conducted by me and the Chief Health Officer. Every issue raised by members of Parliament on behalf of constituents has been responded to and addressed. The issue of the border was a difficult one because New South Wales tried hard to work with Victoria to keep businesses open. Mental health issues particularly are impacted by the economic pressures of the COVID-19 virus. We worked

hard to ensure that, as far as possible, we have maintained our economy. The Treasurer will confirm that continues to be very challenging.

A decision was taken to close the border, which was not something we wanted to do. It was obvious we did not want to do it, so when we did it we exercised great care and caution with regard to how wide the border community would be—the "border bubble" as it has been called in the media. We worked hard with community members in those areas. I have had numerous discussions with the member for Albury, Justin Clancy. I cannot say I have had any discussions with the member for Murray because she has not sought them. There were some issues early on. Some health workers—about 70 of them—who lived in New South Wales had to get across to Wangaratta, which is outside the border.

I remind the member for Murray that inside the border there are permits—about 70,000 of these have been issued—allowing workers to work within the bubble. We have an amazing police force and an incredible health team, all working to ensure people who live within the bubble can move back and forth. We also have to consider the areas outside. Exceptions and special arrangements have been made for critical care workers. An hour ago I was discussing with Justin Clancy whether there was a possibility of other people outside the border zone getting special permits. The Government is happy to look at that.

What we need—as I told the member—is the data so we can work with the local community to try to achieve it. Everything we do is on the advice of the Chief Health Officer in New South Wales. If people are impacted—and the member knows about it—it would have been more helpful and far quicker, if she had come to me a couple of days ago and told me rather than letting those poor people wait an extra few days so she can ask a question on Thursday. Come and talk to me or my staff so we can address the issues. That is what we have been doing with other members in this place.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

The CLERK: I announce that the following petitions signed by more than 500 persons have been lodged for presentation:

Wallacia Resource Recovery Facility

Petition opposing the proposed development of a resource recovery facility at 344 Park Road, Wallacia, noting its impacts on air and noise pollution, increased traffic and land use and value and calling on the Government to stop the proposed development, received from **Mrs Tanya Davies**.

Tuggerah Lakes Flood Risk Mitigation

Petition requesting the Government prioritise improved flood mitigation around Tuggerah Lakes by fully implementing the Tuggerah Lakes Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan, adopting a policy of active management of The Entrance Channel Dredging Program, providing adequate long-term funding for the management of The Entrance Channel and ensuring adequate flood warning procedures are in place, received from **Mr David Mehan**.

Personal Explanation

MEMBER FOR BLUE MOUNTAINS

The SPEAKER: The member for Blue Mountains seeks to make a personal explanation. As I have explained to her, it should be brief, it should not include debate and it should relate to how her character or standing has been reflected upon. It should not reflect on other members in this House.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:50:14): By leave: Earlier today I sought the leave of the House to suspend standing and sessional orders to bring on debate on a motion relating to a serious issue, of which I gave notice earlier this week. I was disappointed that the House denied me leave and I was further disappointed that the health Minister used words to the effect that I was abusing the rules of the House. I resent that. Mr Speaker, you and other members understand just how serious the motion—

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: I have no difficulty with the comprehension of a personal explanation but members should not reflect on any other member in this place. If the member for Blue Mountains wishes to make a personal explanation I respect her right to do so, with your concurrence, Mr Speaker, but she must understand the limits of making a personal explanation. I ask that she be given some guidance.

The SPEAKER: I had heard from the member for Blue Mountains earlier as to her personal explanation. I again remind the member to not stray into making reflections on other members. So far I regard her remarks as

contextual, but I ask her to not refer further to the member for Wakehurst or any other member in a derogatory way.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: Mr Speaker, you and others understand the serious nature of the motion. I did not raise it lightly. I gave notice of the motion because I do not believe it is acceptable for people to be threatened, intimidated or bullied in the workplace. I do not believe—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Point of order: Members must abide by the rules in this House. The Speaker has made very clear what they are. It was widely reported in the media an incident some weeks ago—

The SPEAKER: I ask the member for Oxley to speak to the point of order rather than to debate the issue.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: This is a shallow attempt to bring attention to an issue—

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: It is outside the leave of a personal explanation.

Mr Ryan Park: To the point of order: Rulings from the Speaker, including those of the Hon. John Murray, have clearly stated:

... that a personal explanation allows a member to briefly explain any matter which reflects upon the honour, character or integrity of that member, or reflects upon the member in a personal way including the refuting of accusations made against them by other members in the House.

Let us keep to the rules.

The SPEAKER: I uphold that ruling of a previous Speaker. I am concerned that the member for Blue Mountains is straying beyond that. I ask the member to keep to the spirit of the words referred to by the member for Keira.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: I do not believe it is acceptable for anyone to be subjected to what occurred to me in the Executive corridor last month.

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Blue Mountains that she is going beyond what is reasonable.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: I have got one more thing to say.

The SPEAKER: I will give the member one last chance.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: Point of order—

Ms Prue Car: You ladies must be really proud of yourselves for running a protection racket for him on this.

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

Mrs Shelley Hancock: If members—

Mr David Elliott: What about Luke Foley's protection racket?

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

Mrs Shelley Hancock: —look at Standing Order 62 the rules are very clear: A personal explanation should be brief and should refer to remarks that have been made in the House that may reflect upon the member. It is not open for the member who may feel offended to reflect on something else that was raised this morning in the House. The member for Blue Mountains—

Ms Jodi McKay: You can sit down now. You don't know the standing orders. You're the last person to demonstrate standing orders.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: I have not finished, thank you. You shut up.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: I have not finished. That is what you do every day, isn't it? Every day that is what you do.

Ms Jodi McKay: This is what she does time and time again.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: I want to make a personal explanation. My integrity has just been impugned.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will note that I am on my feet. I think the member for South Coast knows what that means. The member for Blue Mountains has one last chance.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: I do not believe we can tolerate a situation or a culture where someone is made to feel unsafe in the workplace, and I brought that motion—

The SPEAKER: The member for Blue Mountains will resume her seat. She is out of line. I have warned and counselled the member that she is going beyond the scope of the personal explanation.

Ms Trish Doyle: There are no other mechanisms.

The SPEAKER: For the record, there are numerous other mechanisms and I have told the member to seek advice from the Clerk. If the member chooses not to do so that is a matter for her. The member will not misrepresent what I have told her, which is what she did earlier today in the Chamber. I place that on the record.

Private Members' Statements

GRANVILLE ELECTORATE HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (14:55:59): In recent years we have heard much about religious freedom in what has become an increasingly divisive debate. Incredibly important issues that have long needed to be addressed about discrimination against people of faith, vilification and bigotry have been overshadowed and this is most unhelpful and divisive. At the same time, the momentum towards genuine inclusion, respect and interfaith dialogue in our communities continues. Within this context, I was disappointed to see Cumberland City Council change its planning rules for houses of worship to make it much harder to establish or expand a house of worship in the city. This is an attack on freedom of religion and is designed to make it increasingly difficult and expensive for faith communities to come together and pray.

I represent a community of strong faith and multiple faiths where most people were born overseas. According to the last census, 88 per cent of residents of the Granville electorate are of faith compared with 70 per cent across Australia. Most are Christians, with 19 per cent who are Muslim and 11 per cent who are Hindu. It is similar across the Cumberland local government area. For many within the community I represent this is their first home in Australia. Over many decades those communities have established themselves locally as they built lives and livelihoods in Australia. They come together to pray, sometimes within established local faith communities and sometimes establishing their own.

They share their celebrations with their neighbours and, when we are not in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, Hindus and Muslims join Christians in Christmas carols, Muslims invite non-Muslims to break the fast during Ramadan, and Diwali and Holi are huge celebrations for the whole community. In a vibrant multicultural society we do not ask anyone to forsake their culture or their faith to be part of Australian society. Nothing is displaced by the addition of something new. My own parish is typical of this. St Oliver Plunkett's Parish in Harris Park was established among a working-class Irish community that has parishioners from India, Lebanon, China, the Philippines, Ghana, Samoa, Sri Lanka and, of course, Australia.

For those reasons I was incredibly disappointed to see Cumberland council implement the most restrictive land-use controls on houses of worship anywhere in Sydney. Based on Parramatta's controls, which I opposed when I served on that council, there are severe constraints on the locations where a house of worship can be established and, by requiring the equivalent of 50 per cent of the site area be dedicated to parking, it becomes incredibly expensive. Essentially it requires an organisation that is funded by donations to build a massive underground car park. The proposals were a tiny component of a new, comprehensive local environmental plan across the entire city and there was no active consultation with faith communities.

Although I do not like to get involved in council decisions, I was horrified by what I heard when I was contacted by the Merrylands Anglican Church and the Holroyd Christian ministers group, who were equally concerned by the proposals. Houses of worship are now prohibited in low-density residential zones and in commercial centres. The bizarre reason given for banning them from low-density suburbs is that they are not consistent with the character of the area. They have been part of our suburban neighbourhoods for almost 200 years and, as I mentioned before, 88 per cent of the community are of faith. Houses of worship are certainly in keeping with the character of our community. Granting existing use rights is not necessarily much help either, as it still prevents them from growing or moving to a new or better location that is affordable. There is a strong suspicion that this is a targeted attack on new faiths and religions. Make no mistake, the leaders of the established Christian churches in the area are just as horrified as those communities that have been hiring halls and saving to establish their own space to come together to pray. There can be fewer land uses as harmless to others as prayer, yet even in industrial zones new faith communities often struggle to get approvals. Faith is being treated as a nuisance activity.

I have lived across the road from a large Hindu temple for the past eight years. I admit that parking can be challenging on Sunday evenings when they come together for their main weekly service. They have authorised

parking controllers and only once in those eight years has one of the congregation parked across our driveway. While the temple accommodates 500 people at any one time, it has minimal parking and works within the local limitations. This was all approved by the former City of Parramatta Council, prior to the introduction of its overly restrictive controls. Parking is probably the biggest challenge facing any congregation. The solution proposed by Cumberland City Council throws the baby out with the bathwater, making the establishment of a new house of worship prohibitively expensive. Is this to drive members of our community out of the area? I hope not.

Council should be working out ways for congregations to develop innovative solutions to their parking needs through a site-specific parking plan of management that encourages them to share parking facilities with others, rather than making people build an underground car park to be used only once a week. I am proud to represent such a diverse community that is in many ways incredibly welcoming to people establishing themselves in Australia. It says a lot about this great community that the people who alerted me to the flaws in council's proposals, which mostly affect new faith communities, were priests and ministers of established Christian churches. They stood up for the newer Christian congregations, as well as the Muslim and Hindu communities. A minority of councillors voted against this and I commend them for it.

HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:01:14): I update the House on the current infrastructure advancements in the Holsworthy electorate. The Liberal-Nationals Government believes in delivering infrastructure for our communities. Importantly, we are working to upgrade local roads to ensure that they are safer for the many locals who use them every day. Making Heathcote Road safer for motorists has long been a priority of mine. In 2015 we completed the entry to Sandy Point and the new, wider bridge at Deadmans Creek. Last year we completed upgrades at two intersections on Heathcote Road at New Illawarra Road and the Princes Highway. We have also budgeted \$173 million for the duplication of Heathcote Road between Holsworthy and Voyager Point, and for the replacement of the bridge over the Woronora River. The Heathcote Road duplication is a very large project, requiring the replacement of three bridges, including Harris Creek, Williams Creek and the one over the rail line, so there is a lot of work to do.

It will also include an upgrade to the Macarthur Drive and Heathcote Road intersection to help improve traffic flow around Holsworthy Station, a signalised intersection at the Heathcote Road and The Avenue intersection at Voyager Point, and a new cycleway footpath so that people can safely access the train station. Early works for the duplication commenced last year and I look forward to seeing it progress. I have also requested that Transport for NSW investigate providing further safety enhancements along this stretch of road. I am happy to say that the New South Wales Government is upgrading roads that support residents within the Holsworthy electorate and that border the local area—the ones we utilise. We are currently investigating and planning for a 7.5 kilometre upgrade of Henry Lawson Drive between the M5 Motorway, Milperra and the Hume Highway at Lansdowne, and upgrading 5.4 kilometres of Campbelltown Road between Camden Valley Way, Casula and Brooks Road, Denham Court, providing two lanes each way.

Additionally, we have been providing upgrades to pinch points along Hoxton Park Road, including the intersections at the Hume Highway and Hill Road. The Joadja Road intersection upgrade is also currently occurring. Providing a strong transport network is a priority for this Government and, as many members would be aware, we are in the process of providing up to an additional 2,000 commuter parking spaces at Edmondson Park Station. Construction on stage one of this upgrade is due to commence within the next month and will provide a multistorey car park with up to 1,000 spaces south of the station. The New South Wales Government has started construction on a temporary car park to the north of the station to minimise disruption to the community during construction of the multistorey car park. This is in addition to the other commuter car parking enhancements that are being undertaken by the Government, such as those at Warwick Farm and Casula, which I know we will benefit from as well.

It is not just roads and public transport that are on the Government's agenda. Last week I had the opportunity to announce that we are also providing close to \$900,000 to support Sutherland Shire Council and Liverpool City Council to upgrade boating infrastructure in our local area, with one project at Sandy Point and the other one at Lighthorse Park at Liverpool. Those upgrades represent two of 69 projects allocated grant funding under the New South Wales Government's \$28 million investment in round three of the Boating Now Program, which supports infrastructure projects to improve boating access, amenities and safety for New South Wales boaters. The Sandy Point project will involve the upgrade of an existing boat ramp, which includes rebuilding the existing boat ramp and installation of a new pontoon to make it easier and safer for boaters to access the Georges River. I know our champion dragon boat team that runs out of Sandy Point will be grateful for that because it will make a big difference for team members.

The Lighthorse Park project will involve designing and building the new kayak launch facility on the Georges River close to the new Paper Mill project. That will include an all-abilities access kayak launch platform

to cater for people who use a wheelchair to make it easier for them to use our facilities in our beautiful natural environment. This investment is on top of the \$2 million that Liverpool council has received from the New South Wales and Federal governments to provide upgrades to Lighthorse Park through the construction of a playground and a sports field. As I said earlier, this Government believes in delivering infrastructure for our communities, and we are getting on with that job. Work on our \$740 million upgrade of Liverpool Hospital is on its way and it will come with another \$50 million investment in car parking for the hospital. I know that many of my local residents will utilise these new and upgraded pieces of infrastructure and they will benefit from them.

MODERN SLAVERY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:06:30): The scourge of modern slavery is one of the greatest continuing stains on New South Wales and Australian society. The perverse actions of those who traffic in misery and pain diminish our entire community and our moral standing. The electorate of Prospect is home to people from all across the world including Armenia, Assyria, South Sudan and the Tamil peoples of Sri Lanka and the subcontinent. All of those groups have suffered from slavery in their countries of origin. Tragically, even in Australia we are not safe from slavery. In 2018 Anti-Slavery Australia helped more than 123 people who had been trafficked to Australia or faced slavery-like conditions.

Today I received a list from the Australian Federal Police [AFP] stating that in the 2019-20 financial year the AFP received 223 reports of slavery including forced marriage, sexual servitude, forced labour, trafficking in persons, domestic servitude, deceptive recruiting, trafficking in children and debt bondage. This is only the cusp of the problem. The Australian Institute of Criminology estimates that four in five victims of slavery in Australia are not detected. The Global Slavery Index estimated that 15,000 people in Australia were living in slavery-like conditions in 2018. We cannot pretend that slavery is a relic of our history and that it somehow does not affect us in Australia. It is happening here and now.

A number of non-government organisations are working to stop this human exploitation in Australia. One is the Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network, which has taken a leading position in the abolition of slavery in Australia and Australian supply chains. Catholic entities have taken the lead in ensuring that human exploitation is removed from Australian supply chains. By conducting risk assessments on supply chains and engaging with suppliers, Catholic entities have been able to reduce the risk that people held in modern slavery have been exploited during the production of goods or services used by Catholic entities. This is a step that all businesses and government agencies in New South Wales should be undertaking to ensure that they are not profiteering from the exploitation of our fellow humans.

The Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network has gone beyond those actions that we should expect of all major Australian procurers. The network has taken steps to correct governmental inaction on modern slavery. The Domus 8.7 initiative will provide service to businesses, workers and people impacted by modern slavery. It will assist businesses to identify and eliminate slavery from the operations and supply chains. The initiative will also provide support to victims of modern slavery in Australia, helping to ensure their safety and protection whilst seeking a remedy for their treatment. Further, it will provide a platform for business, workers and the public to report suspected incidents of modern slavery so they can be investigated and those impacted can be assisted.

The creation of Domus 8.7 became necessary following the inaction by State and Federal governments in Australia to tackle this problem. Every year we hear more stories of people trapped in modern slavery in our communities, especially in western Sydney. The stories of victim survivors are numerous. The Malaysian woman who was brought to Australia under false pretences and then forced to live and work in a restaurant, and the Afghani woman held in domestic servitude in Australia before being forced to travel back to Afghanistan are just two of the many cases uncovered in Sydney and just a miniscule fraction of overall cases. Further government action is required to eradicate slavery in Australia. We cannot yet be proud of our actions to eradicate modern slavery. We have not done enough. It is far too prevalent in our community.

I am incredibly grateful for the efforts of the Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network, the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney and Anti-Slavery Australia. The continued advocacy of those organisations is crucial to ensure that our State finally takes strong action to eradicate modern slavery. The Parliament of New South Wales should unanimously pass legislation to help eradicate modern slavery. It is an absolute disgrace that this legislation has not yet been proclaimed. The time for review has long passed; now is the time to implement this important legislation. I thank the House.

CONCORD RSL CLUB SITE

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (15:11:04): I take this opportunity to address the House about an important matter in my electorate: the site of the former Concord RSL Club. This matter was also the subject of a recent notice of motion. The decision to close

the Concord RSL Club last year was made because the venue had faced trading difficulties for a number of years. It has been very sad to see the Concord RSL Club close and I know that this facility is greatly missed by our community. However, as discussions have begun about the future use of the land I raise significant concerns about the impact that the potential sale of this land will have on our area and our community.

It is my strong belief that this land poses a unique opportunity to grow the open space footprint in the Drummoyne electorate. This land would serve a strategic and useful purpose as open space and public recreation primarily due to its location, which is in proximity to other open spaces, walking tracks and amenities, and bring together existing recreation areas. The history behind this land and how it was acquired also reinforces the importance of securing the site as public open space.

In 1955 the land of the former Concord RSL Club was sold by the Concord Golf Club to the Concord Council, as it then was, under a covenant that deemed the land was to be used only for "public recreation generally". In 1963 the land was sold on to the Concord District RSL Sub-Branch under a similar agreement with a covenant, which stated that the land was to be used only for an RSL club and other associated recreational uses. Therefore, it is evident that the land of the former RSL club was always intended to be a place for community use. It should continue in this way. The most effective means of promoting these historical covenants is to ensure that the site is retained for the community as open space and for public recreation.

The site of the former Concord RSL Club provides a unique opportunity for new open space. This could include passive space, additional active recreation facilities such as multipurpose outdoor courts or a new sports field. It could be used to support habitats for native fauna and migratory water birds, including the godwit. It would serve as a connection to foreshore access. Once the land is secured, the City of Canada Bay Council must start an open and transparent consultation process to survey community members about what type of public recreation facilities they would like to see included on the site. Ultimately, securing this site as open space provides social and environmental benefits and promotes community wellbeing through the delivery of high-quality open space.

I have consulted with my community and spoken to many constituents who have all expressed their desire for a collaborative approach to this issue. I have been working with the general manager and mayor of the City of Canada Bay Council to ensure that this important issue transcends politics and to support a clear and unified vision for the site. This week I have given notice of a motion on this matter to recognise the need for council to actively plan for open space to support the growing population of the local area, and to ask for the support of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces through his open space policy to facilitate the purchase of the Concord RSL site. I look forward to robust discussions with Minister Stokes. I hope we are able to capitalise on this unique opportunity to secure the land for our community as open space. That would be a fantastic outcome for my community and it is one I am committed to fighting for.

MACKSVILLE-SCOTTS HEAD SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:15:37): It is great to be a member representing a regional electorate when one is part of a government that is delivering for our amazing communities. Only a couple of months ago I was at Macksville-Scotts Head Surf Life Saving Club with acting sport Minister Geoff Lee. He met members of the club and we are so excited that we were able to receive \$83,000 in funding for the club. Persistent water leaks have destroyed sections of ceiling within the club's hall, with water at times coming dangerously close to electrical fittings. On top of that, an adjustable awning over the deck, which looks over the main beach, was wrecked during a particularly ferocious storm—no doubt an east coast low. So it was great to announce the \$83,000 grant. As president of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Surf Life Saving, it was particularly pleasing. Club president Greg Bell was pretty elated at the funding news. I congratulate Greg and the committee members, who put together a great submission.

Every time we are successful with this type of funding, it is thanks to the volunteers—the people who give up their time not just to patrol the beach and make it safe, but also to make sure the club runs well. I salute them and I know that the great Lion and legend of Scotts Head surf club, "Cactus" Moran, would be very, very proud. Richie Donovan, a life member of the club and a great friend of mine, would be very pleased. The club's application was part of our Government's \$4 million Surf Club Facility Program. The grant will go a long way towards funding the replacement of the roof and is a support our region needs, especially after going through the drought and bushfires, and now facing COVID. Just a tip—if members want to inspect the best wedding venue, potentially, on the whole of the planet, come and have a look at this club because it offers one of the most stunning views that one could ever imagine at Scotts Head.

As a surf lifesaver, along with my family, I understand the invaluable community function surf lifesaving volunteers provide for beachgoers. Year on year they keep us safe. Surf lifesaving clubs are often the hub of our communities, and nowhere more so than Scotts Head. The club has a really special relationship with Scotts Head

Public School which, I might just add, has the most incredible Indonesian language program. I think it has a lot to do with a lot of the groovy parents, who love Bali. They have come together to create this amazing opportunity for kids of the Nambucca Valley to learn Indonesian. Often the Indonesian language students from Scotts Head Public School do better than those at the high school. It is a great community and a great result.

Similarly, the Dorriggo Dramatic Club—top of the mountain. It has one of the most incredible rainfalls in the whole of Australia, with the most beautiful soil, the best potatoes and the best dairy cows that one could ever imagine. The \$200,000 renovation will provide access to all community members, regardless of mobility. Again, the club has a great team. I have known Dina from the club for what feels like 100 years. She is very good friends with my brother. They did all this work; they put in the applications. It is a very proud club. I have seen my nieces perform there quite a number of times. I did not have a say on whether that club received the funding. The decision was made independently and I am proud that the money was provided based on the hard work of the volunteers and the submissions.

Last week with Kempsey Mayor Liz Campbell and local sporting groups we were able to turn the lights on. It was the middle of the day but we could see how the LED lights worked. The Jim Sterling Oval and the South West Rocks sports complex received \$1.62 million for lighting projects. The installation and upgrade of the floodlighting of local sports fields will now allow night-time training and competitions for rugby league, soccer, cricket, Australian Football League and rugby union. The new lighting will increase usage of the fields for local sports and I am sure it will increase player participation now and in the future. On the mid North Coast in the middle of winter it gets dark at five o'clock and lights are needed to train.

Mr Chris Minns: We need some too.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: You need some lights? The lights are on but no-one is home. I congratulate all my community groups. I thank the Government for managing money within its means and for supporting our local communities and putting money into big projects like creating a dual carriageway on the Pacific Highway and a new hospital for Macksville as well as the grassroots projects that are important to our communities.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I acknowledge the great work being done by the member for Oxley, who is quintessentially all things Oxley, whether it be Macksville, Dorriggo or Kempsey. My parliamentary colleague is the Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Surf Life Saving as well as an active member of her own surf lifesaving club, along with her family. She knows firsthand how \$83,000 will benefit Macksville-Scotts Head Surf Life Saving Club. As a patrolling member she knows exactly how people's lives are saved by the actions of the thousands of surf lifesaving volunteers in her electorate and across New South Wales. Those people give hundreds of thousands of hours of volunteer time to keep our beaches safe. I congratulate the member for Oxley on her strong leadership in her community and the great job she is doing for Oxley.

M5 EAST

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (15:21:38): I speak about the horrendous impact the new toll on the existing M5 East Motorway has had on the local roads in my electorate of Rockdale. Less than four weeks ago the Berejiklian Government introduced the so-called toll mania—its comprehensive toll tax program. Already the tolls—up to \$6.95 each way for a car or motorcycle and nearly \$21 each way for trucks—has had a huge impact in my area. It is not surprising that motorists are avoiding the M5 East toll and instead travelling on surface streets. Not only is the toll outrageously high but also it is unfair to put a new toll on an old road that has been paid for. This has meant thousands of trucks and cars that previously travelled along the M5 East are now finding alternative routes to avoid the absurd toll.

They end up on Forest Road when they travel through my electorate. Forest Road is home to significant local shopping districts in the Bexley and Arncliffe town centres, which were already struggling with the early impacts of COVID when the Government began a full-scale assault on their livelihoods by attempting to introduce 24-hour clearways outside their shops. Although they successfully lobbied to have those wound back slightly so that street parking is still available during the middle of the day, this decision by the roads Minister has taken a great deal of money out of the pockets of local small business owners. Forest Road has become the go-to route for heavy vehicles because the toll on the M5 East is simply too high for many freight operators to pay.

Dealing with traffic noise and pollution is one thing as a business owner, but it is another thing entirely when it impacts on people in their homes. Those opposite like to put themselves out there as the ultimate defenders of property rights, but when it comes to ordinary people being impacted by government decisions they are nowhere to be found. Nearly 300 residential dwellings in my electorate alone—overwhelmingly single-storey family homes—front directly onto Forest Road. There are hundreds more along the roadway in the electorates of Kogarah and Oatley that are also being significantly impacted.

I ask all of those here to imagine how they would feel if every few minutes, all day and all night, they had a heavy-haulage truck driving past the front of their house. Reports I have received from my constituents are horrifying. The volume of traffic has meant that some residents are constantly feeling their houses rattling every time a truck drives by. One resident has reported that in a single hour last Tuesday night 80 B-double trucks passed by just metres from their front door.

Mr Chris Minns: Eighty?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Eighty. For many families and businesses this situation is unbearable and I have no doubt that the Government's dirty tolling deal on the M5 East will eventually transform Forest Road into a ghost town if the volume of traffic remains at its current level. Residents are now calling for urgent action, including the immediate removal or reduction of tolls on the M5 East; the installation of speed cameras on Forest Road and an increased presence of mobile speed cameras; a ban on vehicles carrying flammable and toxic loads; the monitoring of air pollution levels and action when safe levels are exceeded; and expedited noise abatement program treatments for residents now, not leaving them in the cold until 2025, as they are currently being told.

The M5 East was paid for by the public and was opened free of charge for users nearly 20 years ago. This road was not paid for with the Liberal Party's money; it was paid for with public money. The Coalition is meant to be opposed to taxing people in general, but there is something sickeningly distasteful about double taxation, and all those people who are quietly refusing to pay this new toll tax know it—they cannot afford it. We are currently entering what will likely be the largest recession Australia has faced since the Great Depression. There is no school of economic thought that says one can tax oneself out of a recession. I once called the Treasurer an obsessive Keynesian, but his actions during the current recession have shown that he cannot even hold a coherent position on stimulating the economy. He was pump-priming the economy when it was growing but he has disappeared now that it is shrinking.

I feel sorry for the people of New South Wales, who just have to hope that their Treasurer does not have another meaningless white paper to launch when their economy is going under. His Federal colleagues are publicly laughing at him, and rightfully so. It is time for this Government to stop slugging ordinary people with outrageously high tolls, to take responsibility for its budget mess and get these trucks off my local roads and back onto the motorway network. [*Time expired.*]

KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE LOCAL SPORT GRANTS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:26:51): There is an extraordinary level of talent throughout Ku-ring-gai, including within its sporting clubs. Whether rugby, football, netball, cricket, tennis, basketball—and the list goes on—sport in Australia is part of our culture and delivers important friendships and fun as well as benefits to our physical and mental wellbeing. It has been a trying few months, with sport sidelined for health and safety reasons. However, during that lay-off 12 Ku-ring-gai clubs have received news of their success in obtaining a New South Wales Government Local Sport Grant under the 2019-20 program. In conversations with the clubs I hear that the recent grants have been a welcome psychological boost for their volunteers.

Since 2016 grants have been delivered to more than 34 sports projects in Ku-ring-gai, worth over \$180,000. The funding goes towards increasing regular and ongoing participation in sport, including sport development such as training and upskilling; assisting clubs to provide quality facilities and equipment to its members; and breaking down barriers to sport participation, specifically for women and girls. Ku-ring-gai clubs shared more than \$35,000 in funding for the current round. I congratulate the following clubs on receiving grants: Gordon North Sydney Hockey Club received just under \$4,000 to purchase safety equipment for its junior players; Hornsby Junior Rugby Club received \$2,000 for the provision of level 1 coaching as well as equipment; Wahroonga Rugby Club received \$5,000 to purchase game-day jerseys for all players; Loreto Normanhurst Swim Club received just under \$1,700 to purchase pace clocks and chin-up bars; and West Pymble Bicentennial Bowling Club received \$5,000 to purchase bowling jackets and shirts for members.

The following organisations also received a New South Wales Government Local Sport Grant: The Hornsby Ku-ring-gai and Hills District Cricket Coaches Association received \$2,000 for the provision of cricket coaching for girls and disadvantaged groups; West Pymble Cricket Club received \$1,000 for the provision of coaching accreditation for its new junior cricket coaches; Hornsby Rugby Club received \$5,000 to purchase uniforms and equipment; Old Barker Rugby Club received \$1,000 to purchase a marquee to provide a portable female changing facility; and Knox Old Boys Rugby Club received \$3,000 to install an electronic scoreboard at Lofberg Oval, West Pymble, which is utilised by various community groups.

The announcement that community sport could recommence from 1 July 2020 came as welcome news in my electorate. Another recipient of the current round of grants was North Turramurra Football Club. Recently

I was fortunate enough to visit the club to congratulate it personally on obtaining a grant of just under \$4,000. That financial boost will go towards updating player uniforms and club equipment. I thank club president Graham Leslie and Northern Suburbs Football Association CEO Ed Ferguson for joining me to watch the under-13s team play at their home ground in North Turramurra. It was fantastic to see all players smiling and having fun after the interruption to their season.

The Ku-ring-gai Stealers Baseball & Softball Club secured \$5,000 under the current grants round. That much-needed funding will assist the club in purchasing new uniforms for all of its players. I look forward to congratulating club president Adrian Steer and the club's junior softball team this weekend. As previously mentioned in this place, in 2019 the Ku-ring-gai Netball Association [KNA] received \$200,000 under the New South Wales Government's My Community Project to install lights on nine of its netball courts. Although we could not mark the launch of these lights with a formal event this year, earlier this month I was able to see them for myself. They look great and I know the association could not be happier. The lights have given KNA much-needed flexibility during the operation of the current public health orders. My recent visit gave me an opportunity to see how KNA has managed its COVID-safe return to netball, which is absolutely outstanding. KNA president Jo-Anne Perry and her entire team have gone above and beyond, and I congratulate them on their commitment.

I take this opportunity to thank all local sporting organisations across my electorate for their patience and dedication in keeping their communities COVID safe. Certainly, it has not been easy to comply with the public health orders. I have observed how diligent they have been during my visits to our sporting clubs. Over the past four years, Ku-ring-gai grant recipients under the Local Sport Grant Program have been worthy recipients. The awarding of those small grants enables clubs to provide the best resources for their members and is a great boost for our local community. Sport helps create stronger, safer, happier, and more connected individuals and communities. The Local Sport Grant Program has become increasingly popular over the years. I thank the 22 organisations that submitted applications in the last round. I continue to endorse the program and I look forward to it positively serving our local communities for many years.

WARNERVALE WOOLWORTHS DISTRIBUTION CENTRE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (15:32:00): I voice my support for the 500-plus workers at the Woolworths distribution centre located in Warnervale in my electorate. Last Friday morning I was surprised to wake up to the news that those 500 workers had been locked out of their workplace for four days by Woolworths due to a dispute over pay and working conditions. The Woolworths distribution centre opened almost 15 years ago. During that period no industrial action had occurred there until last Friday when, after four months of negotiations, the union went on a 24-hour strike under protected action following a vote that received 75 per cent support.

In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic the retribution from Woolworths was to lock out those workers for a further four days. Consequently workers were unable to receive pay for five days. That is disturbing because those workers have worked throughout the pandemic to ensure Woolworths supermarket shelves on the Central Coast and further north were stocked. All members are aware that supermarket workers worked extremely hard during that period. But the distribution workers ensured that shelves were stocked in all the supermarkets. It is amazing that Woolworths would take that action. The reason for the pay dispute was that Central Coast workers, at some job levels, are paid up to 16 per cent less than their Sydney counterparts who are doing the same job. A long time ago it may have been arguable on the basis that it was more expensive to work in Sydney. I do not think that argument stacks up now.

It is worrying that workers are worried about unsafe pick rates, insecure work and the casualisation of the workforce. Pick rates are used to discipline workers. For members who do not know what pick rates are, workers have to move so many items per hour. A target is set and if workers do not reach it they are penalised with reduced shifts. After talking to staff members who were on the picket line I learned that casual workers are particularly penalised. I spoke to one gentleman who had worked at Woolworths since it opened. He had been very loyal. He did not have a family of his own, so he worked on Christmas, Easter and other holidays so that other staff members could take time off. He was working in a casual position four days a week, but that was reduced to two hours because he could not meet the pick rates. That is really unreasonable.

I received a message from a lady whose son had his employment terminated because he could not meet the minimum pick rates due to his disability. That is pretty sad. I have received a message from Woolworths saying that it has tried to negotiate in good faith, but when I heard the stories from the workers I was upset that perhaps some of the practices there are not up to scratch. I congratulate the United Workers Union on the way in which it is running the campaign in support of the workers. I congratulate all the workers on their solidarity and on sticking together. This is a workplace that had never taken industrial action in all those years. The first time people take action, what does Woolworths do? It locks them out, which is absolutely disgraceful. I call on Woolworths to

negotiate in good faith and to come to a decision that fairly increases the pay of those workers and looks at the pick rates, particularly for those people—

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order: Is a private member's statement not a community statement, rather than a political statement?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Wyong is referring to his community.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Five hundred people from my community were locked out, so I think that does concern my community. I call on Woolworths to act in good faith. I thank all the workers at the site. I particularly mention that in terrible rain conditions last Sunday they still stuck together. The local council also unanimously passed a motion in support of the workers.

COWRA HOSPITAL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:37:22): In the State's Central West, at the very top of the Cootamundra electorate, a testament to the Government's investment in rural and regional health is taking shape. Cowra's hospital is in the early stages of the redevelopment process, with community consultation underway. The existing buildings date from the late 1950s. It is important that we look to the future for a fit-for-purpose facility that is capable of providing modern health care to a diverse community. The redevelopment is a \$70.2 million upgrade to local health services. It will replace outdated infrastructure and ensure that the needs of the Cowra community are met well in the future.

Since coming to office in 2017 I have constantly pursued this issue and regularly spoken about it in this Chamber. It is an absolute passion project of mine, from gathering over 3,700 signatures to table a petition to this Parliament, to now ensuring all members of the Cowra community can have their say. It is fundamentally right that someone's postcode should not dictate the level of health services they are able to access. A hospital cannot be created from a one-size-fits-all approach. I commend the Western NSW Local Health District for its diligence in the preliminary planning stages and the community consultation, which will shape the final redevelopment. Cowra is a regional centre and the key service provider for the surrounding villages and communities. Up to 20,000 people rely on the hospital for its services, half of whom reside outside of the Cowra township. Ensuring that those communities are heard during the consultation process is vital, but it can also be a challenge.

It is not always second nature for rural, regional and remote people to make their voices heard. These people have lived stoically through years of prolonged drought, the economic impact of the past summer's bushfires and now COVID-19. They often feel uncomfortable speaking up. With this in mind, it has been my genuine pleasure to bring the conversation and the consultation to their communities. I am determined that their needs are considered when the services and facilities at the redeveloped hospital are mapped out. Last week I held drop-in sessions in Woodstock, Canowindra, Wyangala and Gooloogong to gather information for the Western NSW Local Health District and to ensure that the needs of these small communities are considered. During the drop-in sessions, community members spoke about how each of their communities is unique. Topics included farming families, a mini baby boom, an ageing population, the promise of an increase in local jobs, the demands on local services and major local infrastructure projects.

I heard firsthand the desire for increased maternity care in Cowra, the need for improved mental health services and the importance of adequate parking, particularly for those who have had to travel long distances to get to hospital. I heard about many people who have to travel for two hours to Orange to access vital services. I thank the communities for hosting me, for taking the time to share their concerns, for opening up about their health needs and for examples of how services can be improved. This is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of improving health services. I am proud to deliver this feedback to the local health district so that it can be incorporated into the Clinical Services Plan for Cowra. The four-hour sessions put a finger on the pulse of the communities and showed they have not been forgotten in the discussions. By involving these small communities, it is clear this project is theirs to shape and theirs to share in.

With construction due to begin in 2023, we still have a long road ahead. This is a case of taking the time to get things right, in order to create a hospital that is not only fit for purpose but also tailored to the needs of the Cowra community. I will continue to champion this project until the doors of the redeveloped facility open to patients, staff and the community. I thank the communities of Cowra, Woodstock, Wyangala, Canowindra and Gooloogong for coming on this journey with me.

WOODLAWN ECO-PRECINCT

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:42:19): The Woodlawn Eco-Precinct is a major Veolia project in my electorate. It has been in operation in Tarago since 2004 and employs over 100 people. As many

members would know, Veolia is "A global environmental services company which helps cities, governments and industries to manage, optimise and make the most of their resources. The company provides an array of solutions related to water, energy and materials, with a focus on waste recovery, to promote the transition toward a circular economy." Many would recognise the name as a waste collection service. Recently I had the pleasure of visiting the site to witness firsthand the extraordinary works in operation. I was delighted to welcome the Minister for Energy and Environment to the site, along with representatives from Goulburn Mulwaree Council and the environment department. CEO Danny Conlon and site manager Henry Gundry provided us with a comprehensive overview of Veolia, including its operations, goals and corporate ethos.

The Woodlawn Eco-Precinct revolves around a defunct open cut copper mine that has been converted into a bioreactor. The Woodlawn Bioreactor is the company's largest in the world and utilises some of the greatest renewable technologies and innovations in the field. The bioreactor is complimented by a mechanical and biological treatment plant, a wind and solar farm as well as an aquaculture facility. The bioreactor currently manages around 40 per cent of Sydney's waste, but it is much more than a traditional landfill. In Veolia's own words:

... bioreactor technology is still considered at the forefront of feasible clean energy production for existing waste management facilities. It is understood that for every megawatt of power produced by the Woodlawn bioreactor approximately 0.75 tonnes of physical waste is used to convert into methane gas emissions.

The bioreactor captures methane emissions in order to generate clean energy for more than 30,000 homes. Therefore, for every tonne of waste deposited at the facility 1.33 megawatts of clean electricity can be produced and used to power the facility, businesses, homes and city infrastructure. Across Sydney, household waste that goes in our red bins is collected then taken by rail and road to Woodlawn. First, the waste is treated by the mechanical and biological treatment [MBT] facility, which mechanically separates household waste from organics. Waste is combined with air and water in large rotating drums to start degradation and inorganic materials are separated for recycling and recovery. The remaining organic material is further refined into compost and used in remediation of the old mine site. The MBT facility is partly powered by solar and the eco precinct is also home to a windfarm owned by Infigen, with 23 turbines directly on site and 57 on neighbouring land. Not only a great local employer, Veolia regularly consults well with the constituents of Tarago through the use of SMS technology. It has also developed a master plan for the development of the village.

The Veolia Mulwaree Trust has also funded over \$11 million in local projects—a feat that must not be underestimated. As a strong advocate for our local communities, I recognise and certainly appreciate this type of funding to our regional communities and the difference it makes to our grassroots organisations. In the most recent round this included the Tarago and District Men's Shed, Goulburn South Public School, Southern Highlands Hockey, Make-A-Wish Goulburn, and Tarago and District Progress Association—to name just a few. The Minister and I truly enjoyed the visit and tour of this amazing facility, and I look forward to continuing our great working relationship with Veolia in the future.

CARSS PARK POOL

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:46:51): I speak this afternoon to mark the one-year anniversary of the closing of Carss Park memorial pool in my electorate of Kogarah. The pool is located on the beautiful Georges River between the beautiful Tom Uglys Bridge—it is a strange name but the bridge is still very scenic; the member for Keira, who is in the Chamber, has probably travelled over it many times—and Captain Cook Bridge, which is very beautiful too. It is a sad occasion for us because for 12 months—one whole summer—many squads and learn-to-swim sessions and school carnivals have not gone ahead because the pool has closed. This is deeply upsetting for those who live in the St George community and who have grown up around this pool and used it all their lives.

The reason for the closure is that there was a breach of the wall at the Carss Park Pool that required repair. An amount of \$5 million—and I say this without rancour or any political posturing at all—from the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, with whom I share part of my electorate, was generously pledged to Carss Park Pool to fix it, do it up, remediate any problems and get it back online in the service of the community. The community was deeply appreciative of this funding from the Commonwealth. It is my great regret that Georges River Council, instead of taking that money, immediately putting it into a new pool and opening it, has decided to close the pool. As I said, today is the one-year anniversary of that closure.

It gets worse because, as the pool is closed, the council has a proposal to bulldoze Todd Park and build another facility around the corner. No funding has been provided for this. No costing has been provided to the community. Those who have stood up against the council's plans have been provided with not a shred of information about where, how or when that new facility will be built. The end result for the people who live in St George is no pool to use on one of the driest, hottest continents on earth—and, as we all know, it is only going to get hotter. A newly formed major new community group has expressed residents' anger over Georges River

Council's recent decision to demolish Carss Park Pool and potentially—or supposedly—build a regional aquatic centre. The Save Carss Park Pool group and the Protect and Preserve Todd Park Association have joined forces as the Friends of Todd Park and Carss Park Pool. An article in the *St George and Sutherland Leader* states:

"People are just fed up with being ignored for certain political agendas," Save Carss Park Pool Group's Elise Borg said. "These decisions by council are about politics. It's not about the community. There's very few people in the community who think the demolition of Carss Park Pool and the investigation of Todd Park as a regional aquatic centre are a good idea." To kick start their campaign, the 'Friends of Todd Park and Carss Park Pool' are rallying their communities to sign a pledge in support of the rebuilding of the 50-metre Carss Park Pool on its existing site, and the preservation of the parklands and playing fields at Todd Park. Olympic Gold Medallist Michelle Ford, who trained at Carss Park Pool, will be the first person to sign the pledge.

Karina McDougall of the Protect and Preserve Todd Park Association made a salient point. She said:

We have formed the 'Friends of Todd Park and Carss Park Pool' to show that both communities are united in our opposition to Council's aquatic centre plans. Todd Park belongs to the community. It provides much needed greenspace, playing fields and a bike track.

In the 12 months that have elapsed since the closing of the pool, potentially the hope of those in favour of this decision was that the community would go away and lose interest in maintaining and keeping this wonderful community asset open. That is not the case. We will fight tooth and nail for community activities and for access to community facilities and pools. In this hot and dry country where not everybody has access to private pools, these are essential public services. They need to be repaired and maintained but, more than anything else, they need to remain open.

HAWKESBURY'S HELPING HANDS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:51:40): I take this opportunity to commend local charity Hawkesbury's Helping Hands for the great work it has done in assisting the disadvantaged, in particular those who are homeless. I pay tribute to Cassidy Strickland and her mother, Linda Strickland, who started the charity in 2011 after Cassidy, who was an eight-year-old at the time, witnessed a hungry man rummaging around a bin for food. The charity assists the vulnerable in many ways, particularly through providing the homeless with meals, clothing, tents, mattresses and accommodation—among other things. In addition to assisting the homeless, Hawkesbury's Helping Hands assists other disadvantaged people in many other ways. One notable example is the formal wear program through which the charity assists students who would otherwise miss out on memorable occasions due to not being able to afford anything to wear.

The charity assists school students in multiple other ways. It supplies breakfast to different schools through its breakfast club program, Fuel for Learning, and by providing students with backpacks that have school supplies in them. This period of recent disasters has left many with a greater reliance on charities and, thankfully, good people like Cassidy and Linda have been able to assist them. They have continued to be up to the task. Their work during the bushfires, floods and now COVID-19 has meant that many people who would otherwise have been hungry and sleeping out in the cold were fed and had a warm night's sleep. The charity also fed SES personnel and firefighters as they returned from the firegrounds back in December and January.

In 2012 Cassidy Strickland was awarded Hawkesbury Young Citizen of the Year. In 2013 Linda Strickland was awarded the NSW Local Woman of the Year Award. Hawkesbury's Helping Hands was awarded the NSW Pride of Australia Community Spirit Award in 2014 and the Hawkesbury Community Organisation of the Year award in 2016. The charity and its wonderful people have received many other prestigious awards over the years. It is amazing to see the great people from this charity continually and consistently do the important work they do, year in and year out. Hawkesbury's Helping Hands also values the dignity of people, many of whom might feel uncomfortable asking for help. The charity ensures these people know they are valued, cared for and deserving of help, kindness and dignity. For the hot dinner program, in a COVID-friendly way, volunteers purchase, cook and prepare meals in their own homes before going out to serve them to those who need them.

I thank Linda and Cassidy Strickland and everyone who has volunteered for and donated to the charity. I wish them all the best as they continue to support their work. I also thank the other charities and volunteers in the Hawkesbury area who have assisted in any capacity, particularly in recent times with the bushfires, floods and COVID-19 pandemic. I encourage anyone thinking of getting involved with Hawkesbury's Helping Hands—or any of the other amazing charities—to do so.

Business interrupted.

Petitions

WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK

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

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:56:50): I acknowledge the 10,000-signature petition relating to the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link. Firstly I acknowledge the 10,000 people who have signed this petition, voicing their concerns that the Government has left them and their communities in the dark about this major infrastructure project. I commend the organisers of this petition, many of whom are watching now. Some 10,000 signatures were collected from the Premier's own electorate. As the scientist Margaret Mead puts it:

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

The Opposition supports the sensible job-creating opportunities associated with the Western Harbour Tunnel, especially at a time of economic crisis and record unemployment in New South Wales. We are standing here today—not to oppose the project at this stage—but to condemn the Government on the lack of transparency and community consultation to date.

It is currently almost impossible to come to an informed position on this project as so little is known about what impacts it will have on the people closest to it. Thousands of local people have deep concerns about what the impacts of the Western Harbour Tunnel will be on their local community. We are here to voice the concerns of local communities that feel the Government and the Premier are ignoring them. In addition, we have serious concerns about the Beaches Link, specifically a questionable business case that the Government has fought tooth and nail to keep secret despite Parliament's best efforts to ensure transparency—a key tenet of democracy.

Nobody disputes that improving transportation infrastructure is critical to this State. However, for infrastructure to work and be fit for purpose the community must be consulted about the initial concept, during the development process and during construction. The lack of transparency and community consultation is alarming. The systemic lack of transparency and this Government's pattern of secrecy is even more alarming. Why is transparency so important with this and other major infrastructure projects? It is because the people of New South Wales deserve to know how their taxes are being spent and to ensure it is not wasted. This project is costing the taxpayer at least \$14 billion—that is, \$14 billion for 14 kilometres, or \$1 billion per kilometre. For \$1 billion per kilometre this project deserves the fine toothcomb treatment, ensuring it is worth every cent for the people most impacted by it.

The Berejiklian Government has a long track record of ruining homes with WestConnex and livelihoods with the CBD and South East Light Rail. The Government needs to do better with this project. It needs to engage with the community. Unfortunately, lack of transparency and obsolete community consultation appear to be the norm. As the member for Coogee I continue to see firsthand how the community is completely ignored by this Government. My community has experienced the repercussions of infrastructure being built without community consultation. The Government's modus operandi is to act under the cloak of darkness—without any transparency or scrutiny—because it knows the public will take issue with its rushed, ill-designed and ill-fitted projects. We saw this during the planning and construction of the CBD and South East Light Rail.

In 2017 *The Australian* reported the transport Minister had tried to drop this project entirely. The article explained that the Minister described it as a "dog of a project". The article also revealed that the project had to be continued because the contract was signed in such a rush that every alteration would cost the Government five times more than it should have.

Since being elected, my office has received thousands of complaints about light rail during its construction, testing and now during its operation, but the secrecy of this Government continues. Only last week I received the results of a Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 request into the Government's plan to cut 16 bus services from the eastern suburbs. The request for information was rejected "because current commuters may be disgruntled if they believe their service is being cancelled". Yes, the community will be disgruntled, as will our bus drivers if their services are cancelled and there is less work. The Government's arrogance is astounding if it thinks the community does not have a right to know. The community has a right to know if such significant and operant changes are coming so they can do something about it and prevent those things from occurring. Ignorance might be bliss for this Government, but it means misery for the people of New South Wales whom it claims to represent.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:00:55): I acknowledge the people in my community who may have signed this petition and I understand their concerns. I have sat in their living rooms, met in their kitchens and worked with community groups and volunteer organisations to bring about some significant change to improve the design of this project as it relates to the Manly electorate. That means minimising construction time and increasing public space. Obviously the Government is committed to minimising disruption for this project throughout the communities and to building the best project possible. However, this petition has been hijacked by the Labor Party as an opportunity to rob the people of the northern beaches of the investment that they deserve. Labor is trying to pitch one community against another while offering no plan for the people of the northern beaches.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Coogee will come to order. She has had her chance to contribute. The member for Rockdale will come to order.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: Members opposite should listen to all 15 of their members who ran as Labor candidates in the Northern Beaches Council elections. They pledged to take it to their party and advocate for the tunnel. They said, "We will fight for it, if that is what we need to do. We will raise the concerns to the top of the Labor Party ladder." But it gets weirder. The Labor Party candidate in the State election—she is a lovely lady; I think she actually voted for me—said she violently opposed the tunnel. She said, "This election will be a referendum on the tunnel." Then she lost.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Balmain will come to order.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: Members opposite do not know anything about this project. They do not care about the people of the northern beaches. They do not understand the commute. They do not understand our topography, the geography or the history of the project. To understand they would need to experience the commute. Understanding the commute would probably be pretty difficult to do when you host your northern beaches Labor forum—

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

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: When they host their northern beaches Labor forum in Lindfield, which is not on the northern beaches, it is pretty complicated to understand the commute for people on the northern beaches. Despite reams of information about this project being available online, members opposite probably do not know that it improves travel time, increases bus connectivity from the northern beaches and creates a new connection with the metro tunnel. What those members should also probably know is that Infrastructure Australia has this as a priority project. It has shortened the time frame of delivery. Here is another tip for members opposite: the NRMA conducted a survey for people to have their voices heard. Some 23,000 people spoke up—double the number of this petition. What those people said—

Mr Jamie Parker: Do you support filtering the stacks?

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: No, those people had their voices heard. They said that the Military Road corridor ranked in the top 10 worst roads in New South Wales. They are saying they want this tunnel built. They want this project done. Let us hurry up and get on with it.

Ms Jo Haylen: They are kidding themselves if they think it is going to fix Military Road.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: No, no, no. Beyond hijacking this petition as a Trojan horse to rob the people of the northern beaches, Labor offers no plan—none whatsoever. Wait, it did have a plan. The plan was to cancel the project and then spend the money for that project, but not on the northern beaches.

Ms Jo Haylen: On public transport.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: No, not on the northern beaches.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: The plan that Labor had for the community of Manly was to take the project, rip it up and not spend the money on the northern beaches. That was it. Delivering a major road transport infrastructure project has its challenges. The Government is committed to working with the community through those challenges. Hijacking a petition to rip off the people of the northern beaches and prey upon community concern is shameful. It might work at the northern beaches Labor forum at Lindfield but it does not work on the streets of Manly, all the way up the coast to Palm Beach. Shame on you.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:05:02): I thank the thousands of New South Wales residents who have brought this important petition to the Parliament, and particularly the many parents and carers from schools across Sydney's lower North Shore who are very worried about the impacts of this project. This petition sends, yet again, a clear message to the Government that the people of New South Wales are fed up with its addiction to polluting toll roads. The Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link is just the latest arm in the tangle of toll roads built by this Government under the WestConnex banner. In fact, under those opposite Sydney has become the most tolled city in the world. No wonder the Premier called it "toll mania".

By 2023 Sydney will have 12 toll roads and it will be almost impossible for motorists to avoid them. Some tolls are rising by more than three times the rate of inflation. Our kids and their kids will be paying exorbitant amounts to use these roads. Those who have signed this petition know that the decades of tolls are not the only costs built into these roads. They fear for their homes, for the health of their children who are forced to live and learn under the pollution of exhaust stacks, and for the local environment. They fear the toxic waste carted down

their streets and shipped on the harbour and waterways, and they fear for the health of our democratic institutions that are consistently bypassed by this Government. They are furious about the lack of consultation, the secrecy and the silence that meets their basic inquiries about the toll roads.

Sadly, we have seen this all before. In my electorate, in Sydney's inner west, the residents of Ashfield and Haberfield have lived through years and years of dust, noise and disruption from WestConnex. We have seen heritage homes destroyed, residents ripped off hundreds of thousands of dollars through unfair acquisitions and residents ignored during the environmental impact statement [EIS] process. The Government has ignored conditions set by its own approval process for the project, which included public transport options as a consequence of the toll road. There has been damage to property along the WestConnex route, including families living with cracks in their roofs and their homes subsiding.

Only last week an apartment block in Ashfield was evacuated because of structural issues that may be linked to tunnels beneath that block. Smokestacks are built within 500 metres of local schools, ignoring the concerns of parents and teachers. The Government has been forced to admit that the tunnels have jammed locals streets with more traffic, contrary to the fancy billboards that were erected when they started construction featuring nice pictures of happy people walking their dogs. No, those roads are completely jammed and one cannot use them. Now Transport for NSW is trying to come up with a solution that will not make local traffic worse for local residents.

It is infuriating that this Government has learnt nothing from this experience. With the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link it is making the same mistakes over and over again. The Government has not released the business case and it is stalling on efforts for basic transparency measures. Of the 1,455 submissions received, the vast majority were against the Western Harbour Tunnel and yet the Government is pushing ahead. Some of the councils that are raising concerns include the City of Sydney, Inner West Council, Willoughby City Council and North Sydney Council, which smashes the EIS in its submission. The submission refers to:

... inadequate justification and need, loss of open space, construction and operational road network impacts, air-quality and human health concerns, environmental, visual, social, and amenity and heritage impacts, as well as numerous strategic projects having the potential to be compromised.

That statement was made by the radical North Sydney Council. The Government is ignoring the concerns of residents when it comes to air quality and the location of unfiltered smokestacks, pollution and the safety of residents from toxic waste, the impacts on local businesses and open spaces, and protection for local properties from vibration, round-the-clock construction work, noise and dust. It speaks volumes that residents from the Premier's electorate had to bring their concerns directly to the Parliament to have their voices heard. Members opposite must answer serious questions about those toll road projects and one of them is: Given we know the Government ordered Transport for NSW to exclude public transport alternatives when assessing the cost-benefit ratios of toll roads, how can we be sure that they are the best projects for New South Wales? The people who brought the petition before the House clearly think not and thousands of people in the Premier's electorate think not as well. It is time that she listened to them.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:10:12): I genuinely thank the member for Coogee for bringing this petition before the House today. The member for Manly and I were elected to Parliament on the same day and both ran quite significantly on the platform that we would deliver this project, because our collective communities have been calling out for it for at least 40 years. The member for Manly and I love every opportunity to speak about this project to make sure that the voices in our communities are heard because it is the number one project they want to see delivered. That has once again been reiterated by the fact that both of us have just been re-elected for a second time after putting this platform to our communities—not the community of the member for Coogee, which she can purport to represent, but to our local communities. I would be interested to know whether she could tell me the percentage of constituents in my electorate who signed the petition that she has brought before the House, because it is incredibly small.

I always enjoy listening to my constituents. I am happy to hear the views of every constituent who contacts me about this project, even those who have signed a petition, because all of these infrastructure projects can be incredibly impactful on individuals in our communities. When an infrastructure project of this magnitude is put forward, it will have impacts. We are doing everything we can in the detailed design and planning to ameliorate those impacts.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Summer Hill will come to order.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: I thank all of my community members for keeping me informed about their views. Throughout the number of years of incredibly extensive consultation for this project we have made significant changes and adaptations based upon their feedback. I again thank people in our collective communities

for sharing their views, including my local council of North Sydney, which has been very active in meeting with me and the Minister in recent years to share those views.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Summer Hill has had an opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: Members opposite should acknowledge that as a government we are listening to our communities and providing the infrastructure and services that they need and call for. As a resident and ratepayer of North Sydney Council, I acknowledge that it has every right to contribute its views to this process. I have had extensive conversations with many of the councillors and council staff about it. I am grateful to them for participating in this process. I remind members opposite that the member for Coogee spoke a lot about projects in her electorate, but she did not speak about my electorate, the electorate of the member for Manly, the electorate of the member for Willoughby, the electorate of the member for Pittwater or the electorate of the member for Wakehurst—the people who are genuinely and directly impacted. For at least 40 years individuals have been crying out for this project, which has been knocked back by Labor governments that do not care about our communities because they think only their electorates should receive infrastructure investment.

The fact is that Military and Spit roads—the main arterial roads in my community—will be affected by this project, as well as the local roads. The rat-running on back roads, which go past numerous schools, dense housing developments, aged-care centres and retirement villages, impacts our local roads because people from much further up the beaches are using our roads downstream to get into the city. One cannot underestimate the impact on people's daily lives of the traffic and rat-running on local roads. The number one issue brought to me by my community, and to the member for Warringah in the Federal Parliament, is traffic congestion and what that does to people's lives. Those roads are over capacity and, as the member for Manly acknowledged, Military Road is one of the top 10 most congested roads in the entire country. When I was looking through NRMA's top 10 list across the whole country, I did not see any roads in the electorate of the member for Coogee, but I saw a road in my electorate. That is why I am grateful we have the opportunity to speak about this.

My community not only wants this project—it needs it. We know that only a Liberal government will deliver this commitment. I am proud to say that we are getting on with the job, reflecting the wishes of our community. Driving in my electorate is not an efficient mode of transport, with average weekday peak hour speeds of 22 kilometres per hour and average weekend speeds of 24 kilometres per hour on Military Road and Spit Road. I thank the Minister for Transport and Roads and the Premier for their empathy when listening to the community and for getting on with delivering the infrastructure services that only the Berejiklian Government can deliver.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (16:15:15): I begin by congratulating the more than 10,000 citizens of New South Wales who have brought this petition to this place to force a debate on an important issue. This is a fight worth having. The Berejiklian Government's toll-mania program is hitting other areas of Sydney hard. This petition clearly demonstrates that residents of Sydney's northern suburbs know about that, and they do not want this chaotic roadshow coming to them. We have seen what the Berejiklian toll tax has done to the suburbs of Rockdale. Up until 5 July the M5 East was free to use—as it had been since it opened nearly 20 years ago—but now cars and motorcycles are being tolled up to around \$7 each way, with trucks being charged up to \$21. Our suburbs are paying the price for these outrageous toll taxes. That hurts families—do not forget that. Thousands of B-double trucks have since descended on our local roads, and I do not doubt that the new toll roads will lead to a similar situation in Sydney's north.

We are currently experiencing in Australia what is likely to be the deepest recession since the Great Depression. Governments around the world are doing everything they can to stimulate their economies. The Commonwealth Government has spent hundreds of billions of dollars via direct payments to individuals and businesses just to keep them afloat in the short term. We all know that the New South Wales Government does not see stimulus as its responsibility. It is one thing not to support the economy at a time like this; it is another thing entirely to actively try to damage it through a toll tax program. Do members opposite seriously think that people and freight moving around our city can afford to be taxed more? Nobody in the world thinks that we can tax our way out of a recession—apparently except for the New South Wales Government. Perhaps the worst thing about this new toll tax in Sydney's north is that the roadway does not seem to stack up. The community is right to be concerned about the lack of consultation.

Ten thousand people—an overwhelming proportion of whom live in the electorates of members opposite—have signed this petition. Every one of those people has a right to be heard and they deserve to be listened to by their elected representatives. Instead, they have been ignored and kept in the dark. The Government fought against the community's right to see the business case for the northern beaches tunnel every step of the way. This petition makes reasonable requests of this Government and of the petitioners' elected representatives. If members opposite cannot provide that very basic representation to their constituents they do not deserve to be here. There are serious questions about how the Government comes up with white elephant projects that nobody in the community asks

for. I can just picture the Treasurer coming up with ridiculous infrastructure spends in his crazy projects unit so that he can mismanage the funding and project delivery, and leave behind a perpetual tax as a "thanks for coming". That is what this Government is all about—implementing new taxes to fund its own incompetence and calling it "asset recycling". This is a revolutionary technique of budget mismanagement, courtesy of Treasurer Perrottet.

I can hear the conversation with Canberra now. The Treasurer will call up and say, "Hey, Josh. It's Dom. I'm knocking up a white paper, mate. It's a new approach I've got during these times: austerity when it's tough. I need your help to slug the punter more at the supermarket. They've got to eat, so we'll get them good there for sure!" He will go on to say, "Next, I'll put up land taxes on their houses. They're all mortgaged up; they're stuck in the mud and can't avoid that one. We'll get them there! Then get this one, Josh: They'll have to work to pay for all of this, so we'll slug them on the way to work. It's a toll tax, Josh. I'm so excited!" We know that Josh and the rest of Canberra are running from this guy. The Treasurer is only getting the voice message that says, "Hi, you've called Josh. Please leave a message after the tone." [*Time expired.*]

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:20:33): How the member for Rockdale delivered his contribution with a straight face is beyond me. I will say this much about Opposition members: They have never met an infrastructure project that they do not hate. They never deliver on anything. It is irrelevant what they say to the public because everyone knows that they cannot be held to their word on delivering any projects. The member for Rockdale was talking about the people of the North Shore not wanting the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link. To him I say that the people of the North Shore have been waiting for this project for 40 years. That should be something that he is very familiar with, given that his constituents have been waiting for the F6 for 70 years and it has taken this Government to deliver it. Shame on him for not supporting infrastructure for the people of the northern suburbs.

The Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link project is a major transport infrastructure program that will make it easier, faster and safer to get around Sydney. Faster and more reliable trips are essential to reducing congestion and providing improved access to jobs, recreation and services such as schools and hospitals. Three million trips are made across Sydney Harbour each week, making the Warringah Freeway one of the busiest and most complex roads in the country. This project will help to ease pressure on the road network and on its customers. With a direct connection to WestConnex, it will reduce congestion on the Anzac Bridge, the Western Distributor and the Sydney Harbour Bridge corridor.

The Beaches Link will create an alternative to the Military Road and Warringah Road corridors and will relieve traffic pressure on the North Shore. I note that the construction program is expected to support up to 15,000 full-time equivalent jobs. The Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link is part of an integrated transport network with a focus on new public transport connections, improved journey times and bus reliability. The Western Harbour Tunnel alone will deliver significant time savings for customers, including up to 20 minutes between Leichhardt and North Sydney, 20 minutes between Sydney Olympic Park and North Sydney and 15 minutes between North Sydney and the airport.

Since the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link was announced in March 2017, Transport for NSW has carried out extensive community consultation to ensure that the community has had opportunities to be engaged and to provide its feedback. The extensive consultation carried out in 2017 and 2018 has led to a number of positive improvements to the project. The community feedback that was received will be addressed via a response to submissions report, which Transport for NSW is preparing. The report will be submitted to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to inform the conditions of approval and the decision of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. I note that the independent NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer released a report finding that emissions from well-designed road tunnels cause a negligible change to surrounding air quality and, as such, there is little to no health effect on surrounding communities. Labor members are completely baseless in their claims.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I seek leave to contribute to the debate as a member who is affected by and opposes the Western Harbour Tunnel and who supports filtration.

Leave not granted.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:24:02): In reply: I thank the community members who have signed this petition, many of whom are watching today. I remind the Government that this petition was started by residents of the North Shore community. They brought it to us as the Opposition to table it, because they have no faith in the members who look after them.

Just before I came into this place, they continued to say that they have put in Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPAA] request after GIPAA request to try to find out information regarding business cases, but these applications continue to be rejected. They are trying to find out information and everything is cloaked

in darkness. There is no transparency around this issue. I acknowledge and thank the member for Summer Hill and the member for Rockdale for their contributions. In particular, I thank them for sharing their experiences about how, when major infrastructure projects happen and there is a lack of transparency and community consultation, they know the real implications of that situation for community members.

I now want to clarify a couple of things said by the member for Manly and the member for North Shore. We are not necessarily arguing about whether this project should go ahead at this point in time. A fundamental part of this petition is the lack of transparency in this project. Good governance must be initiated when we are going through major infrastructure projects. The late John Keynes once said, "Administrative secrecy feeds conspiracy theories and reduces the public's confidence in government." The Premier's own constituents have lost confidence in her. Members and constituents from the North Shore have lost confidence in this Government. That is why they brought this petition to us, the Opposition, to stand here and defend it. They know that their own members are not advocating on their behalf.

Petition noted.

Private Members' Statements

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:26:55): It is time for change—changing a society permissive of violence against women. We must never underestimate the scale and impact of domestic and family violence on the lives of women and children and their families. According to the Australian Women's Health Network:

Intimate partner violence is prevalent, serious and preventable; it is also a crime.

Among the poor health outcomes for women who experience intimate partner violence are premature death and injury, poor mental health, habits which are harmful to health such as smoking, misuse of alcohol and non-prescription drugs, use of tranquilisers, sleeping pills and anti-depressants and reproductive health problems.

Domestic and family violence is a gendered crime. There is a strong link between sexism, low status of women and violence against women. Violent-supportive attitudes and behaviours can be found almost anywhere and are recognised as a lack of support for gender equality, belief in the inferior status of women in relation to men, sexual harassment and coercion, bullying, abusive or controlling behaviours or group disrespect.

Recently I interviewed Karen Willis from Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia. She spoke of the changes that she has seen over her more than 40 years' involvement in the issues surrounding violence against women and children. She also spoke of the need for wider conversations about domestic violence and sexual assault and the need for cultural change that not only ends domestic and family violence but also removes the barriers to seeking help. Since being appointed shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, I have worked closely with the sector, with academics and with community organisations to shine a light on what is needed to create this change and to identify the gaps in services and long-term strategies and resources to support victims and survivors. Most recently I called on the Minister to support me in backing Domestic Violence NSW's campaign to create long-term housing security for victims of domestic and family violence by increasing investment in affordable housing.

Family violence is the single largest cause of homelessness in this State. Having a roof over one's head is integral to a person's health, welfare and safety. If we are to break the cycle of domestic violence and keep victims and their children safe, we need to provide long-term housing security. Instead, what we have seen from the Government so far is investment in short-term strategies, such as emergency accommodation, but what we are missing and what the sector is telling us that we need is long-term investment and strategy. Since the Government effectively dismantled the women's refuge movement in 2013 and replaced it with an under-resourced homelessness sector, we lost a large number of specialist women's domestic violence refuges that dealt in trauma care for women and children escaping domestic violence. Today I pay tribute to the thousands of women who make up the New South Wales women's refuge movement—the workers, victim-survivors, advocates and volunteers. Their role in making history is noted, and I thank them.

Currently demand for housing assistance far outweighs supply. We have seen a dramatic rise in the number of women and children ending up in short-term temporary accommodation—also known as TA—which is in the form of basic, hard-to-let budget motel rooms, often without support or case management which is so essential to accessing long-term solutions. All parts of that service system—support services, police and courts—are overwhelmed by the number of family violence incidents now reported. Services are not currently equipped to meet this high level of demand, which undermines the safety of those experiencing family violence and their potential for recovery.

The current response to family violence largely assumes that women will leave their home when family violence occurs. Yet where do women and children go in this current environment when there is little secure and

affordable housing and a lack of case management and advocacy to get the best outcomes? Every week, sometimes every day, over the past six months I have written to the Minister about the effects of the bushfire emergency and now COVID-19 on the increased incidence of domestic violence in the community, the impacts on victims and their children and the capacity of domestic violence services, the police and courts to act.

I have called for a rapid deployment of funds but they were slow to come. Finally the Minister has responded but this was after many, many calls. It has taken a pandemic and a response to the desperation of peak bodies such as Women's Safety NSW, Domestic Violence NSW, and Women's Health NSW and frontline services that are desperate. Time and again I hear from victims, survivors, advocates and services that too little effort is devoted to preventing the occurrence in the first place and to intervening at the earliest possible opportunity. I thank my Blue Mountains services especially that work on the frontline day in, day out.

ANSTO INNOVATION CAMPUS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:31:56): I have spoken previously about the wonderful work that Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation [ANSTO] is doing and the support being given by the New South Wales Government. I take this opportunity to update the House on some of the exciting initiatives happening at ANSTO. As members might recall the Government gave a \$12.5 million grant to support the ANSTO Innovation Campus on its current site and across the road on Commonwealth land. This very exciting development has the potential to create thousands of new jobs. Once the campus expands it will have the potential to create service-oriented jobs, with plans to have live-in and onsite accommodation and a village with cafés and restaurants to service not only the campus but also local residents.

Work has started on the first building of the new innovation campus, albeit repurposed existing building No. 72. This is a true stake in the ground for the future campus. The buzz word is "collaboration". Scientists are an insular lot; they keep to themselves and protect their projects like their firstborn. The innovation campus will turbo charge their projects and catapult them into the world of commercialisation, thus generating new industries, new jobs and new businesses. Within the scientific and university world this campus will be unique—the only innovation campus with access to a nuclear reactor on site. Just think of the opportunities this will bring to science, medicine, metallurgy, compounds and things that have not as yet been thought of.

The Nandin Innovation Centre is already home to the brightest and smartest. Its mission statement sums it up. It helps deep tech entrepreneurs to start, scale and grow their businesses by applying science, technology, research and innovation to create solutions that solve unmet challenges and problems not only in New South Wales but also across the world. ANSTO's website states:

Our Innovation Precinct is a nexus where industry connects with science and the local community connects with the world. It is a vibrant and inclusive environment where partnerships deliver inspired solutions for a more sustainable future. As well as linking industry with our scientists and providing access to our capabilities, we're supporting upscaling for start-ups, and providing scholarships to graduates with benefits beyond educational opportunities. Synroc is a great example of ANSTO's research and development. According to ANSTO's website:

ANSTO's Synroc® technology is a waste treatment technology designed to lock up high-level nuclear waste providing a safe and secure method for final disposal.

Synroc reduces the volume of nuclear waste produced by nuclear technologies into a benign, encapsulated and safe non-radioactive pod. It is an example of what ANSTO has been able to commercialise. Another initiative is the STEAM club for primary school students, who can get online and study basic scientific theories while learning and interacting online, building a love of science and having fun. ANSTO's website states:

The ANSTO STEAM Club operates online through Google Classroom. After registering, each child will be invited to join the ANSTO STEAM Club Classroom to access the challenges. A "round" will consist of five weekly challenges that will be posted to the STEAM Google Classroom. Multiple rounds of challenges will be held.

Children can complete the five challenges in each round at their own pace during the five weeks. We recommend that one challenge is completed each week. After each challenge is completed, children must submit a photo of their completed entry to the classroom. The ANSTO STEAM Club Teachers will check the entries.

At the conclusion of each round, children who have successively completed each challenge, will receive recognition of their achievement.

As members can see, it is a very exciting time at ANSTO and for the scientific community, with the moving forward of the Innovation precinct. The buzz is reaching all corners of the Earth with corporations, universities and researchers showing signs of getting on board and staking their claim to this world-leading precinct.

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:36:36): Australia is privileged to have one of the oldest and richest living cultures in the world but two centuries of dispossession and racist policies have led to widespread disadvantage of First Nations people. Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are calling on leaders to do

better in closing the gap. A priority must be to close the justice gap. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience significantly poorer treatment and outcomes in the justice system compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts. Recent videos of police incidents, including in Surry Hills, are disturbing. I have asked the Surry Hills commander for a full investigation and for the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission to review policing practices. I acknowledge the great work many police officers do in partnership to support their local Indigenous communities and help young people, particularly, to stay out of the justice system. But systemic reform is needed to make a real difference and turn around the alarming statistics.

Indigenous people make up 24 per cent of the New South Wales adult prison population but only 2.9 per cent of the wider population. They make up 60 per cent of 10- to 13-year-old children in detention. Despite reductions in their rate of arrest for violent offences by nearly 37 per cent and property offences by 33 per cent over the past 15 years, Indigenous incarceration rates have more than doubled—something the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research attributes to tougher sentencing and law enforcement. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to be charged with summary offences, such as offensive language and resisting arrest, and are more likely to be subject to discretionary police powers, such as move-on orders, consorting laws and strip searches.

The Redfern Legal Centre's report *Rethinking Strip Searches by NSW Police* identified the routine use of strip searches on Indigenous people. Of the strip searches documented by New South Wales police 10 per cent were of Indigenous people but many go unrecorded because they do not result in a charge or get challenged. Aboriginal children as young as 10 have been unlawfully strip searched in public view. I remind the House that this consists of adult police officers ordering children to take off their clothes or expose their body parts outside of the child protection framework. Strip searches on Indigenous people rarely uncover items of serious danger or comply with what can be considered serious and urgent. Over-policing and high incarceration rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not result in community safety benefits yet have longstanding impacts on life, health, mental health, education, income, job prospects and family. Incarceration of mothers results in many children being taken away from their loving home, with lifelong impacts that continue the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage. Too often there are fatal outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in custody where they are 10 times more likely to die than non-Indigenous detainees.

The 2018 Australian Law Reform Commission report *Pathways to Justice—An Inquiry into the Incarceration Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* provided a number of recommendations that should urgently be adopted. They include community-based sentencing options, bail for low level offending, narrowing offensive language offences, culturally appropriate programs for women in prison, interpreter services, specialist sentencing courts, encouraging Indigenous prisoners to apply for parole, an overhaul of fines and penalties and greater independence and transparency in police complaint reviews. Of high importance are recommendations to establish targets to reduce the over-imprisonment and a review of all law enforcement with the aim to reduce discrimination. We should also narrow or repeal other summary offences that disproportionately impact on First Nations people, including resisting arrest and public drunkenness, and reform discretionary police powers such as move-on orders and strip searches.

There needs to be independent oversight of all black deaths in police and Corrective Services custody, the involvement of families of victims in the process and a fresh investigation into David Dungay's death. The recommendations of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice" should be adopted, including decriminalising illicit drugs for personal use. We must urgently raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14. Real change across all aspects of life, including health, education and income, will come only if we work together through a treaty process or makarrata that recognises the wrongs of the past and gives First Nations people a voice in Parliament on decisions that affect them. The announcement today by the Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians committing all levels of government to 16 Closing the Gap targets—which were set in partnership with Indigenous organisations—with regular reporting and First Nations people's involvement is an excellent start.

JULIE FITZGERALD, OAM

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (16:41:37): I acknowledge the outstanding achievement of local Hornsby resident Julie Fitzgerald, who has been recognised in this year's Queens Birthday Honours List. Julie joins an extensive list of men and women, recognised by the Order of Australia for their service to the community, for her illustrious career in netball. The story of one of Australia's finest sporting coaches began in 1975 in my electorate of Hornsby at the Ku-ring-gai Netball Association where she was nominated as assistant secretary. She has been an integral part of the club ever since, taking on numerous roles including president, representative selection convenor and coaching coordinator, all while performing executive roles within other organisations. This is a testament to her giving nature and her passionate character. Throughout

her 30 years of service she has coached both junior and senior teams to play in State championship matches, often with very pleasing results.

One of her most impressive results and fondest memories was travelling with her Ku-ring-gai team to Hawaii to compete in the inaugural world club cup championships in 1984. Her team made it all the way to the finals before going down to the Australian Institute of Sport. No matter the arena, Julie never let the pressure get to her. Every game is a fresh start and the potential for new opportunity. It is always an honour to have our local organisations represented on the national and global stage and I congratulate Julie on doing this over so many years. Regardless of where the netball world has taken her, she has always been there for her local club, mentoring the next generation of Hornsby's sporting champions. I know that Jo-Anne Perry, Brenda Williams, Helen Pratt and the entire organisation are proud of everything she has given and for everything she has achieved.

Julie is also a key member and founder of a number of other sporting clubs within the community. In the mid-nineties she helped establish the Hornsby Spiders Basketball Club and was appointed as general manager in 1997. This was no easy task. The Spiders were home to 168 local competition teams and six junior representative sides. Julie continued to build and generate more members until they reached capacity at 300 competition teams in 2005. Her plans were always to make the Hornsby Spiders the best association in New South Wales and to find a way to get a new stadium built. I have no doubt that both those goals have been achieved, especially considering that she was fundamental in helping move the organisation to its new home at the Brickpit Basketball Sports Stadium in Thornleigh. This has allowed hundreds of men, women and children within our community to access premiere sporting facilities and to grow and nurture their skills.

During her time as executive officer she has received a number of prestigious awards. These include outstanding contribution to women's basketball in 1999, the New South Wales award for significant contribution to referee development in 2002 and Basketball Australia's female administrator of the year in 2003. They are all amazing achievements and what is even more impressive is the achievements of those under her guidance and leadership. During her esteemed tenure at the club she mentored 14 State players, one AIS scholarship holder, one Wallaby, three college scholars and seven intensive training centre scholars. She managed all of this while bringing up her own family and paving her way as a high-profile netball coach. This is yet again a testament to the character, resilience and dedication of Julie Fitzgerald—a selfless individual who would do anything for people around her in her quest to develop the next generation of sporting greats.

When one thinks of the best coaches in netball one thinks of Julie Fitzgerald. What made her great was not just her brilliant understanding of the game but her ability to get the best out of her players. For Julie, investing in the individual as a person was the priority and the netball would flow from there. The best example of that philosophy is Liz Ellis. Julie identified Liz, as a teenager, not just as a good netballer but as a good person. Liz lived in the Hawkesbury and had been accepted to study law at Macquarie University, but the demands of study, full-time netball and a lot of travel meant something had to give. It was at that time that Julie opened up her own home to Liz, who was able to reduce her travel time, complete a degree and go on to be one of the best netballers our country has produced.

Outside of her achievements in the local sporting culture she has performed numerous feats on the national and international stage. Her first major breakthrough was for the Sydney Swifts, which was one of the original eight teams in the Commonwealth Bank netball competition introduced in 1997. She was highly regarded in that role for her ability to guide the side towards four premierships, one in 2001, 2004, 2006 and 2007, before the competition ended shortly after. This was where Julie really started to shine as an incredible coach with a thorough and devout knowledge of the game, and the needs of individual players. It is this humility and compassion that has made her not only an outstanding coach but also a fantastic member of the community. Since those humble beginnings her career has continued to soar. In 2011 she was named head coach of netball at the Australian Institute of Sport. In 2012 she was nominated as assistant coach of the Australian Diamonds and she went over to New Zealand to coach the Waikato Bay Magic before returning home to coach the newly formed NSW Giants.

These are all astounding achievements that Julie has grabbed with both hands to further cement her reputation as one of netball's greatest coaches and mentors. But perhaps Julie's greatest achievement is the way she has raised four brilliant children in Katie, Kristie, Vicky and John. Each of them has grown into successful professionals in their own right thanks to the unwavering love, support and dedication of their mum. Julie is a single mum whose kids never wanted for anything. They have grown into impressive young men and women who now also are contributing to their communities in so many ways. I am so proud of everything Julie Fitzgerald has achieved and I am backing her every success in the future. She deserves recognition within the Order of Australia and as an icon of our community in Hornsby.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for Hornsby. I am sure that everybody in this House recognises the amazing work that Julie Fitzgerald has done and congratulates her on her acknowledgement.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE KOALA HABITAT

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:47:30): My electorate of Port Stephens is well known for having beautiful beaches, pristine waterways and expansive bushland. We also had a number of endangered koala colonies, and the community of Port Stephens is fiercely committed to protecting our local koalas. That is why so many people in my community have been appalled and disgusted at the recent actions of the Berejiklian Government in approving and then fast-tracking the destruction of 52 hectares of koala habitat in Port Stephens—52 hectares of land bulldozed in an area where koalas are known to be endangered.

This Government's track record in protecting koalas is tragic—there is no other way to describe it—and it all comes down to two terrible decisions that this Government made following the 2015 election. First, the Government repealed the Native Vegetation Act, the Threatened Species Conservation Act, the Nature Conservation Trust Act and parts of the National Parks and Wildlife Act—gone. Secondly, the Government watered down all the environmental protections that used to exist in New South Wales and created new laws that were opposed by so many environmental experts I could not possibly list them all. However, I will mention one. The Wentworth Group, representing hundreds of scientists, economists and business people, warned that the Government's laws would "return New South Wales to an era of unsustainable environmental damage by reinstating broadscale land clearing, resulting in more degraded land, more damage to river systems, increased carbon emissions, and the loss of habitat critical to the survival of threatened species." So the Government was warned.

Back then, every Labor member of Parliament voted against those laws because we listened to the experts and we knew what the consequences would be. But every Liberal and Nationals member of Parliament voted for those changes. They ignored the experts and so the law was changed. Last year a secret government report prepared by the Natural Resources Commission revealed that land clearing in New South Wales has increased by a shocking 1,300 per cent since the laws were changed—not doubled, not tripled, not quadrupled but a 13-fold increase in land clearing in New South Wales since the Liberals and The Nationals changed Labor's environmental protection laws. And they are proud of it.

According to *The Sydney Morning Herald*, the Nationals want to go even further. Right now, they are trying to change the Allocation of the Administration of Acts to make land clearing even easier in New South Wales. But those are the decisions this Government made that legalised and encouraged massive amounts of land clearing that has decimated native vegetation and critical habitat across this State and laid the foundations for the worst bushfires ever seen in the world. On top of that, the Government has repeatedly approved projects that have destroyed koala habitat. The Brandy Hill Quarry expansion in Port Stephens is just one example. The quarry's own environmental assessment admits the harm the project will cause. Page 142 of the Biodiversity Assessment Report appended to the environmental impact statement states:

Approximately 45.8 hectares of Koala habitat will be removed for the Project. It is therefore likely that the Project will modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent the species is likely to decline locally.

On page 142 the report also states:

... the removal of Koala habitat resulting from the Project will adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of the species.

The Government had those reports well before it chose to give its tick of approval and well before it fast-tracked the project. Recently the environment Minister, Matt Kean, who is in the Chamber, announced a bold new plan to double the number of koalas in the wild in New South Wales—at least, that is how he sold the story. In fact, he announced a plan to request a report at some time in the future. That is not what I call urgent action. In the meantime, koala habitat is being destroyed because his own Government's laws allow and encourage it and because the Government continues to approve projects that wipe out local koala populations. It does all this after the black summer bushfires and the environmental carnage they caused. That is how koalas become extinct. Members need not take my word for it—they need only read the report of the cross-party, year-long koala inquiry that handed down 42 recommendations. The report clearly shows that unless urgent action is taken, koalas will become extinct in New South Wales before 2050. So unless the Government wakes up and changes its ways, its legacy and the Minister's legacy will be the extinction of an iconic Australian species.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (16:52:27): I thank the shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage for her commitment not only to the protection of koalas but also to the environment. I thank her not only in her capacity as shadow environment Minister but also as the member for Port Stephens. Her commitment to the environment and to koala protection is well known and longstanding. The number one threat to koalas is the loss of habitat through fragmentation. The member for Port Stephens is correct—it has had a devastating effect on koala populations. No-one wants to see the country's most-loved and iconic animal threatened, let alone become extinct. That is why last week I announced that the Government must do better. We must stabilise our existing koala populations and double their number. I promise the shadow

Minister and everyone who loves the koala that the Government will work towards that goal. We will do that in a number of ways. Following the loss of 5,000 koalas in the bushfires, we will commission the chief scientist and the best experts to formulate a plan to achieve that objective and set us up for success.

REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:53:38): In May last year I drew the attention of the House to two headline items—quality of life in regional areas and regional decline. Those two broad headlines have driven my work and the work of my team for the past 16 months. I often speak about quality of life for people living in rural and regional New South Wales and about the need to make our communities good places to live. It is a partially subjective concept so I went hunting to find out what it might mean from a government perspective. I found the following quote: I want people living in regional NSW to have a great life. Moreover, I want people living outside of regional NSW to look to our regional towns and cities and think 'I could also have a great life there', because they know regional NSW is a great place to raise a family, start and grow a business, get a fulfilling job, participate in vibrant community activities, play sport at quality facilities, and access the quality health and education they deserve.

That is not a quote from me; it is a quote by the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade from the New South Wales Government's *A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW*, released in July 2018. It sounds a lot like what I have been saying. I am not saying that I am an expert, but during my term as the member for Barwon I have spoken to a number of people who are experts in health, education, business, employment, regional development and local government, and many more who are well qualified in the school of life.

Together with my team, I am developing policies that make suggestions to government that would turn the worm of regional development from trending downwards to trending up. One would think the regional New South Wales Minister would sit up and take notice when a member of Parliament representing the largest rural electorate in the State raises an idea in Parliament, in writing and in face-to-face meetings—especially when, for the first time in 70 years, that person took the seat from the party the Minister leads. Instead, the Deputy Premier dismisses those ideas.

I like John Barilaro and we have worked together in person to address issues in Barwon. Again, I offer to work with anyone in this Chamber or in the other place to progress issues in regional New South Wales. Let us not waste time and disappoint our constituents with murky partisan politics. Our constituents expect us all to be working for a better regional New South Wales. I know who is sprinkling the glitter that is funding announcements because I find out about those announcements from the local paper. Let us cut through all that. Like Keanu Reeves in the movie *The Matrix*, let us see through the veneer and look for the truth. Let us cut through the novelty cheques, the talk of job creation—there is very little in remote areas—and the talk about supporting agriculture.

One unarguable metric defines and underpins the success of the New South Wales Government. It transcends every other dataset, including announcements about how much record investment there has been in a given area. That metric is population—bums on seats in regional New South Wales. Look at the shifts in population. Look at towns where the population has been in decline because the things that can help make the town a good place to live—employment, services, amenity and public infrastructure—have been impacted by the New South Wales Government's policy. I am not looking for glitter from the New South Wales Government; I am looking for policies that assist to grow populations in rural and regional communities.

I will provide the Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade with a few ideas today. I will keep providing them because they are sound ideas that will change the fortunes of regional New South Wales. They are levers that the Government can pull. If it reckons it is pulling on them already, it needs to pull harder. Those ideas are favourable taxation, digital connectivity, teleworking, drought recovery assistance, reinstatement of government services and employment, and better support for local government by stopping and reversing cost shifting by the State Government. All of this is within reach and would provide the groundwork to make our towns better places to live.

If towns in regional New South Wales are good places to live, they maintain or grow their populations. If towns are good places to live, kids stay in town when they finish school, there is reason to start a family and send kids to local schools for quality education opportunities, and government and private services are available locally and delivered by people who understand the community. People invest in towns that are good places to live. They set up businesses and buy property. They are proud not only of their town; they are also excited about the future of their community. My challenge to government is to dispense with its partisan politics, dispense with its dismissiveness and get on with working collaboratively to make rural and regional New South Wales a better place to live. I add that I understand the Deputy Premier is not in the Chamber today due to a death in the family. I pass on my condolences to him.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I thank the member for Barwon. I also pass on my condolences to the Deputy Premier on the passing of his father.

ROTARY CLUB OF BERRY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:58:44): On Friday 3 July 2020 I attended the Rotary Club of Berry's sixty-first annual changeover event at Coolangatta Estate winery. It is rare to attend a public gathering in these very difficult times. From the Berry pathway project to hosting the barbecue for the official opening of the Berry bypass, I have enjoyed a long and close friendship with the Berry Rotary club. I will use the time of the House this evening to sincerely thank and acknowledge that extraordinary local organisation for the incredible work it does. It punches well above its weight.

I acknowledge the incoming 2020-21 office-bearers and board of directors, including the wonderful president, Haseena Tweddle; the immediate past president, Terry Delahunty, and his wife, Jennifer; the president-elect, Phil Crocker; the secretary, Deb Coad; the outgoing secretary, Ian Nicol; the treasurer, Bill Seelis; and committee chairs Grahame Sweeney, Jacqueline Evans, Brad Sewell, Ken Hutt and Laurelle Price. I acknowledge Narelle King for her many years of service. I thank Councillor John Wells from Shoalhaven City Council and his wife, Dale, master of ceremonies Ian Nicol and Rotary District Governor Peter Ford for their attendance on the evening. I also acknowledge Paul Andersen, the director of community services at the Rotary Club of Berry, on his successful coordination of the Berry Small Farm Field Day, which has been held at Berry Showground for many years.

From setting up the showground to coordinating over 100 exhibitors—it is a lot of work arranging demonstrations, contacting and organising sponsors, and collecting gate entry fees—it is always a huge undertaking that almost every member of the club is involved in. One of the most significant achievements of Berry Rotary will be the delivery of the Rotary nature play park, Boongaree, on North Street in Berry. I was able to secure \$4 million from the New South Wales Government for this project. This concept is the first for our region and it is very exciting for all involved. Like many adventure playgrounds, Boongaree will provide a range of activities for all ages and levels of ability. Berry Rotary has been working hard to raise funds for this project since 2014. The project was adopted by Shoalhaven City Council as part of the Berry Strategic Plan in 2016.

As the local MP, I am proud to back this initiative, which will be of regional significance. Similar playgrounds in other parts of the country are not just popular with local families; these facilities also become tourism attractions for younger families who may want to play and stay in Berry. Mr Speaker, there may even be something for you. My congratulations to Grahame Sweeney, who chaired the committee, Bill Seelis and all the members involved in this exciting project. I know that it will be welcomed by families across the Shoalhaven and in my electorate.

I thank local serving Rotarian Mick Vassallo—and his wonderful wife, Pat—for his outstanding and tireless efforts in organising guest speakers for every meeting. I thank Graham Smith for producing the Bulletin week after week. Well done to my mate Smithy. I thank Mrs Dorothy Hanbridge for her many years of hard work in coordinating the very popular Berry Celtic Festival, which is held in May each year at Berry Showground. Unfortunately, this year's event was forced to cancel due to COVID-19 crowd restrictions, but we look forward to seeing the event return as soon as possible.

Berry Rotary has a very proud and distinguished involvement in quite a number of local community events, which include the annual New Year's Eve Fireworks Spectacular—and a special mention to Peter Stinson's organising committee for its hard work; the annual Australia Day community breakfast at Berry Showground, which I have been honoured to attend in the past; and the Berry Show barbeque and grill, which I always look forward to assisting with in the kitchen, as I have done on a number of occasions. Local community events also include the Berry Merry Christmas street parade, which I participate in as Town Crier; the Berry Small Farm Field Days, which delivered a number of foods, goods and services to the Batemans Bay bushfire evacuation centre to assist impacted residents after the devastating bushfires last summer—it also undertakes a monthly chocolate wheel activity in partnership with the Berry Markets; and Berry Rotary's donations-based programs which support the End Polio Now campaign and ShelterBox.

A shout-out to Ken Hutt, who has raised so much money to support these important organisations. For now it is weekly Zoom meetings that keep the club members connected and engaged while we move to the COVID recovery phase. I will continue to work hard for local community groups like Berry Rotary and I will be a voice for them in Parliament. I will keep fighting to deliver additional funding to organisations like Rotary. I am sure all of us have attended wonderful changeover events. Rotary is an amazing organisation, with 1.2 million members and 32,000 clubs in more than 200 countries around the world. What a great organisation is Rotary, but only because of the people who make it up. I tell you what, there are a hell of a lot of them in Berry Rotary.

CALLAN PARK

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:03:42): I will discuss the importance of Callan Park to our community. I remember on 11 November, just a few short months after I was elected to represent the electorate of Balmain, I spoke for the first time in this House to put the case for Callan Park. It was a Friday and I had been joined in Parliament that day by the mayor of Leichhardt council, Rochelle Porteous, and members of the Friends of Callan Park to formally present the Callan Park master plan to the planning Minister at that time, Minister Hazzard. While that was a significant day, the campaign to save Callan Park had started many years before, most recently in 1998 when the Carr Government first attempted to sell off and develop parts of Callan Park.

The attempt to flog off the site sparked what has been one of the longest and hardest-fought battles of the inner west. Successive governments, both Labor and Coalition, dithered and proposed sales, sell-offs and developments over the past 20 years, during which time Callan Park has aged. We have seen a great deal of demolition by neglect, and continued inaction puts Callan Park at risk of further neglect. That is why after many years of campaigning, having attended the first Callan Park rally in 1999 when I was elected to Leichhardt council as a councillor, I was delighted to stand next to the planning Minister to announce a \$10 million commitment to restore and rejuvenate Callan Park. As the Minister said, that is a down payment. The figure exceeds anything promised or delivered by Labor or Liberal governments over the past 20 years. Better yet, as I said, the Minister referred to the figure as a down payment, which is a very welcome sentiment. We will hold the Government to that commitment.

The announcement comes after two decades of community-led action, agitation and campaigning led by the Friends of Callan Park. I could not count the number of rallies, lobbying meetings with Ministers, letters, petition signatures and public meetings that the campaign has produced. It is thanks to the Friends of Callan Park that there are not apartments on that site today. Yesterday in my community recognition statement I acknowledged many members of the Friends of Callan Park but today I reiterate my thanks to Hall Greenland, Cynthia Nadai and Roslyn Burge, as they have kept the issue front of mind for successive governments to produce this result.

Now that we have the commitment, the next question is how to spend it. The \$10 million has been broadly committed to the enhancement of the parklands of Callan Park—I just attended a Zoom meeting with departmental organisations and the Friends of Callan Park about it—and on restoring and rejuvenating it in the form of a landscape structure plan. It makes a number of specific proposals, including the demolition of intrusive buildings to open up the space for pedestrians, the restoration of some heritage properties and the relocation of parking to remove the conflict between parking and pedestrians on the waterfront.

The fact that so much of the prime waterfront parkland has been used to host car parking spaces for the past 20 years is a real shame and we will change that. We have already asked for a costing for each of the priority projects laid out in the plan so that the community can understand and provide feedback on the costings. I will hold a public meeting on Monday 3 August 2020 to speak to residents about the plan—we already have almost 300 RSVPs—and ask them what they want to see for the site. I hope the Government gives proper consideration to the feedback as the money can transform the face and the experience of the site.

That is not the only win that our community has achieved on the site. The commitment is in addition to the \$2.4 million being spent currently on annual maintenance and support for Callan Park, and that will be ongoing. In addition to security and groundspeople, three full-time project staff are now working on Callan Park. Recently we have seen new lighting installed at the Cecily Street entrance to the Kirkbride building; repairs and maintenance to several buildings, including the iconic former chaplain's cottage; and a range of heritage stonework restoration. There has been approval for the installation of new lighting along the Bay Run, and a conservation and renovation plan is being undertaken for the magnificent heritage gates at Cecily Street.

As many people are aware, Sydney College of the Arts vacated the Kirkbride building last month and the Government has begun an expression of interest process for that magnificent heritage building. Despite the departure of the Sydney College of the Arts, almost 20 organisations are still operating at Callan Park. They make a fantastic contribution to our community and are doing their bit to maintain and preserve the buildings onsite. They include NSW Ambulance, Rozelle Child Care Centre, Writing NSW, We Help Ourselves, Foundation House, the University of Tasmania, Red Nose Day and Glover's Garden, which is the oldest community garden in our State.

There is still so much more work to be done to help secure the future of Callan Park and to restore the moral heart of Callan Park, which has always been about mental health and wellness. We need the protection of the Callan Park Trust but we are also pleased that the Minister has indicated his strong support for the involvement of all local groups to ensure that Callan Park can be driven by community input. I hold the campaign close to my heart, having worked on it as a resident, as a councillor, as a mayor and now as a member of Parliament. I thank everyone in our community who has worked to get us this far. I hope to see them down on the waterfront soon.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL MULHOLLAND**TRIBUTE TO BRONWYN KOLODZIEJ**

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (17:09:05): Recently we have lost some great people in my area, two of whom were among East Hills' best teachers. I pay tribute to Michael Mulholland, a teacher at St Christopher's Catholic Primary School at Panania, and Bronwyn Kolodziej, the assistant principal of Padstow Heights Public School. I will first share with members some of the many tributes paid to Michael Mulholland, who passed away recently after a short illness. Michael was greatly respected by the teachers, staff, students and parents at St Christopher's, as well as by his other colleagues from his 31 years of teaching.

Michael was a well-known supporter of the Manly Warringah Sea Eagles and left a lasting impression over the 50 years that they enjoyed his support. He was known as their unofficial number one fan. At his funeral, video tributes were paid by Manly captain Daly Cherry-Evans and coach Des Hasler, himself a former teacher in the Catholic education system. Des said:

We are very saddened to hear of the passing of Michael, he was an educator and a mentor as well as one of our best ever members and a devoted Manly Sea Eagles fan.

We may have lost one of our greatest supporters but Michael's spirit will live long in our memories.

The family was presented with the jersey worn by his favourite player, Tom Trbojevic, in the last game that he watched. A number of former students taught by Michael have been inspired to take up teaching as a direct result of his example and influence. Two of those are teachers at St Christopher's: Emma Lovatt and Samantha Ma. In a tribute, Samantha said:

Michael was larger than life, with a huge heart and a real love for education. His passion for his students was so inspiring and what we experienced first-hand, led to us both deciding to become teachers. He made learning fun, while still using old-school techniques.

The passing of Michael is such a huge loss and he is someone we will never forget.

St Christopher's principal Jamie Wahib said:

Michael was one of those one-of-a-kind teachers, a character who stayed long in the memory of anyone who was taught by him. He loved teaching and building positive relationships with students, who all loved being in his class. Michael did so much for basketball in primary schools. His legacy will live on through the students, staff and community of St Christopher's Panania who were lucky to have known such a wonderful catholic educator.

My personal experience with Michael was through basketball. My daughters, Lori and Ruby, played basketball for Padstow Park Public School on Mondays after school competitions at Condell Park courts in the East Hills electorate. Michael was certainly well known by the parents involved with that competition. Regardless of what school they came from, it was evident that he had a genuine love for all the kids who played, and he enjoyed spending time with members of his local community. I note that he was volunteering his own time outside of school hours. Michael was well known locally for his ability to tell stories about his pupils and his family. He was a devoted husband to his wife, Doris, and will be greatly missed by his pupils, colleagues and family.

Padstow Heights Public School's Assistant Principal Bronwyn Kolodziej lost her three-year battle with cancer on 19 June. She fought the good fight and was an extraordinary woman. I was at Bronwyn's special retirement send-off that the school held for her to celebrate her many decades of teaching. She loved the fuss that the school body made over her. She enjoyed the students performing for her to celebrate all the teaching years she had had at Padstow Heights Public School and other schools. The current students told stories about some of their experiences of having her as a teacher. At her funeral her husband, John, said:

Bronwyn was a daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, teacher, and a friend to thousands— a very impressive CV to take to heaven.

She was loving, loyal, loquacious and loud. She valued the importance of close family ties, and made a big deal of birthdays, Christmas, and Easters were always important family gatherings. You reap what you sow and Bronwyn certainly laid the foundations of a beautiful home environment

My husband, John, and I knew Bronwyn quite well through our relationships with both Padstow Heights and Padstow Park Primary schools. Bronwyn had many outstanding qualities. One of her great attributes was that she could tell a great story with a wicked sense of humour. That is something that my husband shared with her; they were great mates. Whenever I would run into Bronwyn at different events she would always ask me, "How is my boyfriend?" with a big laugh. I would usually respond, "As good as your husband", because our Johns were usually with the other. I was P&C president at her husband's school, Padstow Park Public, and she would see my husband, John, at her school, Padstow Heights. It was a running joke whenever we would cross paths. One always knew when Bronwyn was in the room. She was vivacious, sharp as a tack and always great fun. Like Michael Mullholland, Bronwyn Kolodziej will also be greatly missed. She will be missed by her pupils, colleagues, friends,

"the boyfriend" and, most importantly, her family. Our area has certainly lost two of the best. May they both be with angels. Vale, Michael Mulholland and Bronwyn Kolodziej.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:14:13): I commend the member for East Hills for recognising the passing of two of her community members. Her emotional state indicates how deeply involved she is with her community, and it is not just her private member's statement that exhibits that. I commend her for the fantastic job she does across her electorate. Tonight we have seen how deeply connected she really is with her local community: She lives there, has worked there and now represents the area.

COVID-19

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:14:59): It has become a cliché to say that these are unprecedented times, but very few people alive today remember the last time a single illness spread across the entire globe. The influenza pandemic of 1917-1920—remembered as the Spanish flu—is estimated to have killed tens of millions of people, decimating populations around the globe and threatening the stability of the fledgling Australian Federation. COVID-19 has not yet been quite so devastating in the loss of human lives but it has been extraordinarily challenging. Our economy, already heading towards a recession, has crashed. Many are out of work, many more are barely scraping by, and just when we seemed to be out of the woods a second wave has struck Victoria and threatens our State.

I urge the people of the Charlestown electorate to remember that we are all in this together. I remind my constituents to stay home if they are sick, get tested if they display any of the symptoms of COVID-19 and maintain hand hygiene and social distancing wherever possible. In the past four weeks two cases of COVID-19 have been reported in the Charlestown electorate. Thankfully those two were returned travellers and no local community transmissions were identified in that time. In the past four weeks there have been just over 10,500 COVID tests in the Lake Macquarie local government area and 11,301 in the Newcastle LGA.

Those figures are welcome. I encourage people to continue to get tested if they display symptoms because this virus does not discriminate. Anyone can fall ill, but some members of our community are more at risk from serious complications than others, including older members of the community and those with pre-existing health conditions. It is better to be safe than sorry. Last week when I developed a scratchy throat and noticed a change in my sense of taste, I went to get a COVID-19 test done. Being tested for coronavirus is not a pleasant experience but the health professionals who administer the tests are good at their jobs and it was over quickly. Thankfully, I received the all clear the next day.

Earlier last week one of my electorate officers developed a chesty cough. He went to his doctor, who prescribed antibiotics and directed him to have a COVID-19 test. His result came back all clear as well but his doctor directed him to stay at home while he recovered. I am a strong believer in taking sick leave when one needs it. I was happy to approve his leave because, as his doctor said, this time is stressful for everyone. But doctors and other health professionals are under even more stress. We must do what we can to combat the spread of non-COVID-19 illnesses to make sure that in the event of a second wave our frontline health workers are not stretched too far. Unfortunately, not all workers can take sick leave when they need it.

As the second wave hits Victoria, we have seen that some workers are not getting tested or are avoiding self-isolation because they cannot afford the time off. It is unacceptable that people are being forced to choose between their health and the health of the broader community, and being able to pay rent or put food on the table. It is not a matter of weighing the health of people against the health of the economy. International experiences, particularly in Sweden, have shown that avoiding social distancing measures does little to boost economic performance and comes at an enormous cost in lives. New South Wales needs paid pandemic leave to ensure the health of individuals, the broader community and the economy as a whole. I urge residents of the Charlestown electorate to look out for themselves and each other. They should keep up social distancing, as difficult as it may be, particularly in built-up areas.

I have two major retail centres in my electorate. It is essential that social distancing is adhered to in those retail centres. Follow the advice of health professionals. If you show symptoms, get tested. If you know someone is struggling and you can help, reach out. I welcome all my constituents to contact my electorate office if they have any questions or they are looking for advice. My staff and I will do what we can to help. We are still all in this together. COVID-19 will be with us for some time to come and we must remain vigilant. I plead with people in my electorate of Charlestown to socially distance, wash their hands and stay safe.

PLANNING SYSTEM ACCELERATION PROGRAM

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:20:10): On Tuesday, and again yesterday, I brought to the attention of the House my very grave concern about the granting of the modification of the development consent for the Eastlakes Shopping Centre on or about 18 June 2020 by the delegate of the planning Minister under the

fast-tracked project assessment. I drew to the attention of the House my very grave concerns about the sordid history of the application and of the relationship between the applicant and senior members of the former Labor Government, and the relationship with the Liberal Party through donations to the Free Enterprise Foundation.

My concern was that the development consent was granted contrary to the very fast-tracked project assessment guidelines contained in the *Priority Projects Criteria* document, dated April 2020. The breach of guidelines occurred because projects that are considered as priority projects are to be "shovel ready" and able to be commenced within six months. Less than a week after the approval was granted by the delegate to the Minister the applicant advised the local paper, the *Southern Courier*, that he anticipates commencing the project the following year—in 2021. The fact of the matter is that I consider the approval to have been given improperly and in breach of those guidelines.

I acknowledge the importance of the Government's policy in relation to fast-tracked project assessments for the recovery of New South Wales during and after the pandemic, and I support any action taken by the Government—as does the Labor Party—to provide jobs and job security and offer employment aspirations for people in this State. I acknowledge this can only occur predominantly through private sector investment. Private sector investment is a significant factor in achieving this. I accept the importance of the criteria and measures that have been put in place by the *Priority Projects Criteria*, which has occurred by agreed principles of the Australian Government, State and Territory planning Ministers and the Australian Local Government Association.

I am more than aware that under the current planning system a number of shovel-ready projects—substantial ones—in the State are being held up by red tape, and that should not be so. However, the guidelines are not a mechanism that enables development approvals to be given for major developments that, first, are contrary to planning policy; secondly, are to be assessed exclusively by the planning department, which has never had the requisite skills to grant approval; and, thirdly, have the effect of losing the support of the community in determining the major projects.

I remind the Government that the discredited part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act was a substantial policy that resulted in the overwhelming defeat of the Labor Government. The Coalition Government promised to repeal it and it was, in fact, repealed. It is effectively being recreated by the priority assessment project, unless the guidelines are applied. This happens to all long-term governments. Once they lose the support of the community, once they are captured by developers, once they start breaching their own guidelines in the name of employment, they end up on a slippery slope to electoral oblivion. If other applications are like the East Lakes Shopping Centre, this Government will be acting to the political advantage of the Labor Party but contrary to the interests of New South Wales.

KU-RING-GAI HOUSING STRATEGY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:24:09): I speak this evening on Ku-ring-gai Council's housing strategy. The council met last Tuesday evening 28 July to consider and potentially adopt the Ku-ring-gai housing strategy and housing delivery plans for the provision of housing within the local centres of Turramurra, Gordon and Lindfield. Parts of Lindfield and Gordon are in my electorate. In that context it also considered the submissions received during the public exhibition of the draft Ku-ring-gai housing strategy to 2036, including the substance of one that I lodged as part of that process and the responses to those submissions. The council resolved that the issue be deferred until September 2020 at the ordinary meeting of council to afford the council the opportunity to digest the issues raised, particularly in Lindfield.

The issues raised related to those submissions but also further correspondence from the local MPs. The motion further resolved that the correspondence received from the two local State members of Parliament be forwarded to the New South Wales Premier seeking clarification on the content and obligations of council. I believe the Premier will refer the matter to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the member for Ku-ring-gai and I will liaise with the Minister as appropriate. For transparency, I wish to place on the record that the later correspondence includes two emails from me to councillors. I will read those emails onto the record for the benefit of the residents who were not able to read them but who follow the council meetings and are interested in our views. The member for Ku-ring-gai can speak for himself. My first email is in the following terms:

Dear Councillors,

I write in relation to the Ku-ring-gai Council Housing Strategy that you will consider at your Council meeting this Tuesday evening.

I want to convey my own view as well as my understanding of the State Government position on future development in the area and relevant dwelling targets.

In the past, I have advocated that all parties should respect the historic agreement with Ku-ring-gai Council in 2007 to deliver 10,000 dwellings to 2031, despite subsequent pressures for more (especially from the NSW Labor Party) and less (from some community members). A plan for an additional reasonable dwellings contribution is now warranted, mindful of the extra planning period of 2031-2036.

While every Council area in Sydney has an obligation to provide for some future housing given growing population, the characteristics and appropriate loads of each are not uniform. Further, the "targets" suggested by the Greater Sydney Commission are not actual NSW Government policy and there is strictly no current requirement to rezone for more dwellings, despite a need for each Council to formulate an appropriate Housing Strategy.

I congratulate Ku-ring-gai Council on its record of delivering new dwellings as previously agreed and note that the additional 4,000 dwellings projected as a target by the Greater Sydney Commission from 2016-2021 come entirely from existing planning controls.

These 4,000 dwellings over 5 years are included in the figure of 10,600 that Council now quotes as a "DPIE Implied Dwelling Projection" from 2016-2036, a substantial number of these can be assumed to flow from existing planning controls, and past experience suggests that this contribution is underestimated. In particular, there is a pre-existing capacity estimation of only 600 of the 3,600 dwellings projected from 2021 to 2026, with little justification apparent for what I believe is a methodological weakness.

I conclude by emphasising two points made in my earlier submission to council in the draft document:

One, in Lindfield town centre the high density zones should not permit developments over the 7 to 8 storeys already experienced. Heights of 10 to 15 storeys should not even be seriously contemplated for Lindfield—Gordon town centre is different. Two, I reiterate my intention to support Ku-ring-gai Council and/or others in resisting any pressure to act beyond what the community might reasonably expect in the circumstances, both in terms of dwelling numbers and maximum heights. The recommended proposal before you is unfortunately an overstep that appears to be inconsistent with reasonable community expectations and to overstate State Government requirements.

My second email clarified a number of those matters raised after a response to councillors from one of the directors. Suffice to say I will continue to fight for the local community in a reasonable way, while also respecting the need for each council to provide for the needs of future population growth.

Community Recognition Statements

RAF PEDROZA

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (17:31:00): Today I acknowledge the hard work of Raf Pedroza for his leadership and service excellence as a NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Fire Divisional Commander during the 2019-20 summer bushfires. Mr Pedroza played a pivotal role in minimising the impact of the devastating fires to communities in the Southern Highlands, preventing fires from spreading into the main towns of Mittagong and Bowral. Mr Pedroza has made significant contributions to the strategic hazard reduction operations over many years in anticipation of the recent fire events. This work removed a number of pressure points of the fire, saved significant numbers of properties and allowed brigades to use this as a tool to manage containment. Mr Pedroza's efforts have not gone unnoticed, especially by those isolated property owners who Mr Pedroza contacted to ensure were safe and well informed. His efforts and bravery are to be congratulated. I thank him for his service to the Goulburn electorate and to the State of New South Wales.

JASON BODGER

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:32:05): I recognise local celebrity and radio host for Hit Mid North Coast, Jason Bodger, for partnering with the Port Macquarie-Hastings Homelessness Committee as its new ambassador for the region. Known as "Bodge" from the legendary *Kristy & Bodge* show, the local media announcer is raising awareness on the difficulties our homeless face living on the streets by sharing his personal story of hardship and resilience. Acknowledging the severity of destitution as a young 16-year-old in Adelaide, Bodge recalled the personal anguish he suffered when confronted with homelessness, noting the shame and anxiety that accompanied his situation, as well as the generosity and kindness of friends that supported him through difficult times. In the lead up to Homelessness Week 2020, Bodge is championing an outstanding initiative with Lifeline Mid Coast and the Port Macquarie-Hastings Homelessness Awareness Committee to shine a spotlight on the challenges faced by our rough sleepers through the Surf@Home campaign, with \$1,790 already donated to the cause. Bodge is the perfect example of triumph over adversity through self-belief and determination. No doubt the now influential host on Hit FM is helping others find their feet and voice through his inspirational message of hope.

FEEDBACK ORGANIC RECOVERY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:33:12): On 19 July I was delighted to attend the open day for Feedback Organic Recovery. The work undertaken by this small business since 2013 demonstrates the benefits of using circular farming practices to produce fruit and vegetables while reducing landfill. The farm is located in an urban environment at Cardiff Heights. It is grown in compost made from waste collected from local cafes and restaurants across the Hunter, and then distributed back to cafes and restaurants, and also through fruit and vegetable boxes and local farmers markets, creating a small-scale, closed farming loop. Feedback Organic Recovery also contributes to public education through its 1 Hour Farmer program, through which members of the public can spend time on the urban farm learning to grow their own fruit and vegetables. The work of Feedback

Organic Recovery is good for the environment and good for our health, and demonstrates a sustainable model that improves urban food security. I congratulate everybody involved in Feedback Organic Recovery.

BROTHER JEFF REGAN

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (17:34:20): Mulgoa resident and former St Dominic's College Principal, Brother Jeff Regan, was diagnosed with coronavirus earlier this year after returning home from a religious conference in South America. Upon returning from South America, Jeff self-isolated and was tested for coronavirus due to feeling ill. Within a few days of receiving a positive result for coronavirus, he was in ICU on a ventilator, then in an induced coma for a few weeks as his body could no longer breathe on its own. Jeff's health declined so quickly that his brother was contacted and told he would not make it through the night.

Thanks to the outstanding work of the ICU team at Nepean Hospital and the many messages of prayer and support from church friends, the Rose Society and past students, Jeff's condition began to improve and he is now recovering well. Jeff's story is one that should inspire us all to keep up our hard work in staying aware and vigilant against COVID-19 and to rally around those doing it tough during these unprecedented times. I thank Brother Jeff for sharing his story. I wish him a safe and speedy journey to full recovery.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN MORRIS, OAM

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:35:25): I wish to commemorate John Morris, OAM, a valuable member of the Maitland community, a passionate advocate for equality, a member of the NSW Teachers Federation, co-founder of the Maitland Repertory Theatre and Maitland Republican Group, and a stalwart of the Australian Labor Party. While teaching at Dungog High School, John saved a couple from certain death after their ute became stuck on a level crossing. John helped the woman to safety and, because the man would not leave the ute, he flagged down the train driver to stop the train. Passengers then got off and helped lift the car off the tracks.

John participated in nearly every aspect of community life before he died in July this year. He was named Maitland's Citizen of the Year in 1996. In 2006 he was recognised for his services to the community with a Medal of the Order of Australia. I pass on our community's condolences and gratitude to his wife, Dorothy, John's children, Louise and Stuart, and his three grandchildren. Vale, John Morris.

BILLY AXFORD

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:36:25): I recognise 22-year-old singer-songwriter Billy Axford from Port Macquarie for developing a plan to kickstart a youth arts company to support the struggling entertainment industry affected by COVID-19 restrictions. Sadly, the arts and entertainment industry has suffered a major blow due to the necessary measures introduced, including social distancing rules. Regardless, local artist Billy Axford is determined to ensure that our youth are supported to continue their love of and passion for performing. Described as a rising music artist in our community, Billy has a vision to develop new opportunities in the local performing arts sector by linking young entertainers with professionals to ensure that our local industry remains alive and vibrant in the future.

Billy acknowledges the importance of educating our young artists to work in the industry under lockdown to reinvent the way they communicate their personal messages of life's experiences and challenges faced in this changing world. A hospitality worker by trade, Billy is employed at the Grant Street Cafe, located next door to my office. I can vouch for his professional, friendly service and high-quality food to match. I am really confident this young man has a bright future ahead in the music industry, and I extend to him my best wishes.

WE CARE CONNECT

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:37:30): We Care Connect received grant funding from Newcastle Permanent's Charitable Foundation to improve its services to the community. A \$48,000 grant went towards a new van to help with collections and deliveries. We Care Connect supports thousands of struggling families in crisis across the Central Coast and Hunter, donating baby goods such as clothing, bedding, car seats, cots, prams and a wide range of other essential care and safety items. Over 60,000 items have been collected and delivered to families in the past three years and We Care Connect also helped cook and distribute over 8,000 meals to the hungry. Congratulations to We Care Connect for giving a helping hand to those families who are in need across the Central Coast.

WEDDIN COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:38:15): I congratulate members of Weddin Community Transport, who are celebrating 30 years of service to the community of Grenfell. The service has grown over the past 30 years from the purchase of the first community car to a small fleet of four vehicles today and a team of 20 volunteers. Such an important service to the community could not go ahead without the support of volunteers

who dedicate their time to assisting others. I take this opportunity to wish Michele Johnson all the best on her retirement after 30 years of service as the Weddin Community Transport coordinator, and likewise to volunteer drivers Kerry Ham and Lloyd Thomas, who are stepping down after many years of dedication. I welcome incoming coordinator Michelle Cook. Congratulations again to Weddin Community Transport.

BLACKTOWN POLICE AREA COMMAND

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:39:10): Blacktown Police Area Command [PAC] officers have been working hard to keep our community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Alongside other police from New South Wales, these officers were deployed to our Victorian border to curb the spread of the virus. By ensuring that only authorised persons crossed over the border into our State, their service has provided an invaluable safeguard against a second wave in New South Wales. The limitations on interstate travel have been a disruption to life as usual and a frustration to many. This is especially true for New South Wales residents living near the border. However, the professionalism and commitment of those officers to public safety has given these residents a much-needed sense of security in these uncertain and unsafe times. Like all our frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Blacktown PAC officers who have been deployed to the border have made personal sacrifices and worked tirelessly to protect residents of New South Wales. I extend my sincere thanks to those officers for their continued dedication to serving our State and commend them for their vital role in fighting the spread of the virus.

GREAT COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:40:11): Recently I met with the new Chief Executive Officer of Great Community Transport, Ben Jackson, and his dedicated team at their main office in Kingswood. Great Community Transport provides a terrific service for those with a disability or those who are elderly in the community and who need a lift to attend appointments throughout the local government areas of Blacktown, the Blue Mountains and Penrith. The organisation has continued to ensure quality services for those in need across the Seven Hills electorate throughout the current COVID-19 pandemic period. I thank them for continuing to support my community in Blacktown, Lalor Park, Kings Langley, Seven Hills and Toongabbie. In addition to ensuring those in need are able to meet their appointments, Great Community Transport creates day trips for Western Sydney seniors to make sure our elderly continue to be socially connected during these times. This service has been particularly impacted by COVID-19. However, I know Ben and his team of volunteers are working very hard to ensure all services continue during these changed times.

COVID-19 AND PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:41:08): This past week my community of Port Stephens has been grappling with something no regional area wishes to experience—locals testing positive to COVID-19, with today's news bringing the total to seven. At this stage we are hopeful that no community transmission has occurred, with local infections being isolated to one unfortunate family. On behalf of everyone in Port Stephens, I wish the family well during this torrid time and hope they have a full and speedy recovery. I also thank every resident, visitor and worker who has listened to health advice, has been tested if they have symptoms and has isolated if they are a close contact. I extend my gratitude and admiration to the business owners who have shown leadership in supporting workers to isolate and be tested or have implemented stricter social distancing and cleaning measures or even temporarily closed their doors again. With Victoria today reporting 723 new cases and Sydney's cases continuing to rise, these are troubling times. This past week has proven how caring and responsible our community is. So let us keep doing what we are doing so that together we can keep each other safe and well.

JEAN HARROW

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:42:07): I acknowledge the contribution of Ms Jean Harrow to our local area as she retires from her role as President of the St George Art Society. Jean has been serving the St George community for 15 years and has led the society from 2014. The St George Art Society seeks to develop practice and appreciation for art in our local community, encouraging aspiring artists and enthusiasts. Under Jean's guidance, the society remained incredibly active and present. Jean's legacy is that of an incredibly dedicated and compassionate president who cared deeply for the members of the St George Art Society. Jean also sought to make the society more inclusive and expand membership. It has certainly come a long way from its selective male-only membership in 1944. It is easy to forget that a contribution like this benefits not only the society but also the entire local community. We are blessed in the St George area with a sensational spirit of service and community. Jean has now become a large part of this history. On behalf of all the local community, thank you to Jean Harrow.

TRIBUTE TO BRIAN HODGES

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:43:10): I commemorate Brian Hodges, a resident of Metford, fondly known as the mayor of Metford, who died recently. He was a hardworking, compassionate and valued member of our community. His Christmas lights rivalled those of the Griswolds' and he would often be found sitting outside on his verandah delighting the children of the neighbourhood. He was a very skilled crane driver at BHP. After retiring early, he went on to attend the markets with his wife, Diane. He was the kind of man who was very proud of his family. Brian took the time to help others in need. He and his wife, Diane, are two of our oldest friends in Maitland. We could always rely on them to help us or anyone we knew that needed help. Brian is survived by his loving wife, Diane; his son, Shane; his daughter, Lisa, her partner, Jason, and their children; and, of course, his beloved Rusty. Vale, Brian.

SOUTH WEST WOLVERINES

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (17:44:13): I congratulate three local boys who have been selected in the South West Wolverines NSW Oztags team. They are Maxximus Defina and Cullen James, two Revesby Heights Rhinos rugby league players, along with Lachlan Wise. The national competition will be held in Coff's Harbour in October. I also congratulate Hadlee James and Khloe Hunter, who were selected in the NSW Oztags girls' team. The achievement continues a period of success for the Revesby Heights Rhinos, who last year were named Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs Junior Rugby League Club of the Year. I wish Maxximus, Cullen and Lachlan all the very best in this competition.

SYDNEY UNI FLAMES

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:44:54): I welcome a new resident to the Auburn electorate, the Sydney Uni Flames. They will be joining the Sydney Kings, who are also situated at Sydney Olympic Park. I congratulate the University of Sydney sports association on its ongoing commitment to professional women's basketball. Without the support of Bruce Ross and the Sydney university sports association, there would have been no professional women's basketball team. We will be pleased to host them in the electorate of Auburn, which will be the home of basketball in New South Wales. I make special mention of Karen Dalton and her ongoing support for women's basketball, not only in New South Wales but also around Australia. She has been an excellent ambassador for the game. I thank her for her lifelong commitment to the sport.

ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (17:45:44): On Monday 27 July I visited the Art Gallery of New South Wales for a special event it held in partnership with the Australian Chamber Orchestra [ACO]. We finally had the opportunity to see a live performance by the ACO, which was developed to curate the art gallery's Some Mysterious Process exhibition. The exhibition tells the story of how the art gallery's international contemporary collection has come together. It has been a very challenging time for our arts and cultural organisations as they deal with the impacts of COVID. I acknowledge the leadership of Michael Brand, Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, ACO artistic director Richard Tognetti and managing director Richard Evans. The ACO has streamed its digital season of ACO HomeCasts, which is a special way for the musicians to provide performances and interviews to their audiences from home. Board leadership is critical. With that in mind, I commend chairman Guido Belgiorno-Nettis, AM, deputy chair Liz Lewin and the other board members. The ACO is a valued organisation in our State and nation. Through its innovative response to COVID, it has further embedded itself in our collective consciousness.

CENTRAL COAST MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:46:53): I congratulate Central Coast Mountain Bike Club on being a successful applicant for a Community Building Partnership grant in 2019. The club recently opened the Centrelink track to the community. The name "Centrelink" came about to financially support local mountain bikers through these difficult times. The club received \$11,500 to extend two new mountain bike trails, which are designed for riders of all skill levels. The Centrelink track was officially opened on 19 June by land partners Visit NSW State Forest by Michael Hill, who had the honour of cutting the tape alongside Jack Moir, a World Cup top 10 rated downhill racer, and Jake Newell—being the first riders to hit the track. The Ourimbah Mountain Bike Park is a free facility for all mountain bike riders. It is 100 per cent community funded and countless hours of volunteer workers go into maintaining the park, trail construction and general admission. The extension of the bike trails is a great asset for the community and will attract mountain bike riders from afar. It is an excellent sport to improve health and wellbeing.

KEN PRIOR

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:47:56): I pay tribute to Mr Ken Prior of Queenscliff Surf Life Saving Club, who will be stepping down as club president after two successful years. I have enjoyed a great friendship with Ken and team Queensie and I recognise the proud legacy he will leave at the club following his time as president. Ken epitomises the community spirit that we know and love in our part of the community. He is a gentleman and has made an outstanding contribution to his community. I understand Ken will continue to serve our community and Queensie as deputy president over the coming year, and I wish him all the best in that role. As Ken always says, one club, one direction, one future. On behalf of a grateful community, I say thank you, Ken.

NEWCASTLE JETSTAR STAFF

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:48:39): I recognise Newcastle Airport's Jetstar pilots, engineers, maintenance workers and cabin crew. A month ago Jetstar workers received the difficult news that Jetstar will be closing its Newcastle Airport maintenance base by the end of the year. Losing 220 jobs from our community is really rough and awful news for those workers and their families. It is a huge loss to our community. These people are our neighbours, our friends, our community volunteers. Their children are in our schools and on our sporting fields. In these tough times it was particularly difficult news for those families and our community. I wish all of those workers well for their futures and I wish their families success in the choices that they make over the coming months. I hope that they are able to secure employment, either with Jetstar or with other employers, that allows them to have successful futures.

OATLEY REMAKERY & SUSTAINABILITY HUB

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:49:43): On 29 February at Oatley Community Centre it was a pleasure to represent the Government at the launch of the Oatley Remakery & Sustainability Hub. The hub was funded through the New South Wales Government's My Community Project. My community is blessed with some beautiful natural treasures—bush, water and wildlife. I support my community in the protection and conservation of our nature, as most recently evidenced by the establishment of the Oatley Remakery & Sustainability Hub. The hub encourages locals to recycle their goods and to minimise landfill. It is a great initiative and another example of the Government thinking globally and acting locally. I thank the Bower Reuse and Repair Centre in Marrickville for its role in the process and the entire team for this creation. It is a wonderful contribution to our local community. May our local environment remain beautiful.

GO LOCAL FIRST

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:50:38): We know that 98 per cent of all Australian businesses are small businesses, often family run affairs where people wear multiple hats, the hours are long and customers become friends. Changes to our shopping habits, the boom of the super centres, the chain store monopolies and the massive uptick in online sales have all dealt blow upon blow to many of our small businesses. I praise the resilience of the many Maitland small businesses who have survived those threats and the Maitland Business Chamber and Maitland City Council who support them. They are now rallying to overcome the greatest economic challenge of the century—the economic downturn brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. As global supply chains shudder under the strain of COVID we have finally realised as a community the importance of local manufacturing and local businesses. When we spend local, it stays local. Every dollar spent in small businesses has a multiplier effect that benefits the entire community. Let's Go Local First to support #MadeinNSW and our local communities.

ST LUKE'S COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:51:43): I acknowledge St Luke's Coptic Orthodox Church which received \$20,000 from Premier Gladys Berejiklian towards a community centre. St Luke's is a multicultural church with a mission "to worship Christ in the Orthodox tradition while making the church available for everyone in the local community". St Luke's was established in 2018 and has recently received development approval to construct a church building in Sylvania. The one-off grant from the Premier will transform an existing property into a vibrant community centre by facilitating internal renovations. St Luke's will provide accessible resources including a library, counselling and youth, educational and crisis management services to community members in need. I commend the team behind St Luke's for initiating a community centre which will welcome and support many members of our local community. I particularly recognise Father Daniel Fanous, Father Samuel Fanous, committee treasurer Steven Basily, and secretary Andrew Nada. I thank St Luke's Coptic Orthodox Church for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and extend my best wishes as they build their new spiritual home in Sylvania.

HAWKESBURY WOODCRAFT CO-OPERATIVE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:52:48): I thank Bob Gailer and the team at Hawkesbury Woodcraft Co-operative for creating the flag stand in my electoral office. In 2019 at a function at Richmond RSL Sub-Branch I noticed the branch's flag stand and discovered that a local, not-for-profit organisation was the creator. I approached Bob Gailer and the team at Hawkesbury Woodcraft Co-operative at Wilberforce who fashioned a beautiful handcrafted stand from a rescued log of silky oak—*Grevillea robusta*. It now takes pride of place in my electoral office and I will fondly tell the story of its origins when visitors meet with me. I thank Bob Gailer, Neil Collier, Theresa Apap and Muriel Picton, who designed and created this authentic Hawkesbury treasure.

YOUNG LOCAL BUSINESSES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:53:45): Last week Young had the pleasure of welcoming weatherman Sam Mac from Channel 7's Sunrise program. Despite the cold weather there were high spirits at Young's Chinese tribute garden where many businesses and locals gathered to celebrate what Young has to offer. Some of the local businesses included in the segment were: Wilders Bakery, Ballinaclash Fruit & Wine, Poppa's Fudge & Jam Factory, Hilltops Glamping, Annie B's Full House, The General Store, Taubman and Webb Trading Post, Annette's Place Preschool and Childcare Centre, singer-songwriter Harry Cleverdon, Young Cycle Group, EB Batinich and Co, bush poet Ted Webber, Cherry King David Munnerly, and Charity Queen Brianah Griffin. It was a wonderful way for Young to showcase its businesses to an Australia-wide audience. I thank everyone who came along.

PENDLE HILL FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:54:43): I recognise the Pendle Hill Football Club. The club has a vision of being a leading club in the football community, growing a reputation for excellent coaching and player development, as well as building effective club administration. The club started in 1966 at the famous Binnalong Oval at Old Toongabbie with a tent as a canteen and a yearly fee of \$2.50. I remember well playing against the Tigers. When I was playing for the Winston Hills Bears they were always tough and still are. I recognise the committee—Michael Briggs, Lucy Douglas, Vanessa Carrett, Sharon Cole, Stephen Collins and Brian Kelly—who are doing a fantastic job on the committee. Best wishes for the Pendle Hill Tigers for the rest of the season.

GWAWLEY BAY FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms ELANI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:55:39): In light of the recent commencement of the 2020 football season, I acknowledge Gwawley Bay Football Club—the mighty Gladiators. Based at Canberra Road Oval, Gwawley Bay Football Club is run entirely by volunteers who are committed to supporting our local junior and senior players. Although it may be the smallest club in the shire competition, the Gladiators have plenty of heart. Earlier this year, Gwawley Bay Football Club opened its storage facilities and put on a sausage sizzle for the collection of essential items to be donated to bushfire-affected communities on the South Coast and beyond.

The dedicated volunteers behind the Gladiators also facilitate fete days, trivia nights and other events throughout the year to raise funds and contribute to the smooth running of the football season. I recognise president David Brownhill, vice president Bec Nunn, secretary Blake Michels, treasurer Cheryl Bellamy, registrars Jai Hook and Lauren Bellamy and Mini Roo coordinator Liz Humphreys. I thank those behind Gwawley Bay Football Club for their contribution to our sporting community and extend my best wishes for the football season to players and volunteers alike.

STUART FREUDENSTEIN

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:56:40): I congratulate Mr Stuart Freudenstein on his appointment as Lions District Governor for the District of 201N4. The District of 201N4 runs from Bourke down to Tumbarumba, out to Coleambally and Hillston and then to Nyngan and up to the Blue Mountains—which will keep Mr Freudenstein very busy. Although only becoming a Lions club member in 2014, Mr Freudenstein has long admired the work of the Lions club and was waiting for the right time to join the organisation. A well-known local, Mr Freudenstein was previously mayor of the former Young Shire Council and president of the Lions Club of Young before his latest appointment with the district. I congratulate Mr Freudenstein on his latest appointment and I wish him all the very best for his future with the Lions club.

WENTWORTHVILLE KARABI SENIORS KNITTING GROUP

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:57:47): I take this opportunity to again acknowledge the fantastic women of the Wentworthville Karabi seniors knitting group for their continued efforts in assisting those in need. Sylvia Granturco of Toongabbie leads the group of knitters, who age right across the years and meet regularly at the Reg Byrne Community Centre. It was lovely to attend a COVID-19 safe afternoon tea at Sylvia's

home to celebrate the ladies' latest efforts in creating many hand-knitted goods for community members across the South Coast who had been badly impacted by last summer's bushfires. It was great to assist in handing over beanies, jumpers, shawls and blankets to former Toongabbie resident Cheryle Mills, who now lives in Mallacoota, and to other residents right across the south-east of Australia. The ladies were granted \$3,000 in funds from the Premier to purchase wool to make products for those in need. Well done, Karabi knitters.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE FAMILY SERVICES

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:58:51): I am pleased to inform the House that Sutherland Shire Family Services has received a \$60,000 funding boost from the New South Wales and Federal governments' recent \$21 million investment. Sutherland Shire Family Services is a not-for-profit organisation that has been providing services leading to the safety and wellbeing of families in our community since 1987. One of these vital initiatives supporting thousands of local women is the Southern Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, which the group has been operating on behalf of Legal Aid for nearly 20 years. With over 400 referrals received from police each month, the service helps women affected by domestic violence to navigate the court system and implement effective protective measures. I am pleased that the additional \$60,000 COVID-19 funding boost will enable the service to employ additional staff to respond to the increase in cases referred during the pandemic. I commend chief executive officer Ashleigh Daines, Southern Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service manager Kate Cora and all those involved for providing such vital support to our community.

SPHINX AUSTRALIA

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)— I was delighted to join shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, Adam Searle and Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union Organiser Casey Thompson in attending the premises of Sphinx Australia, a locally owned and operated manufacturing company in my electorate of Bankstown that specialises in producing apparel for military and emergency service personnel. I was pleased to have the opportunity to meet Sphinx Australia owners Hassan and Tom Abdelrahim to discuss Labor's new "NSW Made" campaign, which aims to support the creation of local jobs and growth of local industries by urging government and large enterprise to prioritise the procurement of goods locally.

Sphinx Australia, based in Bankstown, has been a well-established and long-standing clothing manufacturer since the company's formation in 1984. With over 30 years' experience in manufacturing, Sphinx Australia has become the longest-running clothing factory in NSW, specialising in supplying apparel to defence and emergency services. I thank Hassan and Tom for hosting us and the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union for their continued support of the local industry, and take this opportunity to commend Sphinx Australia for its valuable contribution to our local economy.

ANTIOCHIAN YOUTH CENTRE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)— It was an honour to join His Eminence The Most Reverend Metropolitan Basilios, Metropolitan Archbishop of the Antiochian Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines, for the official opening of the newly-built Antiochian Youth Centre on Saturday, 27 June 2020. I acknowledge His Eminence Metropolitan Archbishop Basilios, St Nicholas Antiochian Parish Clergy Fr Dr John El Karaan, Fr Romanos Al-Baba and Dcn Phillip Saba, St Michael Antiochian Parish Priest The Very Reverend Fadi Nemme, Members of the local Parish Council and the Antiochian Archdiocese Property Trust, as well as all the local parishioners and other members of the Antiochian Orthodox community, who attended this important community event. The new Antiochian Youth Centre will be used to facilitate education, conferences and events, particularly for the benefit of young people, and its establishment has been a vision of His Eminence since His Enthronement in December 2017. It is magnificent to see this ambition has now been realised and I thank Metropolitan Archbishop Basilios and the Antiochian Archdiocese for their kind invitation to attend the opening. I commend Antiochian Archdiocese on this wonderful initiative and for their tremendous and ongoing contribution to our local community.

ETHAN MCGUINNESS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)— I would like to take this time to congratulate 19-year-old Glenmore Park resident, Ethan McGuinness who recently made history as the first Australian male tumbler to claim silver at a Federation International Gymnastics World Cup. The university student competed in the Senior Men's Tumbling event at the Federation International Gymnastics World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan. In 2017, Ethan suffered a devastating Leg injury that saw him side lined for nearly twelve months. After much rehabilitation, Ethan was given full clearance to return to the mat after eight months, but it took a further year for him to feel completely comfortable in the sport again. Now, stronger than ever, Ethan is at the top of his game and feels more equipped than ever to accomplish greater things. With many goals ahead of him, Ethan has hopes to one day

represent Australia in the Olympics for tumbling, which is not currently recognised as an Olympic sport even with its heavy affiliation with Gymnastics. Congratulations and well done Ethan!

BRITTANIE SHIPWAY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)— Congratulations to Mulgoa resident Brittanie Shipway who has landed an exciting lead role in the touring production of 'The Sapphires' in Australia. Brittanie will be depicting Kay, one of the four Aboriginal women who tour as a singing troupe for soldiers fighting in the Vietnam War. The production originally commenced early this year with plans for 160 shows to be played in the city and regional locations across the country, but was postponed in March due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The tour will most definitely recommence once it is safe to do so. Brittanie is delighted to fulfil the role of Kay as a way of celebrating her rich indigenous heritage. Her Ma (Grandmother) Doreen Shipway, who sadly passed away in 2012, was a member of the Gumbaynggirr mob in Urunga on the Mid Coast of NSW and is Brittanie's inspiration for pursuing a career in theatre. Doreen lived a fun and carefree life in the 60's much like the character of Kay, making this a highly personal experience for Brittanie. Congratulations Brittanie on this amazing achievement! I wish you all the best in this inspiring production and your future in theatre.

AKOOSTIK FESTIVAL

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)— I congratulate the organising committee of the Wingham Akoostik Festival, in particular Coordinator, Donna Ballard on their success in securing funding for the 2020 Wingham Akoostik Festival. The organisation have received \$50,000 in funding through the NSW Government's Arts and Cultural Funding Program. This funding is critical now more than ever during these challenging times, as we work to support and develop our local arts and cultural professionals and rebuild the sector, the Akoostik Festival is the perfect event for this. 2020 will see the Wingham Akoostik Festival enter its 13th year with festival organisers anticipating around 5,000 visitors to the region which will benefit local accommodation outlets, restaurants and many other services. This year the committee plans to present the festival in the middle of town to assist local business and draw excitement to the streets for musicians, artists and visitors. I thank the NSW Government for supporting this and other important cultural events across this great state and wish the organisers all the very best with the Akoostik Festival in 2020.

AUSTRALIAN FIRE HOSES

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)— I congratulate and recognise a local Taree based company, namely Australian Fire Hoses. The business has worked tirelessly with long hours 6- 7 days a week to fill orders during the recent devastating bushfires. Many of their employees when not working at the factory have turned their talents during the COVID-19 epidemic into essential workers. Just this month they have finally caught up with a backlog of orders and repairs from the bushfires. The company does not just supply local fire stations, but others across Australia including having provided equipment to Victoria's CFA during the black Saturday fires, where they had an employee drive to Victoria to deliver the urgently needed hoses. I recently had the opportunity to visit the factory and meet with both the proprietor Peter Overton and factory manager Paul Burke and thank them and their employees for their dedicated service in the manufacturing of a quality locally made product that they continue to provide to our emergency services.

BARBARA WAGSTAFF PCYC

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)— I recognise Barbara (Barb) Wagstaff on her retirement from the amazing work she has undertaken as a volunteer at Penrith PCYC. For over 5 years, Barb has assisted in compliance handling of necessary paperwork, scanned people in to the centre, signed young ones into school holiday programs and has generally been the first person you would see as you walked into the club every Thursday. Barb has also assisted with the PCYC charity days and any time she was called on she was there to help. Her dedication, positive attitude and patience were second to none. Thank you Barb for this fantastic service, you will be missed.

SNAP FITNESS BEECROFT

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)— I recently visited an energetic new business in my electorate, Snap Fitness in Beecroft. Owned by Beecroft local David McNamara and his wife Gretta, they opened their doors about 10 months ago and they now have over 500 members. There was no way anyone could have known that just a few months after David and Gretta achieved their dream of opening their own business, they would be forced to shut their doors again as the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world. Snap Fitness Beecroft certainly felt the impact as they had to comply with the public health orders and restrictions to close for a period of time. Thankfully the Commonwealth Government's JobKeeper program was instrumental for staff, including personal trainers being kept on and allowed the business to stay afloat. When I visited recently, David gave me a tour of his facilities (which were truly first-class) and we had a great conversation about the NSW

Government's roadmap to recovery. I am pleased to see business getting back to usual and I would like to offer my thanks to David, Gretta and their team for hosting me last week. I look forward to returning again.

SUZIE NINEVSKI RCSA COVID-19 HERO AWARD

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)— Congratulations to AIR Recruitment Director and Maryland local, Suzie Ninevski, who was recently recognised by the CEO of the peak recruitment industry body, the Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association, as the Australian & New Zealand RCSA COVID-19 Hero. This year the RCSA decided there was a need for a slightly different award to celebrate the industry through this difficult time. The previously known annual Community CEO Award for Outstanding Contribution became the COVID-19 Hero Award. These coveted awards are among the most prestigious in the sector and highlight the true outstanding achievers operating in the space. Beating seven other recruitment leaders from throughout Australia and New Zealand, Suzie was shocked, yet honoured, to hear RCSA CEO, Charles Cameron, announce her name during the live on-line event. The award celebrates human endeavour, leadership and resilience in the face of an unprecedented challenge. Suzie is one of the people who has stood up and shone when it was needed. This award caps off a great year for Suzie, who was also a National Finalist in the RCSA Rising Star 2020 Award category. Great work, Suzie – well done to you.

HOPE STREET WALLSEND

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)— Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the core aim of Hope Street at Wallsend was around providing social inclusion to the community. They did this by providing large scale community meals each week. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Hope Street had to adapt to the new measures whilst still providing emergency assistance to those in need. Thankfully the centre was able to stay open and provide services such as hot takeaway meals, frozen meals, access to the foodbank store, free fruit, vegetables and bread, essential food hampers including a new option of home delivery, case work, chaplaincy and domestic and family violence support. On average they have provided around 120 to 150 hampers per week and around 200 to 250 hot meals per week. They have a great team of staff and volunteers who have stayed on in order to support our local community. Thank you to Craig Budden and all his wonderful staff and volunteers. Baptist Care Hope Street have remained committed to staying open and providing the much needed support and care for the wider community. We thank them for that.

COVID-19

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)— To say I am proud of how Campbelltown has handled the recent COVID-19 outbreak would be an incredible understatement. It was the Casula cluster, on Campbelltown's doorstep, that was the first of several recent clusters to be discovered in our state. The positive results from the patrons who attended the venue, as well as several places throughout Campbelltown and the wider Macarthur region, really did cause a significant amount of angst throughout our community. But as Campbelltown residents do, they took it in their stride. Like we have always done, the Campbelltown community stuck together and stuck solid. The far majority remained extra vigilant and adhered to all the expert medical advice. As recent weeks have shown, none of us can be complacent when it comes to COVID-19. We have seen the devastating impacts it has caused throughout the globe, and most recently to our south in Victoria. We all have a responsibility to do the right thing and to help contain the spread. I am proud of Campbelltown's efforts in doing that. As always, I am incredibly proud of Campbelltown.

WILMA WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)— There are so many organisations and charities scattered throughout Campbelltown and the wider Macarthur that are dedicated to helping the vulnerable in our community. One of those organisations is WILMA Women's Health Centre. The centre really do an admirable and inspirational job in helping women in need throughout our community. The dedication and passion of those at the centre is obvious for all to see. At the centre women have access to a number of people including: a women's health nurse; a naturopath; a nutritionist; an acupuncturist; and a craniosacral therapist. Counsellors are also on hand to assist with a number of areas including: depression and anxiety; confidence and self-esteem; sexual assault; domestic violence; childhood sexual or other abuse; grief and loss; alcohol or drug issues; addictions including gambling; and family and parenting issues. The list of services speaks volumes of just why WILMA Women's Health Centre is so valuable to not only the community of Campbelltown, but the entire Macarthur region. There is no doubt that our community and myself are extremely grateful for the centre's existence. On behalf of our community, thank you to the team and WILMA.

2020 HELLENIC STUDIES AWARDS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)— On the 11th of February I had the pleasure of hosting the Order of AHEPA's 2020 Hellenic Studies Awards here in Parliament House. AHEPA, or the Australasian Hellenic

Educational Progressive Association, is the largest Hellenic organisation in the world, with chapters in America, Canada, Greece, Cyprus and New Zealand. The organisation seeks to promote community participation, and strengthen and improve Hellenic relations. The Hellenic Studies Award is organised by the Australian Hellenic Educators' Association, in honour of the International Day of Hellenic Language. These Awards recognise the work of students and teachers in recognition of their achievements in both classical and modern Greek studies. In particular, congratulations to local winners from Bald Face Public School, Sienna and Eleni, who won awards for excellence in Hellenic Studies at the Primary level. It was my honour to host and attend the awards and to join the guests in acknowledging the award winners. I would like to thank Mr Panayiotis Diamadis from AHEPA for his leadership and organisation, and congratulate all the award winners.

ST GEORGE MEN'S SHED

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)— I had the pleasure of visiting my friends over at the St George Men's Shed in January. The Australian Men's Shed Association supports over a thousand Men's Sheds, including the St George Men's Shed, of which I am a patron. The Shed currently operates out of Carrs Park, and services all of the St George area. The Men's Shed undertakes a wide variety of activities, including carpentry, furniture making, photography, leather work, and basic computer skills. But more importantly, it provides men an opportunity to bond and develop their skills. It was great to visit the Shed, which was moved from Penshurst in 2016. It is always fantastic to see these men come from all walks of life to develop new friendships and work on beneficial projects, which can help boost overall wellbeing. I would like to acknowledge Shed President, Bernie Dolan, for his continued leadership of the Shed. I always enjoy visiting the Shed and catching up with Members, and I look forward to continuing to support the work of the Shed in 2020.

NEW WHEELS FOR REALISING EVERY DREAM INCORPORATED

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)— Up to 220 local people will be able to participate more fully in community life in and around Lismore through a project supported and announced by me recently. I handed over the keys of a new vehicle to Marie Gale, Chief Executive Officer of Realising Every Dream Incorporated (REDinc.), who told me it was a much-needed morale boost for this disability service provider. REDinc. support worker Josiah Williams, and clients Natasha Ulyiatt and Nathan Gooley, were also on hand to celebrate the good news. I thank REDinc.'s Special Projects Manager Jenny London for making her aware of the organisation's need to update its small fleet of ageing cars. Jenny is a passionate community advocate with a proven track record of making a difference to so many people's lives. The new vehicle was made possible by a \$20,000 grant under the NSW Government's 2019 Community Building Partnership with REDinc. contributing about \$8000. Accessing 'on demand' transport on the Far North Coast can be hard at the best of times. Adding more reliability to REDinc.'s fleet will help people get out and about to where they need to go and when they need to go.

BUSINESS CHAMBERS SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES DURING COVID-19

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)— I pay tribute to local chambers of commerce, affiliated with Business NSW, for stepping up to support struggling local businesses across the Electorate of Lismore during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Business NSW regional managers Jane Lavery (Northern Rivers) and Joe Townsend (New England North West) have been working closely with me to support local businesses and our regional economies. Our local business chambers have also been playing a vital role to ensure that local business owners are aware of the range of State and Federal government support for which they may be eligible, and I have been lobbying behind the scenes for it to reach as many as possible. I recently had a zoom meeting with chamber representatives, thanking them for their strong advocacy and we will continue to work together to protect and grow local jobs as we rebuild from floods in 2017, drought, bushfires, and now COVID-19. This will require adapting to what is referred to as the four-square-metre economy. I recognise our chamber presidents – Sarah Smith, Lismore; Diana Roberts, Nimbin; Mandy Boocock, Kyogle; Nick Moran, Murwillumbah; and Kristen Lovett, Tenterfield – and their executive committees for all of their hard work.

LYLLARDYA ALLIRRA BRIGGS-HOUSTON

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)— I want to congratulate Lyllardya Allirra Briggs-Houston from Narrandera who has been nominated in two categories of the National Indigenous Fashion Awards. Ms Briggs-Houston has been shortlisted for the wearable art and cultural adornment and textiles design categories. The garment designs she submitted are called 'Sandhills', named for the stories her grandmother told her about growing up on the sandhills in Narrandera. Her label Ngarru Miimi celebrates the Wiradjuri people and the stories of her ancestors, through artwork and hand prints on natural materials all created in her home studio in Narrandera. Congratulations on this fantastic achievement and best of luck in the awards.

PENRITH REGIONAL GALLERY 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)— Penrith Regional Gallery, home of the Lewers Bequest is celebrating a fantastic milestone with its 40th anniversary this year. The site with the original home was built in 1905 and then purchased by leading artists, Margo and Gerald Lewers who made it their home and studio. In 1980 with both parents having passed on, daughters Darani and Tanya donated the site, building and gardens to Penrith Council along with many works of art by Gerald, Margo and their artist colleagues so that those with an appreciation of art could continue to enjoy it. Following remodelling over the years, today the Penrith Regional Gallery comprising of Lewers House, the Lounge Room Gallery, Ancher House and the living work of art garden offers visitors a quiet oasis to enjoy their exhibitions or a place just to sit and enjoy the surrounds with a coffee or meal at Café Lewers. To celebrate their 40 years, the gallery are celebrating with their "Dream Realised: Our community victory" exhibition. Wishing the Penrith Regional Gallery all the best for the future.

PICTON POP UP TESTING CLINIC

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)— I would like to thank all of the staff from the South West Sydney Area Health District who were involved in the pop up COVID-19 testing clinic at Victoria Park in Picton recently. When the need to establish this clinic in Picton was deemed necessary the staff at both a clinical and administrative level moved into action rapidly. They did so with professionalism, dedication and compassion. I was able to see the pop up clinic at first hand and was so impressed with the operation. I would also like to thank the Wollondilly Council and the Local Police for their assistance with traffic management and control around the testing site. Those who were involved with the whole operation were able to put it together with speed and professionalism. This certainly gave the local community a strong measure of reassurance that our Government was ensuring the safety of the local community.

TELOPEA PARK MEMORIAL BUXTON

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)— I would like to acknowledge all of the hard work by so many people to bring to reality the memorial to RFS volunteers Andrew O'Dwyer and Geoffrey Keaton who tragically lost their life fighting the Green Wattle Creek Bushfire late last year. Wollondilly Council has now approved an amendment to the Telopea Park Masterplan to enable the construction of the memorial. There was very strong local community support for the Memorial. The local community has been very engaged in the planning and development. The families of the fallen firefighters were also involved in the process and their views helped drive the project forward. I would like to say a special thank you to the Buxton RFS and in particular Kim Hill for all of their hard work in planning and fundraising for this memorial. The memorial, which will have a fire truck themed playground, is a fitting tribute to those brave men who gave their lives in the service of others.

CAROL NEGLINE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)— I recognise and congratulate Carol Negline on her retirement after 17 years as the owner and licensee of the Moree Post Office Hotel, known affectionately and simply by locals as 'The PO'. Carol and her late husband Grahame bought the hotel in 2003, however, after Grahame passed away in 2005, Carol took up the reins to run it all by herself. Carol's hands-on approach to running The PO saw her doing everything from serving drinks behind the bar, working in the bottle shop and in the office. Carol is a wonderful role model for rural and regional women in business and I wish her all the best in what is a well-deserved retirement.

HEATHER TREVASKIS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)— I wish to bring to the attention of the house the achievements of Lockhart's Heather Trevaskis who recently received a NSW Government Community Service Award. As President of the Lockhart & District Historical Society, Greens Gunyah Museum, Heather has gone above and beyond dedicating most of her time since retirement to preserving Lockhart's social history. Heather believes in Lockhart's potential as a tourism destination, with the Museum as a key factor in this strategy. With her can-do attitude, Heather shows exemplary initiative, leadership skills & dedication, inspiring the entire community through her pride in the Museum. Within eight years of devastation of two floods (2010 & 2012) Greens Gunyah Museum emerged as a sustainable & progressive regional museum having doubled in space & volunteer base with increasing visitation rates. Heather has played a major part curating the extensive range of historical artefacts, photography & machinery displayed, including artefacts from Brookong Station, wool art by artist Doris Golder & in 2019 the personal collection of former Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer AC in the newly acquired Billabong Motors building. Achievements of this kind & scale deserve our recognition and gratitude.

2020 NSW RURAL YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)— I recognise and congratulate Inverell High School student Lachlan Hampton and Macintyre High School students Abi Chetham and Lilly King on their selection as New South Wales Rural Youth Ambassadors this year. The Rural Youth Ambassador Program provides students in rural and remote communities with an opportunity to develop leadership skills and voice issues facing youth to government sectors. Lachlan, Abi and Lilly will be excellent ambassadors for our region and all rural NSW youth. I congratulate them again and wish them all the best for the upcoming online forums and discussions on the issues facing our rural and remote students.

DUNGOG-CLARENCE TOWN COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)— I would like to congratulate the ladies of the Dungog-Clarence Town CWA on their initiative of co-ordinating the "Mask Up Dungog" campaign. The CWA is uniting the community and its visitors to take personal responsibility for managing the pandemic. As a result the Dungog-Clarence Town CWA are making masks with support from the Dungog Boomerang Bags and the community. The masks are being sold to the community and also sold to the Dungog Tourism Information Centre. Again congratulations again to all those involved in getting the "Mask Up Dungog" campaign up and running in these challenging times.

ST MARKS COPTIC CATHOLIC

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)— Western Sydney and the Prospect Electorate are home to a vibrant Coptic Catholic community. It was a pleasure to meet with Parish Priest Fr Andrawes Farag, discuss the achievements of St Marks Coptic Catholic Church and their plans for the future. St Mark's Church is the first Coptic Catholic Church to open in Australia, and has quickly become a focal point of our growing Australian Coptic Catholic community. The new church was consecrated in 2019, providing the Australian Coptic Catholic community with an appropriate home. The Church offers our Coptic Catholic community the opportunity to practice their faith and traditions that are so important to our cohesive society. The cross cultural fertilisation of ideas is part of why Sydney and in particular Western Sydney are such great places to live, work and raise a family. We have learnt the lessons and taken on the ideas of so many cultures, it is fantastic to see the Sydney Coptic Catholic at St Mark's Church community working to share their ideas and knowledge with the wider community, helping to build a stronger multicultural society.

BLACK JULY COMMEMORATION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)— In July 1983 the Tamil community of Sri Lanka were subjected to a pogrom, attacked and killed in Colombo over a period of a week by violent mobs. This violence ignited the Sri Lankan civil war that cost over 100 000 Children, Women and Men their lives. The month is known as 'Black July'. The international Tamil community holds Black July commemorations to remember this tragic event. This year I was invited to join as the keynote speaker at the Tamil Eelam Black July Remembrance Day Event, commemorating the loss of life in Sri Lanka and discussing the way forward for the Tamil community in their goal for genocide recognition. I would like to thank all of the speakers and organisers that made this important event possible. I was honoured to join parliamentary colleagues from Canada and the UK and academics from India and France. We must always remember the tragic events of the past that continue to shape the present and future. I will continue to work with the Australian Tamil community to ensure that these events and the genocide of the Tamil people is remembered and recognised.

MAITLAND SEED LIBRARY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)— The COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it a contagion of enthusiasm for self-sufficiency that is manifesting in everything from backyard chickens to sourdough starters and do-it-yourself gardens. The ethos behind this mindset has long been core to the philosophy of the global Slow Food movement, with its mission to ensure good, clean and fair food for all and reconnect people with the paddock to plate process. A new development this year is a collaboration between Maitland council, the East Maitland Library and Slow Food Hunter Valley to launch a library of free, local, seasonal seeds. People who wish to borrow and use them need only to register online, order their seeds and nominate a library collection point. The original stock of seeds has been donated by stallholders at the Maitland Earth Market but, at the end of growing season, participants will be encouraged to donate some of their seeds back to the library to ensure replenishment for the next season. Congratulations to Slow Food Hunter Valley for another great initiative that promotes our local food coverage, celebrates seasonal produce and maintains biodiversity in the Lower Hunter Region.

MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)— In June, Australians commemorated Men's Health Week - an important annual international event to raise awareness of the key issues in men's health and provide men with important health information. Men, family and friends, community groups and workplaces are encouraged to get involved by taking part in daily activities, sharing health information and encouraging men to look after their health. This is important because sadly, a boy born in Australia in 2010 has a life expectancy of 78 years while a baby girl born at the same time can expect to live to 82.3 years. Right from the start, boys suffer more illness, more accidents and die earlier than their female counterparts. Men also take their own lives at four times the rate of women. The health status of many Australian men is far worse in marginalised groups including Aboriginal men, refugees, men in prison, or of low socioeconomic standing. We must work together to identify what causes these outcomes and turn them around to create positive environments for men and boys. Most importantly, let's encourage men to get their health checks, to live long, healthy and happy lives.

FUNDING BOOST FOR MAIANBAR RFS AND SUTHERLAND FRNSW

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)— I'm extremely pleased fire protection has been boosted in our community with new state of the art equipment at Maianbar Rural Fire Service (RFS) and Sutherland Fire and Rescue (FRNSW). I appreciated the Minister for Police and Emergency Services the Hon David Elliot visiting my electorate recently to officially hand over the new equipment. Maianbar RFS received a new CAT 1 Tanker. This will be an invaluable resource, significantly increasing their capabilities in the Royal National Park and in general duties. They were consistently deployed across the state to help fight the devastating fires over summer and are well deserving on the receipt of this equipment. Sutherland FRNSW received a new \$760,000 pumper which will help firefighters better protect our community. It can supply 4,000 litres of water for their firefighting operations and has a Compressed Air Foam (CAFS) system to fight chemical, petrol and bushfires. It's fantastic that Maianbar RFS and Sutherland FRNSW have received these new vehicles, as it ensures they're equipped to protect themselves and our community during emergency responses. Thank you to Maianbar RFS and Sutherland Fire Station members for the courageous work you do in protecting our community during the toughest times.

COMMUNITY PANTRIES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)— Congratulations to those inner westies who have showed incredible compassion, ingenuity and generosity during the pandemic. Community pantries has sprouted across the inner west, providing food and essential items for those who have lost income, are self-isolating, or just need a helping hand. Connect Marrickville has established a community pantry at Marrickville West Primary school, with food and items donated by generous parents. Connect Marrickville provides additional educational support to disadvantaged students and through the pantry is making sure no family has to go without. The Ville Food Pantry on Marrickville Road was established by locals following a donation of an upcycled wardrobe by the Bower. The Tempe Community Pantry is located under freight bridge on Unwins Bridge Road and is regularly stocked with long-life milk, sanitary products, and pasta. Thank you to local legend Peter James for rallying Tempe locals. Pantries have also sprung up in Surrey Street, Marrickville, Ashfield Baptist Church and in Newtown, where locals set up the Newtown Blessing Box. Thank you to those who donated their time and goods and who are looking out for their neighbours during this Covid-19 pandemic.

INNER WEST COUNCIL CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)— Congratulations to Roxanne McMurray, Professor Simon Chapman, Peggy Lane and Daniel Lahood; all of whom have been named as this year's Inner West Council Citizens of the Year. Roxanne McMurray, 2020 Citizen of Year, is a respected domestic violence campaigner and Manager at Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre. She is a passionate advocate for funding domestic violence services and established SOS Women's Services, a women's advocacy and action group campaigning against the closure of women's and girls' refuges in the city. Professor Simon Chapman is this year's joint Inner West Senior Citizen of the Year, sharing the award with Peggy Lane, who I spoke about yesterday in the House. Professor Chapman is awarded for his dedication to music and the arts, having established the St.Anmore music festival, honouring the renowned conductor Richard Gill, a long time Stanmore resident. Daniel Lahood, 2020 Young Citizen of the Year, is a passionate advocate for social justice. Most recently, Daniel has volunteered with Neighbour Aid, grocery shopping for elderly residents self-isolating during this pandemic. Congratulations to this year's recipients, you are all inspirational inner westies.

POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Following the announcement that our Powerhouse Museum will stay in Ultimo, I draw to the attention of the House the community coalition that was instrumental in this long-fought but successful campaign. Anyone who has visited the Powerhouse Museum knows that it boasts an astounding

collection of historical, scientific and decorative artefacts and is unreservedly adored by our community and people across NSW. It has been my pleasure to represent my community's unwavering passion and care for this iconic institution over the years. While there is more work to be done, today I would particularly like to acknowledge the following community members for their steadfast advocacy for the Powerhouse both in Ultimo and for Parramatta over the years: Patricia Johnson, Jean-Pierre Alexandre, Jennifer Sanders, Kylie Winkworth, Lionel Glendenning, Lindsay Sharp, Grace Cochrane, Anne Schofield, Trevor Kennedy, Leo Schofield, Andrew Grant, Tom Lockley, Helen O'Boyle, the late Brian Powyer, Clive Lucas, Cheryl Bates, Judith Coombes, Alister Sharp, Judith White, and Suzette Meade. I speak on behalf of everyone in our community when I say thank you to these dedicated advocates for protecting our Museum for generations to come.

EASTERN SUBURBS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION AND THE WOMEN'S PREMIER CUP

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I would like to wish the best of luck to the Eastern Suburbs Football Association (ESFA) for the upcoming Women's Premier Cup. The ESFA do amazing work in promoting equity for access to football and improving the quality of coaching, players, referees and facilities. The association does a tremendous job at governing football throughout all of the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney. As patron of the ESFA Women's I am very excited to follow and support the upcoming Women's Premier Cup and wish all the players the very best of luck. I would also like to thank all the staff, committee members and Directors of the ESFA for their contribution in developing such a successful and inclusive football community in the Eastern Suburbs. Best of luck to all clubs this season, play hard!

COOGEE NETBALL CLUB

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I would like to take this opportunity wish the Coogee Netball Club all the very best for the upcoming season. After what must be the longest pre-season in the club's history, the teams will don the pink, white and black from Saturday, 25th of July as the competition gets under way. 2020 has been a year with precious little to celebrate, and so the return of community sport and especially of local netball is something that needs to be celebrated. I would especially like to thank all the volunteers who have contributed to the club this year. It would not have been easy to redesign every training session and club process to make it pandemic safe and so I wish to thank each and every volunteer for making this season possible. I would also like to make special mention of club President, Sharon Deans. Sharon's love of the game and of the club shines through in her actions and work ethic and so I thank her for steering the club through to the tough times as we look forward to better days ahead.

RACISM INCIDENT REPORT

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—I recently attended the launch of the 'COVID-19 Racism Incident Report' capturing racist incidents against Asians in Australia arising due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic. The report was a collaboration between the Asian Australian Alliance, Being Asian Australia and the impressive Osmond Chiu, Research Fellow at the Per Capita Thinktank - with valuable contributions from Democracy in Colour and Diversity Arts Australia. Special mention to Erin Wen Ai Chew, National Convener for the Asian Australian Alliance who has such strength and integrity when it comes to speaking out against racism and inequality in our communities and worldwide. Erin, I know that the work you do isn't easy, and I thank you personally for doing it, it means so much to me and so many others. Thanks also to Thomson Ch'ng, NSW Convener, who hosted the launch and Molina Swarup Asthana, Victorian Convener, who participated in the panel. Thank you to those who responded to the survey: "We give thanks to your courage and effort in coming forward with your stories in order to shed much needed light on the issue of racism against Asians and Asian-Australians amidst this pandemic. "

NOWRA BRIDGE UPGRADE

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—It was my pleasure to recently join with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole, and Minister for Families, Community and Disability Services and Member for Kiama Gareth Ward to turn the first sod and commence work on the \$342 million project on the NSW South Coast. More than 50,000 vehicles cross the Shoalhaven River every day and the new four-lane bridge will make journeys safer and more reliable for all motorists. The South Coast community has long fought for this upgrade and it is an honour to have secured the funds for them. Since 2011, the Australian and NSW Governments have invested \$2.5 billion into building a safer Princes Highway from Sydney to the Victorian border and the Nowra Bridge is an important part of this upgrade. Shortly we will see the first loads of rock delivered to build a temporary platform into the Shoalhaven River from near Scenic Drive so that the building of the new bridge structure can commence. I thank everyone in the community for their patience as we complete this transformative project.

NSW BUSHFIRE INQUIRY

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—Bushfires devastated the South Coast community at the beginning of this year, and I've spoken a number of times on the way our local community came together to help their neighbours, friends and families in the most difficult of circumstances. It is important that we all continue to work together to ensure that we are prepared for such an event, should it take place again this summer, or in future years. Earlier this year Premier Berejiklian launched an independent inquiry into the 2019-20 bushfire season to provide input to NSW ahead of the next bushfire season, and I thank everyone on the South Coast who has made a contribution to this process. Recently I met with Dave Owens, former Deputy Commissioner of NSW Police, and Professor Mary O'Kane AC, Independent Planning Commission Chair and former NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, who lead the six-month inquiry, which will review the causes of, preparation for and response to the 2019-20 bushfires. We discussed whether the right arrangements are in place for preparing and responding to bushfires with regard to local councils in both the Minister's capacity as the Minister for Local Government and Member for South Coast.

ROUGH EDGES

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I would like to record appreciation for the work of inner city community service Rough Edges. Under the St John's Community Services umbrella, Rough Edges provides practical help and advocacy for disadvantaged people with drop-in information, advice and advocacy, along with emergency relief and meals. Rough Edges is linked with the Banksia Women project helping women escaping an abusive or violent partner to get back on their feet, and with St John's Legal Centre helping sort out legal problems. The Urban Exposure social justice education has people with lived experience take groups through a learning encounter to understand life for vulnerable people on the street. A wide range of community 'champions' help with donations, ranging from St Mark's Darling Point, Rotary Kings Cross and caring individuals. I've been a proud Rough Edges supporter, particularly through the annual Roughtober fundraiser. During the pandemic, Rough Edges has adapted and pivoted, changing services to meet local needs while protecting clients and the community from the virus. I thank Rough Edges for this vital work building community connections and supporting vulnerable people to get their lives on track.

SYDNEY STREETLEVEL

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I would like to record the valued contribution of the Salvation Army's Sydney Streetlevel Mission in Surry Hills. Streetlevel's social justice focus and non-judgemental approach is a vital part of the service network for disadvantaged and isolated people in the inner city, especially those living on the street or struggling to get by. Streetlevel helps people with emergency aid when they have no money, along with really practical help like toilets, showers, lockers, mailing address, laundry and public access computers, along with a small supermarket with low cost food and an op shop for clothing. There is a caseworker who helps with Assistance with housing, Centrelink, advocacy and referrals to specific support, and financial counselling to sort out debts and fines. Group breakfast and lunch at the café and activities like English classes, music and kid's club have had to be put on hold at present, but have always been part of Streetlevel – bringing people together. I congratulate and thank the passionate and committed team of workers and volunteers at Streetlevel who provide "an open door of hope, healing and restoration".

MACQUARIE LINKS PLAYGROUNDS

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—Quality playground equipment is pivotal for healthy and active communities. It is fantastic to see the Macquarie Links community be proactive and secure new playgrounds and fitness equipment for residents of all ages. The Macquarie Links Community Association secured nearly \$180,000 in funding for three small playgrounds and a fitness area through the My Community Project program. Congratulations to the Association members who put in a lot of time and effort to prepare the funding submission and to win community votes to secure funding. The effort of the Association members is a prime example of how fighting for our community can make a big impact on the lives of others, especially our youngest residents. It was pleasure to visit Macquarie Links with Cr Rey Manoto and try out the new playground and fitness equipment. The playground received a big tick of approval from the kids! We are confident families in Macquarie Links will take every opportunity to enjoy these community facilities with their children and continue with their commitment to the community of Macquarie Links.

LEOS CLUB OF BALLINA COAST HIGH SCHOOL

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—I commend the Leos Club of Ballina Coast High School for raising \$433 in support of the Ballina Hope Haven Women's and Children's Refuge. With the support of the East Ballina Lions Club, the students were able to run a hot dog stall to raise money for this good cause. Our community has had record numbers of women and children impacted upon by domestic violence in previous years. It is

commendable to see young people rallying behind initiatives that provide accommodation and refuge for the less fortunate at a time where they need it the most. The money raised will go a long way in providing a safe space for women and young people in our electorate. I thank the Leos Club of Ballina Coast High for the contribution they have made in providing crisis accommodation for women and children fleeing Domestic and/or Family violence.

EVERY CLOUD PRODUCTIONS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I acknowledge the inspiring work of Every Cloud Productions—and I would like to thank Deb Cox and Fiona Eagger for shooting their latest TV production in the Northern Rivers. Every Cloud Productions create and produce thought-provoking, entertaining content telling Australian stories for domestic and international audiences. They have a policy to put more women in front and behind the camera, to foster diversity in production and casting and to mentor the next generation of storytellers. The production company helps to foster Australian talent and by filming in the Northern Rivers they will create opportunities and jobs for creatives, as well as boost the local economy when we most need it. I personally look forward to seeing another wonderful production shot in the Northern Rivers showcasing our diverse range of talent both in-front and behind the camera.

LACHLAN AND JASMINE SHEPHERD

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I congratulate Lachlan and Jasmine Shepherd from Mount Annan who won the Name the Cranes competition to name Campbelltown Hospital's two redevelopment cranes. I note that the names "Mac" and "Arthur" were chosen from a very competitive pool of entries and that the names reflect the region which the cranes will call home. I look forward to seeing Lachlan and Jasmine's winning entries on the cranes, which will be a visible feature in Macarthur for the next twelve months.

2020 AUSTRALIAN VIRTUAL ROBOTICS TOURNAMENT - UNITY GRAMMAR

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I would like to recognise the outstanding achievements of students at Unity Grammar in Austral who were awarded the Virtual Trophy for Robot Design at the 2020 Australian Virtual Robotics Tournament. This highly competitive tournament was held in June this year on an all virtual platform where teams performed live robot runs from their school robotics workshop. These robot runs were judged by an international judging panel consisting of members of high level organisations ranging from Macquarie University to Google and Disney to LEGO Education. The STEM Cells Y team, who took out the Virtual Trophy for Robot Design was made up of: Abdul Rahman Rifai, Amina Al-Said, Ayeza Siddiqui, Daniya Syed, Haneefah Lawal, Hassan Raja, Muhammad Hardan, Yasmina El-Bureen, Coach Laila Qadan, and Coach Zain Khan. The second team that participated was the STEM Cells X team which was made up of: Eman Hafda, Maise Alqudah, Maysa Maarbani, Zayn Maarbani, Coach Laila Qadan, and Coach Zain Khan. I once again congratulate these Unity Grammar Students for this fantastic achievement.

SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)—On Tuesday 30 June, I visited the Sydney Dance Company's Wattle Street Ultimo Studios to see the re-opened studios hosted by Executive Director Anne Dunn, Chair Brett Clegg and Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela. It was great to hear about the work the Company had been undertaking during COVID-19 and to meet some of the talented dancers. It was the first time the dancers had come back to practice since the studios were closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. I was pleased to hear the online virtual studio classes have been a big hit and will continue despite the studio re-opening. Sydney Dance Company are an exemplary creative arts organisation founded in 1969 and led by the Artistic Director Rafael since 2009. The Company's primary studios will be at The Wharf, currently being upgraded as part of the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct re-development. I want to acknowledge the strong Company leadership including Executive Director Anne Dunn and Deputy Executive Director Lizzi Nicoll. I also thank Board Chair Brett Clegg and directors Pam Bartlett, David Baxby, Jillian Broadbent AC, David Friedlander, Mark Hassell, Catriona Mordant AM, Sandra McCullagh, Emma-Jane Newton, Paris Neilson, Chrissy Sharp, Carla Zampatti AC for their support.

WOOLWORTHS GROUP

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Woolworth Group in taking the step to mandate the wearing of masks by customers who visit their stores in the Fairfield and Liverpool Local Government areas. In the Fairfield LGA, Woolworths staff have remained vigilant in maintaining social distancing measures throughout the first and second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety of customers and staff has always been the priority and Woolworths supermarkets in our local area have adhered to the Health guidelines of social distancing and hygiene practices to an exemplary standard. Thank you to the staff of Woolworths supermarkets in the Fairfield LGA for doing their absolute best in such a challenging situation to slow the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure the safety of their fellow workers and customers alike. The wearing

of masks is yet another measure which the Woolworths group has recognised as being key to slowing the spread of the virus and I commend their decision to make wearing them a mandatory practice when visiting their stores.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE FAIRFIELD THANK YOU

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the St John Ambulance Fairfield Division members for the invaluable support they continue to provide through their assistance with testing a record number of people for COVID-19 in south-west Sydney. Superintendent Abnob Putros and his team have been providing an extensive amount of support to the drive-through testing clinics at Fairfield, Casula, Picton and Liverpool. This is such a challenging time for our community and we are grateful for the medical and logistical assistance provided so selflessly by this group of members and volunteers. As well as registering and recording details of patients, Superintendent Putros and the team have been providing patients with information about the steps to take after a COVID-19 test and how to get test results. Always willing to be where they are needed most, the St John Ambulance Fairfield Division members and volunteers have been diligent in their duty to the community at this time more than ever. They have demonstrated a steadfast commitment to serving the public in a time of high risk, and I commend and thank them for their efforts to provide this much-needed support to our community.

SUPPORT FOR PARRAMATTA CITY GROUPS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I speak of the recent support received by community organisations in Parramatta Local Government Area suburbs, within the Seven Hills electorate. The students, parents and staff of Toongabbie West Public School will benefit from a \$15,000 Premier's grant for new works at the school. The P&C were successful in gaining funds towards the construction of awnings, covers, seating and walkways for Toongabbie West. The Pendle Hill Football Club has been successful in their application for \$12,500 from the Premier to aid construction of fencing, lighting, seating and signage. The Club's home ground at Binalong Park, Old Toongabbie, will also benefit from repairs of facilities and new equipment with the grant. The Winston Hills Football Club has secured \$12,500 towards concrete surface works, fencing and construction of a barbecue area at the Club's home ground at Max Ruddock Reserve, Winston Hills.

ROSEVILLE STATION UPGRADE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Improving accessibility for all members of our communities is important, including on public transport. So I am pleased to note that final plans have now been approved to deliver an accessibility upgrade at Roseville Station, in my electorate of Davidson. The upgrade will make travel easier for less mobile customers, including people with a disability, limited mobility, parents and carers with prams, and travellers with luggage. It will include two new lifts, accessible pathways to the station, a new ramp, improved amenities, and additional accessible parking including for bicycles. The project is scheduled for completion in the first half of 2022. I acknowledge the local community feedback during the planning period, and all involved in delivering this more accessible public transport infrastructure.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS FOR 1ST LINDFIELD SCOUT GROUP

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Established in 1920, 1st Lindfield Scout Group will celebrate 100 years of scouting on 19 September at the scout hall in Slade Avenue, Lindfield, and on 26 September at Roseville Golf Club. I plan to attend the centenary celebrations which will include journalist Mike Carlton, a former member of 1st Lindfield in the 1950s, and Neville Tomkins, Chief Commissioner of Scouts Australia NSW. Scouts provide many benefits for young people, such as developing resilience, encouraging good character, and providing community connection. In response to the coronavirus pandemic, activities were temporarily moved online. Participants continue to display resilience during these challenging times. I commend 1st Lindfield Scout Group, hope it continues to flourish, and congratulate all involved in organising the centenary events.

SCOTT WITCHARD

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—We often hear about the selfless efforts of our SES volunteers and today I want to recognise Scott Witchard for his service and commitment to our community as an integral member of the Port Macquarie NSW State Emergency Service. Local man born and bred, Scott Witchard and the crew at Port Macquarie SES command have been adjusting to the new era of COVID-19 restrictions including social distancing requirements and group limitations with the inclusion of online training and split team meetings. Scott acknowledges the members have adapted well under the circumstances as they gradually reintroduce face to face training in small groups and adhere to procedural compliance as frontline volunteers continue to engage in rescues and emergency responses. Recognised by his peers for demonstrating an overall passion and devotion to the unit, Scott is best described as putting others above himself as he attends routine callouts to assist those in danger and distress. An advocate for wearing masks when attending rescues and ensuring

all equipment and vehicles are safely sanitised after attending a scene, you can be assured your safety and welfare is foremost in the minds of our courageous SES volunteers in Port Macquarie.

CHRIS HARRIS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—It is important to recognise those in our community for heroic actions and today I acknowledge well-known local Chris Harris who recently saved a young boy caught in a rip off Flynn's Beach on Wednesday, 15 July 2020. Hailed a community hero by onlookers, it was during the eve of the incident when local surfer Chris Harris was preparing to catch some waves at the popular Flynn's Beach in Port Macquarie when he noticed a boy struggling in treacherous conditions. Without hesitation, Chris sprang to action and guided the 12-year-old to shore where NSW Ambulance paramedics attended the scene. It is no doubt that if it weren't for the swift response that day to an escalating situation, tragedy may have struck the young man caught in a rip on that fateful Wednesday afternoon. Accredited for his bravery and selflessness during the dramatic rescue, Chris is now committed to raising awareness for the need for surf education for our youth to ensure they are aware of the potential hazards that exist when venturing into the water. I commend Chris for his advocacy and determination in shining a spotlight on the importance of beach safety in our community.

LOCAL LIBRARY SERVICES

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the recent provision of a mobile library service for residents of the Hills Shire, including those of my electorate of Castle Hill. This program is similar to ones instituted across the state and is an opportunity to bring the wonderful collection of local libraries to commuters and others not able to access Library Services in a more conventional manner. The new library van will visit community centres, such as aged care facilities, playgroups and schools, as well as undertaking promotional activities at shopping centres and train stations and at major Council events such as Australia Day. Importantly, the vehicle will enable the Library team to take services and activities out to residents in new growth areas such as Box Hill and North Kellyville as well as to others in the community who may be physically or socially isolated. The program is a \$76,062 commitment from the Government, part of the \$6 Million Public Library Infrastructure Grant Program. The Library team are to be congratulated for thinking outside the Library walls and developing a way to extend the reach of services into the community.

CASTLE HILL SHOWGROUND UPGRADE

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Castle Hill Showground for securing stimulus funding for the benefit of my electorate. The Castle Hill Showground plays host to many community events such as the Annual Relay for Life and numerous equestrian events and dog shows. It also provides the necessary infrastructure for local community groups, such as sporting clubs, to stage their events. The showground recently received \$175,000 worth of funding, going towards new light poles, new septic pumps, an upgraded laundry building and replacing the demountable office. This was part of the NSW Government's \$25 million over two years in Showground Improvement Works. My thanks and congratulations go out to all those who helped secure this funding, most notably Michael Edgar from the Hills Shire Council.

MARISSA RANCAN BIG BROTHER

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I acknowledge one of the famed Rancan sisters, Marissa Rancan, who recently was a contestant on the 2020 series of Big Brother. Many in this place may have heard of Marissa before her time in the Big Brother, being a household name in the 80's when she and her sisters, Adele and Lisa, brought aerobics to Australia. While Adele and Lisa moved into the Pilates industry, Marissa took up her passion in makeup and many Mosman locals would recognise Marissa from the Mecca store in the Mosman village. During her time in the Big Brother house, Marissa used her fitness expertise to show that she had what it took in the physical competitions, often beating the younger housemates. Marissa ensured her larger-than-life presence was felt in the house, and I am sure that many in my electorate of North Shore were cheering her on from home. Congratulations to Marissa Rancan on reaching the top 10 of Big Brother 2020, and we look forward to seeing what comes next in her future.

MONTE SANT' ANGELO STUDENT LEADERS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I acknowledge the new student leaders of Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College in my electorate of North Shore. Congratulations to College Captain Maddison Rubic, and the rest of the leadership team including Bridget Cunningham, Isabella Doyle, Emily Eide, Ava Regoli, Madeleine Teychenne, and Lily Ward. I would also like to acknowledge all those students who have stepped up into other leadership teams including the House Captains and the Co-curricular Captains. These students exhibit leadership, dedication, tenacity, and a drive to make a change in their local community. I hope to join with these students again soon and see what amazing outcomes they will be able to do at Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College.

Congratulations girls and I look forward to seeing some of the fantastic work you will do over the next year as the next generation of leaders.

ROSEMARY ALLEN OAM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Rosemary Allen who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours. Rosemary has been recognised for her service to music education, and to the community, having been a member of the Music Teachers' Association of New South Wales for more than 30 years. During this time she has also been an office bearer for the association locally, serving as the president of the Newcastle Branch between 2001 and 2017. Apart from being one of life's great joys, the benefits of music education are countless. From improving dexterity to listening skills, developing creating to boosting self-esteem, Rosemary's contributions to her students have been far greater than notes on a page. Congratulations again, Rosemary. This honour is much deserved.

JEFFREY HORN OAM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Jeffrey Horn, who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in this year's Queen's Birthday honours. Jeffrey was recognised for his service to the road freight transport industry as the long-time owner and managing director of Horns Transport, where he pioneered environmental initiatives that saw the company win environmental awards in 1994 and 1996. Additionally in 1996, Horns Transport was named as the NSW Road Transport Association Master Carriers of the Year. Although a quiet achiever, Jeffrey's contribution to the industry cannot be understated. Congratulations again on this much-deserved honour.

SUTHERLAND DISTRICT HOCKEY CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I am pleased to inform the House that Sutherland District Hockey Club have almost completed clubhouse renovations made possible by a \$15,000 grant from the Premier, the Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP. Formed in 1965, this entirely volunteer-managed hockey club is one of the largest in Sydney and welcomes players as young as 4, fostering their development right through to senior and representative levels, with many alumni having played for Australia. The one-off grant contributed to clubhouse repairs, flooring, lighting and a new PA system to deliver a much needed upgrade to the 40-year-old facility. Members, supporters and visitors alike will benefit from the refurbished clubhouse which will also facilitate presentations, carnivals, meetings and other events throughout the year. I acknowledge the dedicated executive committee members overseeing the project, including Peter Tait, Peter Krepp and Sarah Dredge and for their ongoing commitment to hockey in our community, John Mulcair, Luke Domrow, Phil Rowling, Jo Momsen, Ruth Sannes, David Richardson, Frank Rowling, Steve Harvey, Garry Harvey, Bill Melchert, Kevin Margetson and John Cowan. I thank Sutherland District Hockey Club for bringing this important project to my attention and look forward to visiting the new clubhouse in future.

ST LUKE'S COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge St Luke's Coptic Orthodox Church who have received \$20,000 from the Premier, the Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP towards a community centre. St Luke's is a multicultural church with a mission 'to worship Christ in the Orthodox tradition while making the church available for everyone in the local community'. Having only been established in 2018, St Luke's has also recently received development approval to construct a church building in Sylvania. The one-off grant from the Premier will transform an existing property into a vibrant community centre by facilitating internal renovations. St Luke's will provide accessible resources including a library, counselling, youth, educational and crisis management services to community members in need. I commend the team behind St Luke's for initiating a community centre which will welcome and support many members of our local community. Particularly, I recognise Father Daniel Fanous, Father Samuel Fanous, committee Treasurer Steven Basily and Secretary Andrew Nada. I thank St Luke's Coptic Orthodox Church for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and extend my best wishes as they build their new spiritual home in Sylvania.

LAWSON RANKIN

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—After a horror scooter crash in Bali, young Lawson Rankin was left fighting a severe traumatic brain injury. Doctors weren't certain he would survive, or what deficits he might struggle with if he did. Lawson, with the help of his family and friends and the support of our local community, is defying the odds. He has learnt how to eat and speak, he is walking again, and he has big plans for the future. Lawson intends to get back out on the footy field and go to university. A fundraising campaign brought in a whopping \$200,000 from the community, and thankfully his family was able to organise a medevac and bring him home to Australia to get him started on his road to recovery. I acknowledge Lawson's mum and dad Phillip and Therese, and to the hard-working staff both in Bali and here in Australia, including at the John

Hunter Hospital, Rankin Park Centre, and the Hunter Brain Injury Service, for their support. I would like to congratulate Lawson on his hard work and extraordinary achievements thus far. I wish him all the best and look forward to seeing what this remarkable young man will accomplish.

SAMANTHA CROSS AND THE PLASTIC POLICE

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Of the many environmental challenges we face in the twenty-first century, what to do about plastic pollution is one of the largest—and one of the issues we can do the most about in our day-to-day lives. Samantha Cross decided to do something about it. She started Plastic Police in 2015, after feeling "inundated" by soft plastic in her home. Samantha approached Biddabah Public School about collecting soft plastic and converting it into an outdoor bench seat. After a year of collecting, and having found enough soft plastic to stretch from Warners Bay to the Central Coast, they built the seat—but the Plastic Police's mission was just getting started. Now the project includes more than 25 organisations, including schools, councils and businesses. As well as collecting and re-purposing soft plastics, the Plastic Police is aiming to educate the public about soft plastics and encourage the community to reduce or eliminate usage. The goal is to catch soft plastics before they end up in waterways or landfill. I would like to thank Samantha, fellow Plastic Police activist Lexi Crouch, and all of the organisations who have been involved in this very worthy initiative.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 18:03 until
Tuesday 4 August 2020 at 12:00.**